UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS IN BRATISLAVA
FACULTY OF APPLIED LANGUAGES

GOVERNANCE OF MIGRATION IN V4 COUNTRIES

Master´s Thesis

2023   **Bc. Diana Gajdosík**

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RIADENIE MIGRÁCIE V KRAJINÁCH V4

Master´s Thesis

Study Programme: Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication

Field of Study: Philology

Consultation Centre: Department of Intercultural Communication

Supervisor: Mgr**.** Michaela Čiefová, PhD.

Bratislava, 2023   **Bc. Diana Gajdosík**

Declaration

I hereby declare that I elaborated the submitted thesis independently. I declare that this work is my own and I listed all the sources I used at the end of the document. While writing this thesis I received guidance from my academic supervisor.

Bratislava, 2023   Bc. Diana Gajdosík

Acknowledgement

ABSTRAKT

GAJDOSÍK, Diana: *Riadenie migrácie v krajinách V4.* [Diplomová práca]. – Ekonomická Univerzita v Bratislave, Fakulta aplikovaných jazykov, Katedra interkultúrnej komunikácie. – Vedúca záverečnej práce: Mgr. Michaela Čiefová, PhD. – Bratislava: Ekonomická univerzita, 2023. 92 strán.

Predkladaná diplomová práca je vypracovaná na tému riadenia migrácie v krajinách V4, menovite Česko, Maďarsko, Poľsko a Slovensko. Práca overuje hypotézu, že tieto štyri štáty – vzhľadom na ich spoločné historické a kultúrne pozadie – prejavujú spoločný prístup k otázkam medzinárodnej migrácie. Práca sa sústreďuje na dve relatívne nedávne udalosti, ktoré výrazne ovplyvnili Európsku úniu: takzvanú migračnú krízu v rokoch 2015-16, keď Európu zasiahli masívne migračné vlny, a súčasnú situáciu, keď milióny Ukrajincov hľadajú medzinárodnú ochranu v Európskej únii kvôli vojne medzi Ruskom a Ukrajinou. Teoretická časť práce vychádza z historického a politického pozadia regiónu V4, detailne predstavuje dve vyššie uvedené udalosti, pričom relevantné kvantitatívne údaje sú spracované do tabuliek a grafov. V prvej podkapitole empirického výskumu analyzujeme migračné stratégie uplatňované štyrmi štátmi počas krízy jednotlivo, pričom kladieme veľký dôraz na prístupy vplyvných politikov tej doby. Druhá podkapitola skúma niektoré zmeny v migračnej politike po kríze a spoluprácu štátov V4. Tretia podkapitola predstavuje prípadové štúdie dvoch utečencov z Ukrajiny prichádzajúcich do Česka a Maďarska, zatiaľ čo štvrtá a piata podkapitola predstavujú terénne štúdie realizované na juhozápadnom Slovensku, pričom sa venujú téme legálnej aj nelegálnej migrácie – a zvažuje sa aj interkultúrny aspekt v rámci danej problematiky. Popisujeme a analyzujeme informácie získané prostredníctvom rozhovorov s kľúčovými respondentmi a kvantitatívne a kvalitatívne údaje získané pomocou dotazníkov zaslaných utečencom a miestnym obyvateľom. Výsledky nášho výskumu sú zhrnuté a ďalej diskutované v záverečnej kapitole.

Kľúčové slová: Vyšehradská štvorka, Európska únia, medzinárodná migrácia, nelegálna migrácia, kríza, migrant, utečenec, Ukrajina, interkultúrna interakcia

ABSTRACT

GAJDOSÍK, Diana: *Governance of Migration in V4 Countries*. [Master´s Thesis]. – University of Economics in Bratislava, Faculty of Applied Languages, Department of Intercultural Communication. – Supervisor: Mgr. Michaela Čiefová, PhD. – Bratislava, University of Economics, 2023. 92 pages.

The submitted Master´s thesis elaborates the topic of migration governance in the V4 countries, namely Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The work examines the hypothesis that these four states – on account of their shared historical and cultural background – demonstrate a common approach to issues related to international migration. The main focus is on two relatively recent events that greatly affect the European Union: the so-called migration crisis in 2015-16 when massive waves of migration hit Europe and the current situation when millions of Ukrainians are seeking international protection within the European Union because of the war between Russia and Ukraine. The theoretical part of the work is based on the historical and political background of the V4 region, presents the two afore-mentioned events in detail, while the relevant quantitative data is processed into tables and graphs. In the first subchapter of the empirical research, we analyse the migration management strategies applied by the four states during the crisis individually, while putting a great emphasis on approaches of influential politicians of that time. The second subchapter examines some changes in migration policies after the crisis and the cooperation of the V4 states. The third subchapter presents case studies of two refugees from Ukraine arriving to Czechia and Hungary, while the fourth and fifth subchapters showcase field studies conducted in southwestern Slovakia, by addressing the topic of both legal and illegal migration – moreover, the intercultural aspect within the given issue is also considered. We describe and analyse information obtained through interviews with key informants and quantitative and qualitative data received through questionnaires submitted to refugees and locals. Our research results are summarized and further discussed in the final chapter.

Keywords: Visegrad Four, European Union, international migration, illegal migration, crisis, migrant, refugee, Ukraine, intercultural interaction

Contents

List of Tables and Graphs

List of Abbreviations

AMIF – Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CZ/CZR – Czechia / Czech Republic

ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists

EPP – European People´s Party

EU – European Union

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HC – Humanitarian Centre

HU – Hungary

IOM – International Organization for Migration

KII – key informant interview

MAGYC – Migration Governance and asYlum Crises

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

MÚ – Migration Office of the SR

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PL – Poland

PM – Prime Minister

PPP – Purchasing Power Parity

SD – Social Democracy

SHR – Slovak Humanitarian Council

SK/SR – Slovakia / Slovak Republic

STU – Slovak Technical University

SU – Soviet Union

UN – United Nations

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (The UN Refugee Agency)

UNICEF – United Nations Children´s Fund

ÚPZC – Police Detention Centre for Foreigners

V4 – Visegrad Group, Visegrad 4 countries

Dictionary

Humanitarian Centre Gabčíkovo – Humanitné centrum Gabčíkovo

Migration Office – Migračný úrad

Police Detention Centre for Foreigners – Útvar policajného zaistenia pre cudzincov

Slovak Humanitarian Council – Slovenská humanitná rada

Introduction

Regulation of international migration is an often discussed socio-political and geopolitical issue. The complexity and controversial nature of the topic stems from the fact that it can be approached from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, international migration not only has a significant impact on the social, cultural, and economic structure of both origin and destination countries, but also influences international relations worldwide. Therefore, our globalized, rapidly developing world expects comprehensive, up-to-date migration management strategies that are in accordance with human rights and are flexible and adaptable at the same time. However, in reality, only some of these strategies can be applied successfully, while others are more likely to become a subject of criticism.

In 2015, Europe was hit by mass migration flows that pointed to the unpreparedness of the European Union to manage the situation, which has often been referred to as a *crisis* ever since. Subsequently, the subject has been approached by researchers and political scientists with greater frequency than ever before. Governments and authorities now also appear to demonstrate more attention in addressing issues related to migration. Moreover, the interdisciplinary character of the topic is confirmed by its regular presence in other fields of studies such as sociology, economics, law, environmental sciences, and intercultural communication.

The present thesis principally focuses on migration governance of the V4 region – including Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – and, at the same time, places great emphasis on the position of the afore-mentioned countries within the European Union in relation to migration-related issues. The aim of the work is to provide a comparative analysis of migration management strategies of the V4, to examine the cooperation between the four states and to demonstrate how and to what extent is the region affected by mass migration waves. Furthermore, we not only address the migration crisis of 2015, but also the recent influx of refugees caused by the outbreak of the still ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. In addition, the present situation is displayed from the perspective of refugees and other relevant stakeholders.

In order to understand the social, cultural and political background of the V4 region, the first subchapter of the theoretical overview presents the establishment of the Visegrad Four alliance and its past and present character. The second subchapter introduces the term

of international migration and names some common causes in the form of push and pull factors. In the third subchapter, the migration crisis of 2015 is gradually investigated, with particular focus on the EU quotas, the V4 cooperation and the aftermath of the crisis. This section also presents – in form of tables and graphs – the different extent to which the four countries were affected by mass migration flows during the crisis. The fourth subchapter of the theoretical overview provides a comprehensive picture of Russia´s attack on Ukraine, which has caused millions of refugees to flee the country. It is inevitable to mention some aspects that greatly affect how the V4 countries are approaching the situation, including the geographical and cultural proximity of Ukraine to the V4 region. Therefore, the fifth subchapter addresses the importance of cultural identity of both locals and immigrants.

After understanding the theoretical background, the main and secondary objectives of the work are defined, the hypothesis is formulated and the methodological approaches for the empirical research are introduced. Our main research techniques include descriptive analysis and subsequent induction of the information obtained through qualitative desk research, questionnaires, and key informant interviews. While the first subchapter of the empirical part examines the migration governance in the four Visegrad countries individually – with a great importance placed on influential politicians and their migration management strategies –, the second subchapter analyses some changes in migration policies since the 2015 crisis. The third subchapter presents the cases of two refugees with Ukrainian country of origin, who were provided temporary shelter in the Czech Republic and Hungary.

However, given the broad nature of the work, the main empirical focus lies on Slovakia. We decided to make a field study of the Humanitarian Centre in Gabčíkovo – in Southwestern Slovakia – that currently accommodates Ukrainian refugees. The MAGYC Project research team contributed to the preparation of the case study with template questions and materials that were reshaped based on the objectives and limitations of the thesis. Secondly, we present how Slovakia addresses illegal migration by studying the operation of ÚPZC Medveďov – a Police Detention Centre for Foreigners – that is located on the Slovak side of the Slovak-Hungarian border. The final chapter presents our conclusions, provides a summary of the key findings, and engages in further discussion.

1 Theoretical Background

The theoretical part of the work is based on the historical and political background of the V4 region while examining in detail those relatively recent events that are strongly related to migration governance. In order to present the topic as comprehensively as possible, we display the V4 cooperation, study the concept of international migration and introduce the two defining mass migration flows that hit Europe in 2015/16 and 2022/23 – however, the main focus of the theoretical overview lies on the former. In addition, we incorporate the intercultural aspect into the context of migration, as the importance of cultural similarities and differences will be further researched in the empirical part.

1.1 A Brief Introduction of the V4 Member States

In order to examine migration governance in the Visegrad Four, it is crucial to first understand some basic facts about the member states and their cooperation. All the four states are located in the heart of Central Europe, covering a total area of more than 533.500km^2. They are relatively small but politically and economically important countries, as they connect Eastern and Western Europe with significant transport routes. Furthermore, the region might be a popular transit for those fleeing from the East and heading to a Western country. With the exception of Poland – bordered by the Baltic Sea to the North – they are landlocked. They have a varied surface and a temperate climate. As for religion, the most widespread one is Christianity – Poland and Slovakia are the most religious, followed by Hungary and Czechia. From a political point of view they are parliamentary republics with a prime minister as a head of government and a president as head of state.

1.1.1 Common Chapters from the History of the V4 Countries

The agreement between the V4 countries was established mainly because the region shares some mutual values and common chapters from their recent history. Before formulating our hypothesis, we would like to examine some ideas that support an active political cooperation within the V4 and also those that would suggest the opposite.

First of all, the region´s shared history with communism largely determined and shaped its current position within the EU. After the Second World War, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland – along with other Central- and East-European (CEE) countries –

became part of the Eastern bloc, which means that the region was heavily influenced militarily, politically, economically, and culturally by the Soviet Union (SU) that had both direct and indirect control over the so-called satellite states. The political leaders of these countries were communists, appointed by the SU. During this era, conquering Soviet forces supported local communist parties in CEE countries and assisted in the reorganization of their governments and economies according to the Soviet model. The Soviet Union and its satellite states founded the Warsaw Pact in 1955 which embodied the Eastern bloc, while NATO represented the Western bloc. These two were ideologically opposed and both built up an own defence that lasted throughout the whole Cold War.[1] [NATO] The Soviet bloc started to fall apart at the end of the 1980´s due to revolutionary waves throughout the occupied states. The Warsaw Pact collapsed, which was followed by the final dissolution of the SU in December 1991. We refer to this as the *Fall of Communism* or the *Fall of Nations* – an event that resulted in significant political changes throughout Europe.

Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia became politically independent countries, but are currently part of major alliances that have a significant impact on their political, economic, and cultural position. The establishment of today´s Visegrad Group was inspired by an important royal meeting back in 1335, called the First Congress of Visegrad. The Kings of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland met to settle any disputes between the kingdoms and to strengthen their powers within Europe (mainly against the Habsburgs at that time). This cooperation was renewed on the 15th of February in 1991, when the Visegrad Declaration was signed by Václav Havel (President of the Czechoslovak Republic), Lech Wałęsa (President of the Republic of Poland) and József Antall (Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary). Since the split of Czechoslovakia on the 1st of January in 1993 the cooperation has expanded to four members.

The V4 was aimed to be the key to the modernization of Central Europe as it could help the ex-Communist states to resemble Western Europe and to enforce their interests more effectively in the European Union. The success of the V4 cooperation was important not only for the four member states, but also for Central Europe as a whole: if these four dominant states are able to succeed, it could mean greater political and economic security for the entire region. [KISS, É.; 2020]

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[1] The Cold War was between 1947-1991.

The specific subregion of the V4 was formed not only because of the countries´ geographical location, but also because of their similar international aspirations: the ex-Communist countries intended to integrate towards Western Europe. After the Fall of Nations, their first notable goal was to join NATO[2], which Czechia, Hungary and Poland managed to achieve in 1999, Slovakia in 2004. At the time when the V4 states joined, NATO already had 16 members, including some politically influential Western European countries such as France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, or Spain – therefore, we can consider a NATO membership as a lucrative step towards the West. Moreover, the V4 countries successfully realized defense and security projects within NATO, such as establishing a common Polish-Czech-Slovak brigade with a command in Slovakia, Topoľčany. Projects like this made the Visegrad Countries to appear as reliable partners. [MYKULANYNETS, L.; 2007]

1.1.2 The Informal Character of the V4 Cooperation

However, Bauerová points out that the V4 cooperation has a rather informal character which has been a subject of criticism ever since the group was founded. [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018] When the countries´ next main aspiration became an accession to the European Union, they encountered some difficulties because of the region´s Soviet history, which made the countries ideologically opposed to the West for so many years. The in/ability and un/willingness of the group to cooperate in overcoming this obstacle (affecting all four countries) may support Bauerová´s statement.

Accession to the EU was subject to various conditions, which aspirant members had to fulfill. To sum up these prerequisites: an applicant state has to develop a stable democracy that guarantees human rights and protects minorities; has to develop a competitive market economy; and has to be willing and capable to take on all EU policies and regulations – both present and future. [The European Council; 1993] These and other conditions – some of which were formulated mainly for the Central and East European countries – were very strictly enforced as the EU wanted to minimize the risk of new countries making the Union politically or economically unstable. Some Commission Officials even claimed that a part

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[2] NATO currently consists of 30 independent member countries. It is a political and military alliance which enables members to consult and cooperate on defense and security-related issues. Their aim is to solve political problems and prevent conflict. But if the members´ diplomatic efforts fail, they have military power to carry out operations. [NATO]

of the Member States of the time – if they were applicants, could not have met all the conditions either. [GRABBE, H.; 2002] The Communist history of Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia made it even more challenging to meet all criteria. The countries´ common past and similar future ambitions would logically suggest an aspiration for cooperation in the implementation of the criteria, however, in reality, each of the four countries engaged in individual negotiations with EU representatives which rather weakened the relationship of the V4. Although the government representatives of the four countries met several times during the accession period and successfully discussed key issues, they still considered their individual interests to be the most important. [GRÚBER, K. and TÖRŐ, Cs.; 2010]

After introducing significant political changes, Czechia, Hungary, and Poland could begin the official accession negotiations with the EU in 1998, while Slovakia only in 2000. [European Parliament] All these four countries have come a long way until they – along with six others – finally joined the EU by signing the accession treaties on the 1st of May in 2004.

1.1.3 Visegrad Cooperation after 2004

Becoming an EU member has brought some major changes to the region. To name a significant example, the four countries became part of the Schengen zone[3], which enables its inhabitants to travel within the area without border checks. Moreover, the EU aims to promote peace and well-being of its citizens, offers freedom and security, while taking appropriate measures at its external borders to regulate asylum and immigration. [EU] Other core values of the EU, like respecting human dignity, freedom, democracy, and equality, are also crucial for our topic.

Becoming part of the West encouraged the Visegrad Group to take advantage of the possibility that they can now actively influence the policy of Europe as a whole. Their Prime Ministers adopted a new Visegrad Declaration on 12th of May in 2004, which stressed the importance of their collaboration during the integration process. On the contrary, the Visegrad Group also emphasises that the cooperation will continue to ´maintain its flexible and open character´. [Visegrad Group; 2004] To name some examples, this open nature of the cooperation can be observed in not adopting a common currency. While Slovakia has already been a member of the so-called Eurozone since 2009, the other three countries have

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[3] All the four countries have been part of the Schengen area since 21st of December 2007.

not entered the Euro area yet. From an economic point of view, this could open potential doors for Slovakia towards the West, for instance strengthening its relations with Brussels or with Western countries neighbouring the V4, such as Germany and Austria. Another difference lies in the fact that the region does not aim for a common priority sector, as the car industry is a key domain in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, while agriculture plays a core role in Poland. [MACEK, L.; 2021]

"There is an increasing political and cultural divergence among these countries," says Eugeniusz Smolar, a board member at Warsaw's Centre for International Relations. Some other political scientists also believe that the V4 cooperation is weak and limited, especially since the 2021 Czech legislative elections – as Czechia now has a liberal conservative Prime Minister and along with Slovakia both of the countries are heading towards liberal democracies, while Hungary and Poland intend to do the opposite with right-wing domination. [BAYER, L. and CIENSKI, J.; 2022]

1.2 International Migration

International migration is a situation, in which people move from one country to another in order to settle for a longer period of time. The process itself, the so-called migration trajectory– according to F. Düvell – can be divided into 8 phases: in the first phase, a potential migrant is only thinking about moving into another country, then they go through a decision phase, after which the preparation (3.) and organization of the stay (4.) begin. They become actual migrants in the 5th phase – the transfer –, which is followed by the arrival (6.), the stay (7.) and the settlement (8.). [ANTALOVÁ, M.; 2016] In this instance, people are free to decide to migrate to another country.

However, there is a significant difference between migrants and refugees. Refugees – according to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees – are those people, who are *´unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. ´* [UNHCR; 1951] Furthermore, the Geneva Convention states the rights of refugees and what protection and assistance they should receive. To name some examples, *´a refugee should not be penalized for their illegal entry or stay in a country´* and *´should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.´* [UNHCR; 1951] The agreement entered into force in 1954, formerly focusing on the consequences of the Second World War. Since then, the number of refugees

and displaced people has been continually growing, their amount even doubled in the last decade. [Federal Foreign Office]

There is also a legal difference between refugees and asylum seekers: a refugee is a person who has left their country to seek safety and has already gained a right to international protection. While an asylum seeker has not yet been legally recognized as a refugee, still waiting for their asylum claim. It is essential to add that seeking asylum from persecution in other countries is a human right. [UNHCR; 1948]

1.2.1 Push and Pull Factors

There are several reasons for international migration, which can be divided into two broad categories: push factors and pull factors. Push factors are poor or dangerous conditions that force people to migrate, including severe environmental, geopolitical, or social risks in migrants´ country of origin.

Firstly, geographical conditions and climatic factors have always played an important role in deciding where people would like to live. Climate change has resulted in an increase in the Earth´s temperature and the frequency of natural disasters in some areas, which gradually make these zones uninhabitable. Especially the so-called MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) is affected: according to scientific predictions the region will experience droughts, more frequent heat waves and faster temperature increase than the global land average. Moreover, this may cause water shortage, sea level rise and storm surges. Also, it will badly affect the agricultural sector - which is crucial for food security and social stability – resulting in lower crop yields and worse working conditions for people.

Therefore, migration has always been one of the oldest defensive actions against extreme weather conditions and reduced agricultural productivity. [BORGHESI, S. and TICCI, E.; 2019] According to the estimates of the World Bank, climate change might displace around 216 million people by 2050. [CLEMENT, V. et al; 2021] Despite the fact that this type of migration has existed for a long time, *environmental refugee* is a relatively new term, which points to one of the most important categories of human rights: the right to a healthy living environment. An environmental refugee is therefore a person who has been temporarily or permanently forced to leave their original residence as a result of a significant environmental disturbance that threatened their existence or seriously affected their quality of life. [ŠTEFANČÍK R. and LENČ J.; 2012]

Secondly, social risks as push factors for migrants include infectious diseases and poor medical care, insufficient social welfare, inadequate public services, large proportion of poverty and lack of job opportunities. The 2022 Global Risk Report published by the World Economic Forum acknowledges that cross-border migration might be an effective way to reduce global poverty and share prosperity, however, millions of refugees are stuck in refugee camps of countries that do not have the capacity to take them in. Moreover, COVID-19 pandemic led to movement restrictions in developed countries, which disturbed some already existing migration flows. As the spread of the virus subsides and restrictions are gradually lifted, the recovery will likely provoke migration flows that have been recently restrained. [World Economic Forum; 2022] Various studies and statistics confirm that migration is increasing as globalization progresses. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of migrants increased from 173 million to 244 million. During this period, the most common push-factors of migration did not change fundamentally, but both the push and pull factors became more visible for people, making them willing to relocate. [TÁLAS, P. et al.; 2017]

Thirdly, geopolitical risks often act as compelling push factors for international migration. Geopolitics is the study of international relations between countries or regions, it focuses on distribution of political power according to geographic space. Geopolitical risks include all those issues between two or more countries that may cause tension or unrest arising from subjects like political power or military activity. One of the most recent examples is Russia´s war on Ukraine, which started on 24th February 2022 after months of unsuccessful negotiations. (See Subchapter 1.4) Another determining geopolitical issue triggering mass migration flows to Europe is the Civil War taking place in Syria since the 15th of March 2011. According to the Syrian Observatory of Human Rights, by the end of 2015 at least 260 000 Syrian people died in the war. What is more, other human rights organizations measure the death toll being even higher, estimating around 400 000 – 470 000 victims. [TÁLAS, P. et al.;2017]

In contrast to push factors, pull factors are determinants that attract people to a certain area, usually to more developed countries with better living conditions. In any case, these are benefits that may empower or enable migrants to succeed in their country of destination, for example, a growing economy, a more liberal government, political stability, low level of corruption, supportive social welfare programmes, better job, or educational opportunities, suitable environmental and living conditions. According to the MAGYC Project´s findings, some demographic factors of destination countries may be important pull factors, however,

in origin countries there is often inequality regarding material capabilities, therefore these people lack necessary resources to migrate. [YAVCAN, B; 2021]

The Visegrad Four region might be an attractive temporary or permanent haven for some of the migrants and asylum seekers, as all the four countries are urbanized and highly industrialized, with well-developed high-income economies. This claim is supported by the Global Economy´s statistics, which published a list ranking 173 countries according to their GDP per capita, PPP (Purchasing Power Parity), based on available data between 1990-2021. Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are all above the world average[4], placing them in the top 43. [The Global Economy] From the global perspective, the population is also well educated, the literacy rate of the region is above 99% and the countries have a long history of developing the infrastructure necessary to provide accessible education to citizens. [Worldatlas]

Moreover, as Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are EU members, these states have to obey the policy of the EU, which has dealt with migration regulation since its foundation[5]. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum, signed in 2020, focuses on fair management of external borders in accordance with European values[6] and supports more effective integration policies.[7] [European Commission; 2020]

1.3 Migration Crisis of 2015/16

There has been a mass-migration of non-EU citizens to Europe, which is being perceived as a *crisis* or something *critical*. This particularly Eurocentric perception refers to events that may lead to instability, danger, or change in what was previously considered normal. [FRÖHLICH, CH. and MÜLLER-FUNK, L.; 2020] However, it is still a matter of debate whether there was a migration crisis, or rather a crisis of migration governance. Moreover, governance may also produce crises. [FINE, S. and THIOLLET, H.; 2020] In The Oxford Handbook of Migration Crisis published in 2019, Dirk Hoerder in his article argues that any type of displacement could be, from the migrant´s point of view, recognized as a crisis, because they have to leave their place of origin. But we pay special attention to mass

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[4] The world average GDP per capita, PPP is 21226.17 U.S. dollars.
[5] The European Union was founded on the 1st of November in 1993, when the first 12 Member States signed the Maastricht Treaty in the Netherlands.
[6] For values of the EU refer to Subchapter 1.1.3.
[7] See subchapter 3.2. for more information on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

migration as in that case a lot of people are affected by this experience of individual crisis. [YAVCAN, B.; 2020]

We also emphasize the importance of rhetoric: it is not negligible how we talk about the crisis, as it can largely determine the direction of the discourse. [METZ, R.; 2017] *´Europeans do not even agree with each other on how to deal with the migration problem. (...) It already starts with what name we give to the phenomenon. The Germans call it a refugee crisis, we call it a migration crisis´* - stated Hungarian PM Orbán during an interview to a Swiss weekly. [kormany.hu; 2015a] According to a content analysis focusing on press, the expressions of *refugee*s and *asylum seekers* were used in majority in Germany and in Sweden instead of the expressions of *migrants* and *immigrants*. [METZ, R.; 2017][8]

The appellation of *crisis* spread in 2015, when the European Union registered more than double the number of asylum claims than in the previous year – over 1.2 million. Furthermore, more migrants died in 2014 and 2015 than ever before. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 3200 refugees in 2014 and 3770 in 2017 lost their lives in the Mediterranean region on their way to Europe – which has always been one of the most common destinations of migrants. [TÁLAS, P. et al.; 2017] These figures indicate the number of people who have been officially recorded as dead or missing, the actual count might be even higher.

As published by IOM, in 2015 most refugees came to Europe from Syria (50,2%), followed by Afghanistan (20,2%), then by Iraq (7,1%), Eritrea (4,2%), Pakistan (2,7%), Nigeria (2,2%), Iran (2,1%) and Somalia (1,6%). Their most common countries of first arrival to Europe were as follows: Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, Cyprus, and Malta. It is also critical to emphasize that these are all coastal countries and based on the report more than 96% of the migrants arriving to these territories reached Europe by sea. [IOM; 2016]

The greatly increased number of refugees from Syria can be explained by the Civil War taking place there (See Subchapter 1.2.1), which started back in 2011 but the situation worsened gradually. In Addition, there have been other changes in the power relations of the world: after the end of the Cold War and the bipolar power related to it, a new world order began to emerge, where solving regional conflicts became more difficult and armed

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[8] Within this thesis we equally refer to the situation as *migration crisis* and *refugee crisis*.

interventions were not only more frequent but also prolonged, forcing the inhabitants to flee these areas. [TÁLAS, P. et al.; 2017]

1.3.1 The EU Quota System

The large-scale migration flow in 2015 hit the EU relatively unprepared, but the Union recognized the need for actions. On the 13th of May in 2015, the European Commission published A European Agenda on Migration, summarizing various steps the EU should take in order to address the challenges of migration, justifying that ´Europe cannot stand by whilst lives are being lost, therefore, the EU needs a clear system for reception of asylum-seekers. ´ [European Commission; 2015; p.3] Secondly, the dispersion of the continuously arriving migrants was uneven: Greece and Italy were most exposed to the pressure by migration. [IOM; 2016] Consequently, the EU introduced the measure of the so-called quota system – the resettlement and the relocation quotas– the main purpose of which was to distribute asylum seekers among all the Member States. On the one hand, the resettlement quota refers to the transfer of people seeking international protection from a third country to a Member State, mainly to alleviate the pressure in the countries neighbouring Syria and to fulfil EU´s previous commitments to protect the rights of the refugees. [BARBULESCU, R.; 2017]

On the other hand, the aim of the relocation quota was to reduce pressure within the EU by relocating migrants from Member States with the largest numbers of migrants to other Member States. According to the EU Council Decision published on the 22nd of September in 2015, 66.000 people had to be relocated from Greece and Italy. Therefrom, a total of 8769 people were to be allocated to V4 countries. *Table 1* presents the distribution defined by the EU Council Decision.

Country	Allocations from Greece	Allocations from Italy	Total
Total EU	**50 400**	**15 600**	**66 000**
Total V4	**6 696**	**2 073**	**8 769**
Czech Republic	1 215	376	1 591
Hungary	988	306	1 294
Poland	3 881	1 201	5 082
Slovakia	612	190	802

Table 1: Number of Allocations from Greece and Italy Defined by EU Council Decision 2015/1601

Source: The European Council (22 September 2015)

The above-mentioned measures provoked differences throughout the EU, which became ideologically divided: the Western European countries approved the quota system, while it raised resistance among the Central and East European Member States – including the V4. In October 2016 the then President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska said that *´the Visegrad Four has probably never had such a bad image in Europe as these days´.* [demagog.sk; 2016] This controversial scene slowed down the EU cooperation, as Member States often prioritized their own interests over those of the EU as a whole. [BAUEROVÁ, H; 2018] Heaven Crawley, scientific researcher of the Coventry University in England refers to the European migration policies of 2015 as *out-of-sync* and were *unable to respond appropriately* to the complex dynamics of migration. In addition, the author blames the unwillingness or incompetence of Europe´s political leaders of the time, who could not fill (all the) gaps in migration policy. [CRAWLEY, H.; 2016]

1.3.2 The EU Quota System and the V4

Bauerová points out that the events of 2015/16 had a two-sided impact on the V4 cooperation. On the one hand, the representatives of the four states were constantly consulting about their shared needs and interests and stood up for their views against the EU. On the other hand, the situation revealed the informal character of the group as the political elites still preferred to implement their own policies independent of the V4. [BAUEROVÁ; H; 2018] Already back in September 2015, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, (and Romania) voted against the EU quotas in the Council. At the beginning of December the same year, Slovakia and Hungary demanded the annulment of the Council Decision at the Court of Justice, stating:

- *(i) that the adoption of the decision was vitiated by errors of a procedural nature or arising from the choice of an inappropriate legal basis and*
- *(ii) that the decision was neither a suitable response to the migrant crisis nor necessary for that purpose.* [Court of Justice of the European Union; 2017]

The government of the Slovak Republic was the first to file the lawsuit on the 2nd of December 2015, followed by the lawsuit of the Hungarian government a day later. Despite the fact that Poland voted for the quotas back in September, the country later joined the side of Slovakia and Hungary in this dispute. [aktuality.sk; 2019] On the 6th of September 2017, the Court of Justice rejected the lawsuit filed by Slovakia and Hungary in their entirety. [Court of Justice of the European Union; 2017] Moreover, Czechia, Hungary and Poland

were sued by the European Commission because of the violation of the EU law, as they did not respect the mechanism of redistribution of refugees. [BEŇOVÁ, Z.; 2019]

According to the Fifteenth report on relocation and resettlement, issued by the European Commission at the beginning of September 2017, the pace of relocations showed a gradually growing trend throughout Europe, however, the EU average was still relatively low. By the 4th of September 2017, a total of 19.244 people have been effectively relocated from Greece and 8,451 from Italy.

Country	Effectively relocated from Greece	Effectively relocated from Italy	Total
Total EU	19 244	8 451	27 695
Total V4	28	0	28
Czech Republic	12	0	12
Hungary	-	-	0
Poland	-	-	0
Slovakia	16	0	16

Table 2: Relocations from Greece and Italy by 4th of September 2017

Source: European Commission 2017

Table 2 clearly illustrates that the number of effective relocations to the V4 region is negligible. However, the political representatives of the countries continuously communicated the reasons for this towards each other and the Union. From January 2015 to October 2016, the topic of migration regulation was touched 14 times at the V4 meetings, during which they repeatedly confirmed that the four states reject the mandatory quotas. [METZ; R., 2017] Following this in November 2016, when the Ministers of the Interior of the Visegrad Group met to discuss the migration crisis, they issued a joint statement in order to respond to the situation. Despite acknowledging the importance of cooperation in hosting large numbers of migrants, effective administration of asylum claims and improving the readmission of people not eligible for protection in the EU, the statement articulates that the V4 countries still oppose the compulsory quotas. According to their announcement, the four states continue to agree that a mandatory relocation of migrants is not an effective way to address the influx of illegal migrants. Moreover, they criticize the EU for creating unnecessary divisions among the Member States by introducing these measures. At the same time, the Visegrad Group supports a common European response to the migration crisis, however, it would promote a scheme based on respect for the competencies of the particular Member States. [Visegrad Group; 2016] Despite the fact that the V4 representatives often

reached a common standpoint during the negotiations, how the four states handled the issues related to migration in practice is more complicated. [BAUEROVÁ, H; 2018] However, it is inevitable to emphasize that the states of the V4 region were affected by the crisis with very different intensities – which is presented in more detail in the following subchapters.

1.3.3 The Migration Crisis in Hungary

Hungary is located on the EU´s southern external border, which already indicates that the country was affected by the migration flows of 2015 in a different, more intense way than the other three Visegrad countries. Tálas et al. divide the routes of migrants and refugees to Europe in 2015 into three main categories:

- the Central-Mediterranean route (mainly through Italy and Malta)
- the Eastern-Mediterranean route (mainly through Greece)
- the Western-Balkan route (mainly through Hungary) [TÁLAS, P. et al.; 2017]

By considering the fact that one of the main routes of the arriving migrants led through Hungary, it is no surprise that migration became a key issue in Hungarian politics. The pressure already began to develop from 2013, when the number of foreigners seeking asylum started to increase significantly. However, the highest numbers were reached in 2015[9], which can be considered as the peak of the crisis – illustrated in *Graph 1*.
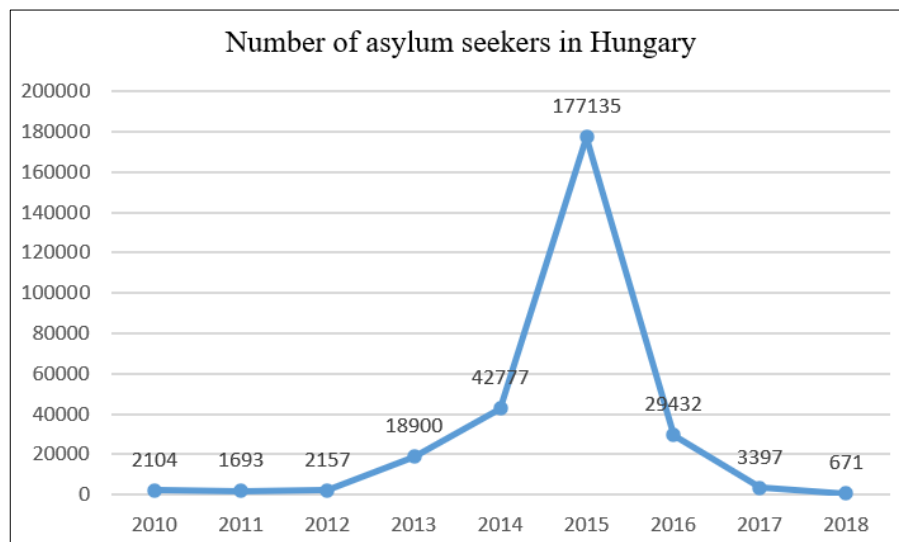
Graph 1: Number of Asylum Seekers in Hungary between 2010-2018

Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality Hungary, own elaboration of data

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[9] In 2015, 37% of the asylum applicants were from Syria, 26% from Afghanistan, 9% from Pakistan.

As demonstrated, there was an enormous increase of asylum applications between the years of 2014 and 2015. Therefore, *Table 3* shows the change between the two years in more detail.

	2014	2015	Change	Change in %
Total Number of Registered Asylum Seekers in Hungary	42 777	177 135	134 358	314,09%
European	21 865	25 170	3 305	15,12%
Non-European	20 912	151 965	131 053	626,69%
Share of Europeans in Total Number of Registered Asylum Seekers	51,11%	14,21%		16,89%
Share of non-Europeans in Total Number of Registered Asylum Seekers	48,89%	85,79%		-16,89%

Table 3: Changes in Number of Asylum Seekers in Hungary between 2014-2014

Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality Hungary

If we compare the number of asylum seekers in Hungary with those who actually received protection, we can already see that Hungary was not very hospitable towards refugees. *Table 4* shows the number of asylum seekers who were granted any form of protection.

Year	Number of Asylum Seekers	Refugee Status Granted	Protected Status Granted	Accepted Status Granted
2014	42 777	240	236	7
2015	177 135	146	356	6
2016	29 432	154	271	7

Table 4: The Number of Asylum Seekers in Hungary vs. Those Receiving International Protection

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office

1.3.4 The Migration Crisis in Slovakia

The refugee flows in 2015/16 affected the Slovak Republic, but to a far lesser extent than its neighbouring Hungary. What is more, the number of asylum applications did not increase compared to previous years but rather decreased. [Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic] *Graph 2* illustrates the number of applications for asylum over 8 years.
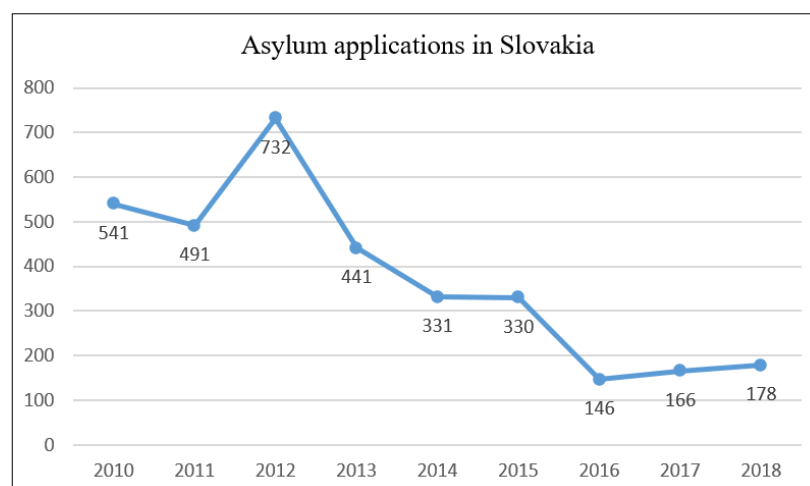
Graph 2: Number of Asylum Applications in Slovakia Between 2010-2018

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic; own elaboration of data

Secondly, the real number of refugees who ended up in Slovakia is even lower, since only a small proportion of the asylum applicants was granted asylum: 4,2% in 2014 and 2,4% in 2015.[10] *Table 5* demonstrates the distribution of positive and negative judgements.

Year	Number of Asylum Applications	Asylum Granted	Additional protection provided	Negative judgement	Stopped Proceedings
2014	331	14	99	99	137
2015	330	8	41	72	128
2016	146	167	12	56	35

Table 5: The Number of Asylum Applications in Slovakia vs. Outcome

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic

Thirdly, Slovakia was not a popular target country but rather a transit country for the migrants arriving in Europe. A specific phenomenon could be observed: some of the illegal migrants either wanted to pass through the territory of Slovakia only or wanted to enter the asylum procedure in order to legalize their stay in Slovakia and subsequently prepare for illegal crossing to another state. This is confirmed by repeated cases when asylum seekers tried to illegally cross Slovak state borders with Austria or Czechia to continue on to one of the western countries of the European Union. [ČERI, L.; 2016]

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[10] In 2016, more people received asylum than actually applied for it because some applications from the previous year were also processed.

Lastly, when examining the extent to which the country was affected by the crisis, it is important to note that among the V4 countries Slovakia had the lowest number of mandatory allocations based on the EU Council decision. (See Subchapter 1.3.1)

1.3.5 The Migration Crisis in Czechia

The Czech Republic was not strongly affected by mass migration flows as it was neither a popular destination country nor a significant transit country for migrants arriving to the EU. [BAUEROVÁ, H; 2018] According to the 2015 Migration and Integration Report issued by the Czech Ministry of the Interior, the country was affected by the migration crisis only marginally. The number of applicants for international protection in the Czech Republic was below the EU average and the country registers significantly fewer illegal border crossings than its neighbours like Germany, Austria, or Poland. [Ministry of the Interior CZ; 2015] *Table 6* shows the number of applicants for international protection and the number of those who were granted asylum.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of Applications	833	756	753	707	1 156	1 525	1 478	1 450	1 701
Asylum Granted	75	125	113	49	95	82	148	29	47
Additional Protection Granted	28	104	270	149	256	194	302	118	118

Table 6: Number of Applications for International Protection in Czechia between 2010-2018

Source: Ministry of the Interior CZ, 2018

On the other hand, if we compare the numbers to 2014, Czechia recorded a significant increase of illegal migrants. The report from 2015 further highlights that a total of 8563 persons were detected during illegal migration on the territory of the Czech Republic (97,2% caught for illegitimate stay in the country while only 2,8% for illegal crossing through the external Schengen border), which is an increase by 77.6% in total compared to the previous year. *Graph 3* shows the number of illegal migrants detected in Czechia before, during and after the years of the migration crisis.
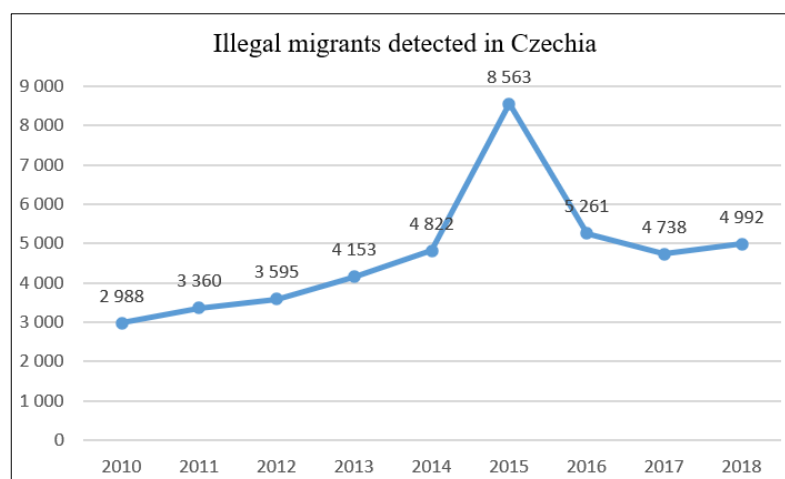
Graph 3: Number of Illegal Migrants Detected in Czechia between 2010-2018

Source: Ministry of the Interior CZ; 2018, own elaboration of data

Back in 2014, most illegal migrants arriving to the territory of the Czech Republic originally came from Europe (2048 people) and Asia (1981 people). In 2015, Asia replaced Europe by becoming the most frequented place of origin of the illegal migrants, 5426 people came outlawed from Asia, while 2311 from Europe. These data indicate that the number of people illegally coming to Czechia from Europe didn't grow significantly, while the number of illegal immigrants from Asia more than doubled. [Ministry of the Interior CZ; 2015]

1.3.6 The Migration Crisis in Poland

Poland is located on the Eastern border of the Union and is the only V4 country with a coastal border. It is the largest country of the region both by area and number of inhabitants. The vast majority of Poland´s strongly religious population professes to be Catholic, which makes the country remarkably homogenous in terms of religion. In addition, when it comes to the share of country-nationals, Poland – along with Hungary – belongs to one of the most homogenous societies of Europe. [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018] Therefore it comes as no surprise that Poland has always been a country of emigration rather than immigration. The country started to attract more immigrants at the beginning of the last century when the government proposed strategic changes in migration policy with the focus on integration of foreigners. [European Commission] However, as well as in the other V4 countries, the outbreak of the war in Syria and the Europe-wide spreading migration crisis were the most important influencing factors for the increasing number of immigrants and refugees seeking international protection. *Graph 4* shows the number of first-time asylum applicants in Poland.
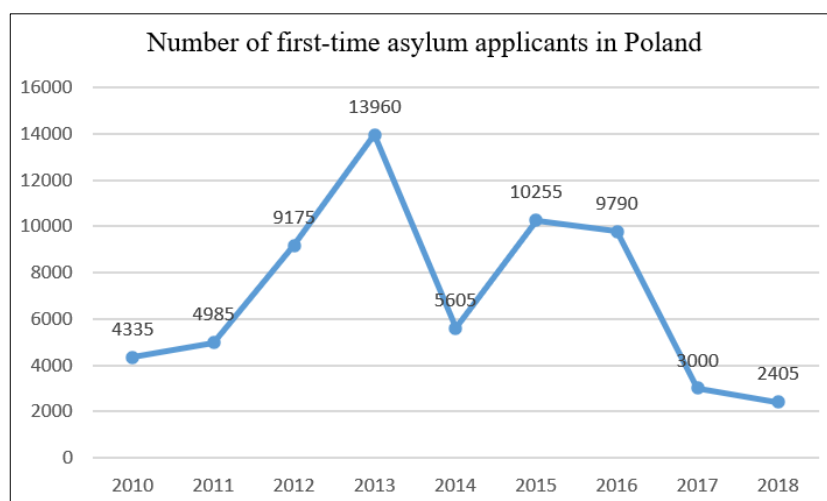
Graph 4: Number of First-time Asylum Applicants in Poland between 2010-2018

Source: Eurostat, own elaboration of data

Graph 4 demonstrates that Poland was affected by the migration crisis, however, to a far lower extent than Hungary. In addition to the asylum applications that the country received, Poland alone had to accept more refugees according to the EU quotas than the other three V4 countries altogether. Influential Polish politicians had controversial perspectives on the quotas, which resulted in Poland not accepting any refugees, while the target set by the EU Commission was more than 5000.

1.3.7 Political Overview of the V4 during the Peak of the Crisis

Political representatives and governing political parties both play a crucial role in managing migration governance as they are responsible for forming the social, political and economic fabric and international relations of the country they represent. Therefore, this subsection serves as a brief overview of those politicians whose migration governance strategies will be analyzed in more detail during the empirical research focusing on the events of 2015/16. Beňová highlights that migration was one of the central topics in the EU countries especially in the pre-election period in certain countries and also emphasizes the paradoxical situation of Hungary where migration to the EU became a fundamental topic especially for those who oppose it. [BEŇOVÁ, Z.; 2019]

Viktor Orbán, Hungary´s longest-serving Prime Minister and leading politician, placed a great emphasis on migration regulation.[11] Since the outbreak of the 2015 migration crisis he has been one of the harshest critics of the EU´s migration policy, but also vice versa: his legislative actions within the field of migration became the target of criticism by many international organizations, including the EU. [BEŇOVÁ, Z.; 2019] Orbán has set the goal of changing the liberal European politics, which based on multiculturalism and political correctness does not want to and even cannot handle the crisis – in his interpretation – and thus endangers the Christian European civilization and the achievements of the EU so far. According to Orbán, he is the one who embodies and protects ´real Europe´. [METZ, R.; 2017]

Similarly negative attitude can be observed in Slovakia from Robert Fico PM[12] and Robert Kaliňák Deputy PM and simultaneously Minister of Interior[13], both members of the SMER-SD left-wing populist party. The aim of the Slovak integration policy was to shape a homogenous society with one shared Slovak culture, therefore Fico´s government refused migrants from the Islamic countries. [BAUEROVÁ, H; 2018] Fico was strongly against the implementation of the mandatory quotas set by the EU and emphasized many times that the representatives of the other V4 states also agreed on this view. At a press conference on the 23rd of September in 2015, Fico and Kaliňák announced that Slovakia is filing a complaint against the EU quotas. This move was explained by Fico as a concern for the further functioning of the EU: an issue whether the EU would operate in the future based on the principle of the will of the majority against the will of the minority instead of trying to find a consensus acceptable to all parties. Kaliňák added that the EU States, according to them, were not ready for the quotas. [Government Office of the Slovak Republic; 2015a]

In forming Czechia´s migration policies and conducting negotiations, both the then President Miloš Zeman[14], and the then PM Bohuslav Sobotka[15] played an important role. Zeman has repeatedly spoken out against the surge of immigrants coming to the Union. Anti-

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[11] Orbán is currently serving his fourth term as Prime Minister, his first term was between 1998-2002 and he was later consecutively re-elected in 2014, 2018 and 2022.
[12] Fico served two terms as a Prime Minister: between 2006-2010 for the first time and between 2012-2018 for the second time.
[13] Between 2012 and 2018.
[14] Zeman served two full terms as President of the Czech Republic between 2013 and 2023, he previously served as Prime Minister between 1998 and 2002. He is a founder of the centre-left, left-wing populist social democratic Party of Civic Rights.
[15] Sobotka served as Prime Minister between 2014 and 2017, member of the centre-left Czech Social Democratic Party.

Muslim, populist rhetoric can be observed in Zeman´s speeches, while Sobotka´s statements were not as radical. [BAUEROVÁ, H; 2018]

The presidential and parliamentary elections held in Poland in 2015 influenced the country´s standpoint in migration governance the most. When the migration crisis hit Europe, the Civic Platform political party ruled with President Bronisław Komorowski[16] and PM Ewa Kopacz[17]. The Civic Platform is a centrist (leaning towards centre-right) party, strongly supporting EU membership.[18] A shift in Polish politics came in 2015 when the opposition – Law and Justice right-wing populist party – won both the presidential and parliamentary elections, Andrzej Duda became the President and Beata Szydło the PM. The Law and Justice differs from the previous Platform in its Eurosceptic views.[19] The ideological (dis)agreement between the EU and the individual member countries – among others – plays a significant role in forming policies for the regulation of international migration.

1.3.8 Aftermath and Outcome of the 2015 Migration Crisis

It is important to mention that the majority of refugees applied for asylum in the V4 countries for formal reasons, as they later moved on to Western EU states as final destinations, mainly to Germany. [JUHÁSZ, A. et al.; 2017] However, this was not an easy step as they were restricted by the so-called Dublin Regulation of the EU – which originally dates back to the 1990´s but the most accurate version of that time has been in force since 2013. The main purpose of the law is to ensure a fair examination of each asylum claim in one Member State of the EU and to determine which Member State is responsible for examining the asylum of the given asylum seeker: usually the State where they first entered the territory of the EU. [European Commission; 2013]

The former Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel[20] became one of the most influential European politicians during the 2015 refugee crisis. She played an important role in Germany´s more pragmatic approach to migration issues. [SERESOVÁ, T.; 2022]

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[16] Komorowski who held office from August 2010 to August 2015.
[17] Kopacz was in office as PM between September 2014 and November 2015.
[18] The Polish Civic Party is a member of the European People´s Party that strongly promotes the European Union, its partners and parties believe that a ´strong and united Union acting together is best suited to face this world's many challenges and threats. ´ [EPP]
[19] The Law and Justice is a member of the European Conservatives and Reformists, whose main visions include respecting the rights and sovereignty of the Member States and safeguarding citizens and borders. [ECR]
[20] Angela Merkel in office between 2005 and 2021.

Merkel´s policy on migration became well-known throughout Europe and she gradually became a symbol of moral leadership. [METZ, R.; 2017] Her open-door policies were often referred to as ´*Wilkommenskultur*´ (Welcome Culture) during which she often repeated her well-known motto ´*Wir schaffen das*´ (We can make it) that changed the lives of thousands of people. On the 25th of August 2015, Merkel suspended the EU´s Dublin Regulation for Syrian refugees in Germany, which meant that these refugees had the possibility to process their asylum application in Germany even if they have arrived in the country through other EU state. Germany gradually became one of the biggest host countries for refugees in the Union, by the middle of 2021 the country reported almost 1.24 million refugees and 233 000 asylum seekers, while half of these refugees came from Syria. [UNHCR] Germany also performed very well when it comes to the EU quotas – the country conducted the most successful relocations from both Greece and Italy by 2017. [European Commission; 2017]

The number of migrants arriving in Europe began to decrease considerably after the peak of the crisis in 2015/16. We can also observe a drop in the reported number of migrants who died or went missing on their way to Europe. *Table 7* demonstrates the afore-mentioned figures as released by IOM.

Year	Arrivals to Europe	Dead and Missing
2016	389 976	5 305
2017	187 499	3 140
2018	146 949	2 380
2019	128 663	2 087
2020	99 907	2 326
2021	151 417	3 188
2022	189 620	2 080

Table 7: Arrivals to Europe, Dead and Missing Migrants - between 2016-2022

Source: IOM; 2023

Despite the fact that the V4 region was neither strongly affected by the migration flows (with the exception of Hungary), nor accepted a large number of refugees based on the EU quotas, various political and media campaigns – and a lot of other factors – have strongly influenced the public opinion on migrants, thus increasing the xenophobia within the domestic population. According to available surveys, authors of the Freedom House published a report in which they demonstrate the level of xenophobic sentiment in Europe closely before and during the peak of the crisis. The level of xenophobia in Hungary,

Slovakia and Czechia was outstandingly high, while concerns about the migration flows were relatively moderate in Poland. [Freedom House; 2016][21]

Billboards and slogans about the protection of the Europeans, their culture, values and religion became an important part of Hungarian politics. Metz in his paper summarizes the timeline of the billboard campaign by the Orbán leadership, which – as stated by the author – successfully won over the majority of public opinion:

- First billboard campaign in June 2015: *ʹIf you come to Hungary …ʹ*[22]
- Second billboard campaign in July 2015: *ʹThe Hungarian reforms are working!; We don't want illegal immigrants!ʹ*
- Third billboard campaign in May 2016: *ʹLetʹs send a message to Brussels, so that they also understood!*
- Fourth billboard campaign in July 2016: *ʹDid you know…?ʹ*
- Fifth billboard campaign in September 2016: *ʹWe should not risk!ʹ*
- Sixth billboard campaign in October 2016: *ʹWe have communicated it to Brusselsʹ* [METZ, R; 2017][23]

Similarly as in Hungary, a strongly dismissive rhetoric of influential Slovak policy makers towards migrants can be observed. In their paper *ʹSorry I don't want them hereʹ*, the authors Štefančík and Kiner analysed discourses of Slovak politicians on the issue within the period of 2015-2020, evaluating statements of right-wing extremist, social democrat, and liberal political representatives as well. They found out that Slovak politicians, regardless of their party affiliation, generally represented a negative approach to mass migration. The authors structured the results of their analysis into four dimensions of the security issue, which are as follows:

- personal dimension: some Slovak politicians spoke of migrants as a risk and accused them of threatening the life or health of European residents;
- political dimension: political representatives strongly disagreed with the mandatory quotas specified by the European Union, criticizing these regulations as threat to state sovereignty;

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[21] The whole report is available online under the following link:
https://www.refworld.org/topic,50ffbce582,516e75ed4,583c34cb4,0,,,SVK.html
[22] For example: *ʹIf you come to Hungary, … you must respect our culture!ʹ; … you cannot take away jobs from the Hungarians!; …*
[23] Own translation from Hungarian to English.

- economic dimension: since migrants come from poorer countries, they are considered as a cheap workforce. Therefore some politicians indict they may pose a threat to domestic employees and labour market;

- cultural dimension: foreign migrants brought their own culture, tradition, and religion with them. Slovak politicians publicly opposed this phenomenon, especially by verbally attacking the Muslim affiliation. [ŠTEFANČÍK, R. and KINER, A.; 2021]

However, the situation seemed to calm down after the peak of the crisis. The rhetoric of Slovak policy makers became more moderate right after the elections, but the country´s attitude towards the EU quotas remained dismissive. [KAJÁNEK, T.; 2022] Only in 2017, Slovakia – as the only country among the V4 – reacted to the quotas by specifying the number of migrants the country was capable of accepting, which is the reason why the European Commission did not address a lawsuit to Slovakia when suing the other three V4 countries. [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018]

According to Kajánek´s elaboration, not only in the V4 countries, but in all 27 countries of the Union, the number of citizens who identify immigration as one of the two main public problems at the national level decreased gradually and significantly between 2015 and 2020. [KAJÁNEK, T.; 2022] The author further highlights that concerns about mass migration have relatively disappeared in Europe at least until the current Russian invasion on Ukraine began.

1.4 Refugee Flows from Ukraine in 2022/23

After years of conflict, Russia launched an invasion on Ukraine in February 2022. Since then, millions of Ukrainians – mainly women and children – have fled the country to seek protection within the borders of the EU. *´European leaders and the European Parliament have condemned this unprovoked and unjustified military aggression in the strongest possible terms, as it grossly violates international law and undermines European and global security.´* [European Parliamentary Research Service; 2022; p.1] The European Council also granted candidate country status to Ukraine in June 2022, less than 5 months after the country applied for membership. Both the EU and NATO have adopted sanctions, in order to weaken the Russian economy. To name an example, NATO and Allies are contributing to starving the Kremlin´s war machine on resources, making it extremely

difficult for Russia to build more tanks and missiles or finance the war. [NATO; 2022] Russian attacks make life in Ukraine dangerous, therefore the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has declared the highest emergency level on their scale.[24] Moreover, they have already recorded millions of individual refugees fleeing the country. [25] *Graph 5* – based on data from the Statistical Office of the EU – demonstrates developments in the number of first-time asylum applicants in the Union. The graph clearly shows both the peaks of the two mass refugee flows and those years when the situation was rather calm.
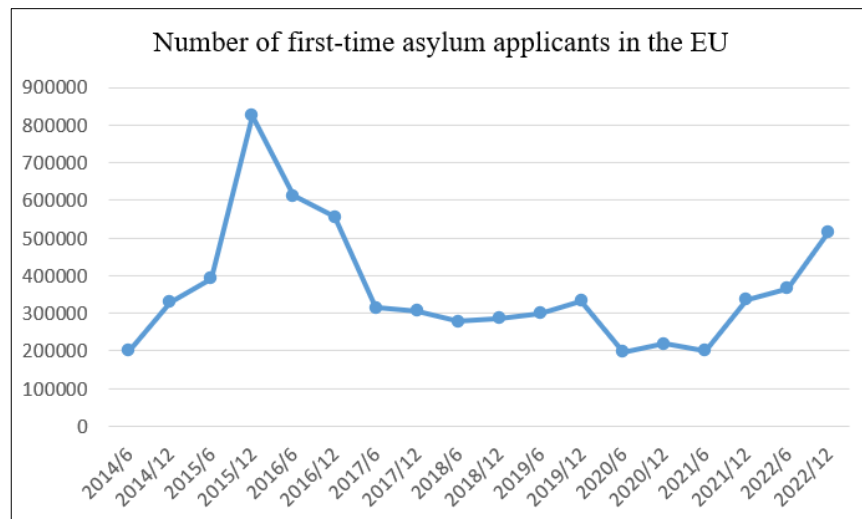
Graph 5: Number of First-time Asylum Applicants in the EU between 2014-2022

Source: Eurostat, own elaboration of data

The current migration waves from Ukraine strongly affect all the EU Member States, but mostly the ones neighbouring Ukraine, namely Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. However, the current approach of the V4 states to Ukrainian refugees differs from what it was to refugees in 2015. Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia opened their borders for Ukrainians, moreover, Slovakia accepted the Act. no. 480/2002 Z. z. on asylum, providing temporary shelters for those in need. [SERESOVÁ, T.; 2022] However, Hungary´s position was questionable at the beginning of the war. Orbán has met Vladimir Putin several times in recent years, including the Hungarian PM´s visit to Moscow on the 1st of February 2022 – only three weeks before the outbreak of the war –, after which Orbán emphasized that

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[24] According to the UNHCR, A level 3 emergency is activated in exceptionally serious situations where the scale, pace, complexity or consequences of the crisis exceed the existing response capacities of both the relevant country operation(s) and relevant Regional Bureau(x), and require a corporate, whole-of-UNHCR response.

[25] The most recent statistics can be found on UNHCR´s Data Portal under the following link: https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine . The data is updated every Wednesday.

´Hungary is a member of NATO and the European Union, while maintaining excellent relations with Russia´. [kormany.hu; 2022] The actual beginning of the Russian invasion brought a change in the communication of the Hungarian Government and when the four Prime Ministers of the V4 region met on the 8th of March 2022, they all unanimously agreed on unwavering support to Ukraine during the Russian invasion. [Visegrad Group; 2022a]

It is important to mention that there are significant differences between the geopolitical conflicts that resulted in the 2015 migration crisis and between the Russian-Ukrainian war that caused the mass refugee flows to Europe in 2022. Kajánek points out the following aspects that must be considered when examining the situation:

- From the beginning of the Russian occupation of Ukraine, the conflict was portrayed as a war against Europe – as Ukraine lies on the European continent, directly neighboring the Union.
- The governing elites of the V4 countries (excluding Orbán) supported the sanctions against Russia right from the start of the war.
- The heroism of the Ukrainian army fighting for the protection of their national identity was intensively promoted – especially around the time of the outbreak of the war – which influenced the approach of the V4 states, including some of those conservatives and right-wingers, who are traditionally more sceptical of immigrants.
- The composition of refugees fleeing Ukraine differs from the composition of refugees arriving during the 2015 migration crisis. This difference can be observed in gender and age, as mainly women and children are crossing the border.
- The V4 states now face an influx of refugees from a region that is not only geographically closer but is also much more similar to V4 in cultural, ethnic aspects, including the dominant religion. [KAJÁNEK, T.; 2022]

1.5 The Question of Culture

Culture is a highly complex, interdisciplinary phenomenon that is the subject of studies in various fields, such as sociology, history, anthropology, psychology, or communication, political and intercultural studies. Therefore the number of existing definitions of the term *culture* is unlimited, but various explanations that has been proposed shape some common patterns. After approaching the term from different perspectives, Čiefová proposes a comprehensive definition of the concept of *culture* as follows: *´Culture is a dynamic system consisting of values, norms, laws, beliefs, customs, as well as of patterns*

of thinking, feeling, acting and behaving, i.e. material or spiritual elements, which is learnt and transmitted from one generation to another generation, while providing guidelines to the members of the community who share it.´ [ČIEFOVÁ, M.; 2018; p.89]

1.5.1 The Importance of Culture and Proximity

The cultural and ethnic background of immigrants entering the EU cannot be ignored. Several studies confirm that cultural, ethnic and geographical proximity play an important role in forming a positive attitude regarding immigrants. [KAJÁNEK, T.; 2022] During their research of public attitude toward immigration, Hainmueller and Hopkins found out that compositional concerns (concerns about impacts on *culture and social life* in the host country) play a significantly more important role in shaping immigration attitude than economic concerns (concerns about *wages and taxes*). [HAINMUELLER, J. and HOPKINS, J.; 2014] Since the growing tendency of international migration, various forms of intercultural encounters have also become more frequent. Despite the fact that the share of migrants in the V4 population is among the lowest values in the EU, it must be noted that the migration trend is growing, bringing many issues. The greater the cultural differences among people interacting, the greater these issues may become. [ANTALOVÁ, M.; 2020] However, the ignorance of differences in cultural values would further raise the probability of intercultural conflicts. [ČIEFOVÁ, M.; 2020]

Focusing on the two already presented migration flows that hit Europe, Ukrainian citizens are often perceived as refugees coming to the V4 from the same cultural background, while refugees from the Islamic countries were often presented as cultural threats to the region. [SERESOVÁ, T.; 2022] Therefore, as we explore cultural differences, we decided to address the variations in the religious background of immigrants in more detail, as this aspect serves as an example of how diverse beliefs and practices can shape individuals and communities.

On the one hand, during the 2015 migration crisis, a majority of immigrants to the EU originated from Islamic countries. Islam is one of the major religions of the world, but most of the Muslims[26] are concentrated in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East and North Africa. [Pew Research Center] The core beliefs and practices of Islam are formulated very strictly, are based on five pillars, which are the following:

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[26] Those who practice Islam are referred to as Muslims.

1. ´There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God. ´[27]
2. To offer five compulsory prayers daily (called salat), facing Mecca.[28]
3. To pilgrim to Mecca (called hajj)
4. To pay obligatory charity (called zakat).
5. To fast during the daylight hours of the Ramadan period.

Religious beliefs and practices in this form may appear unfamiliar to the citizens of the V4, where the majority of people adhere to Christian faith. [European Commission] Despite the fact that Islam is one of the major religions of the world, only 6% of Europe´s population is Muslim. [Pew Research Center] In addition, the former Soviet Union not only restricted its residents from traveling outside the communist bloc, but also promoted atheism throughout its territory, which suggests that CEE citizens had limited exposure to diverse religious beliefs.

On the other hand, the V4 region is currently experiencing an influx of refugees primarily originating from Ukraine, where the majority of the population also claims to belong to any denomination of Christianity. [KIIS] In addition, Ukraine displays some linguistic and historical ties with the V4, as the Ukrainian language – along with Czech, Polish and Slovak – belongs to the Slavic language family which might facilitate the (basic) level of understanding between people, while the country itself shares the region´s Soviet history that strongly determined societal norms and values of the whole Eastern bloc. Furthermore, the geographic proximity of Ukraine to the V4 may also influence the approaches of the region towards Ukrainian refugees. To name an example, when the Russian-Ukrainian war outbroke, the conflict was often portrayed as a war on Europe. [KAJÁNEK, T.; 2022] Secondly, especially during the first months of the war, we could regularly encounter discussions in the Slovak and Hungarian media on the question, whether the war would move westwards across the Ukrainian border. Thirdly, Ukraine´s geographic proximity to the V4 countries may also evoke a stronger tendency among V4 citizens to provide aid or any form of assistance to refugees fleeing the war, as according to Singer´s receiving news about distant disasters rarely disturb people´s emotional wellbeing, as these tragedies occur to distant strangers, with whom we have no particular connection while we tend to provide more help to those who are within our proximity . [SINGER, P.; 2009]

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[27] This phrase is also written in the holy book of Islam, the Quran (also Romanised as Koran).
[28] Mecca is considered the holiest city in Islam.

2 Objectives and Methodology

The present thesis is written within the frameworks of the European Union´s Horizon 2020 MAGYC Project.

The success of any research lies in its well-defined goals and the selection of appropriate techniques. This chapter introduces the main and secondary objectives of the present thesis as well as the carefully selected research methods.

2.1 Objectives

Despite the fact that the rather informal character of the V4 cooperation and the constantly present political and economic differences within the region would suggest an obstacle for the four countries to adopt the same – or at least similar – approaches to major issues, the common historical and cultural background of the region still propose the idea that the four countries rather cooperate when it comes to migration governance. Henceforth, we assume that: *The V4 states demonstrate a common approach to migration governance.* Obviously, it must be taken into consideration that the four countries of the region were affected by mass migration flows to a different extent.

The main objective of this thesis is to *provide a comparative analysis of migration management strategies of the V4.* In order to fulfil the main objective, several secondary goals have been defined, which are the following:

- *to demonstrate how and to what extent is the V4 region affected by mass migration.*
- *to investigate whether the V4 is a target destination for immigrants.*
- *to examine whether the 2015 migration crisis affected the migration policies of the V4 and the cooperation of the four states.*
- *to supply an analysis of the intercultural aspect of interaction between refugees arriving in the V4 region and locals.*

2.2 Methodology

The theoretical overview of the present thesis is based on relevant bibliographical sources, including publications of both domestic and foreign authors, which enabled us to examine the topic from several perspectives. The topic of migration is well-researched at the

University of Economics in Bratislava, authors, including Antalová, Beňová, Čiefová, Kajánek, Kiner, Seresová and Štefančík mainly focus on the Central European region. Secondly, authors from abroad like Bauerová, Kiss, Metz and Tálas provide additional information on migration governance in V4 countries. Thirdly, publications of the MAGYC Project research team broaden the international perspective of the thesis. Moreover, it was inevitable to reach for online resources such as authoritative websites, statistical databases, political statements, and declarations in the interest of presenting a detailed and authentic review. To name some examples, we drew information from the official websites of the EU, IOM, NATO, UNHCR, Visegrad Group and authoritative online platforms of the ministries of Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. In order to demonstrate how and to what extent is the V4 region affected by mass migration, we have elaborated the obtained quantitative data into tables and graphs and have provided a comprehensive overview of significant events related to migration.

The empirical part of the work consists of some separate sub-researches. Firstly, a qualitative desk research allows us to conduct a detailed investigation into the migration management strategies of the four Visegrad states individually, while also addressing the approaches of influential politicians. The core information obtained through qualitative desk research provide us with useful materials for a comparative analysis and a subsequent induction.

Secondly, in order to examine potential changes in migration policies since the 2015 migration crisis – and to observe the efforts for cooperation within the V4 – we address key points of chosen migration regulation perspectives of the V4 countries and subsequently subject these points to further investigation, during which we confront whether the objectives have been successfully implemented since being set.

Thirdly, to supply a descriptive analysis of the intercultural aspect of interaction between migrants arriving in the V4 region and locals, and to further investigate whether the V4 is a target destination for migrants, we provide two case studies and two field studies, during which we have collected valuable information through key informant interviews (further as KII) with relevant stakeholders. According to Marshall, the key informant technique is an expert source of information, the principal advantages of which is that the method can be utilized in various research fields while the desired qualitative data can be obtained in a relatively short period of time. [MARSHALL; 1996] Furthermore, we have

selected our respondents based on the characteristics of the *ideal key informant* which are as follows: they dispose a role in the community which provides them access to meaningful information desired by the researcher, moreover, the key informants are willing to cooperate in the research and are able to communicate their knowledge in an impartial, unbiased way. [BURGESS; 1982 and MARSHALL; 1996] In addition, a brief overview of the results from our side is inevitable to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the collected information. The realization of the afore-mentioned case and field studies is introduced in the following paragraphs, while the information obtained is presented in Subchapters 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

2.3. Introduction of the Case and Field Studies

In Subchapter 3.3, we present the experience of two Ukrainian refugees through illustrative case studies. The participants, identified as Respondent A and Respondent B, were both compelled to leave their country of origin due to the war. Respondent A sought international protection in the Czech Republic, while Respondent B in Hungary but subsequently decided to relocate to Germany. Additional details regarding the KIIs conducted with these respondents can be found in Appendix A.

In order to address legal migration in more detail, the first field study is executed in Gabčíkovo, where the Humanitarian Centre (HC) accommodates refugees – currently from Ukraine. The HC was chosen for study because of its proximity, as we believe that conducting research in a close location of the authors can facilitate the collection of qualitative data. Moreover, the management and residents of the centre, as well as the citizens of Gabčíkovo are open for cooperation. Prior to preparing for the field study, the MAGYC Project research team provided us with useful materials in the form of template questions that might be useful to address before or during research. These materials have been gradually reshaped based on the objectives and limitations of the thesis and served us as a guidance to focus on relevant information. Secondly, we conducted KIIs with the director of the centre (Further as Respondent D) as well as with a receptionist (further as Respondent R) who are both in daily contact with the accommodated migrants. Thirdly, we addressed a questionnaire with open ended questions to Ukrainian refugees living in the HC, as conducting oral interviews would have been challenging due to language barriers. Last but not least, we sent out a short online questionnaire to address the contact between locals and refugees and to examine potential interactions between them. With the afore-mentioned questionnaires, we set a goal to reach 10 residents of the HC with Ukrainian country of origin

and a minimum of 50 locals from Gabčíkovo (with social heterogeneity) who have been living and/or working in the town for a minimum of 8 years (this timeframe has been selected because it has been 8 years since the outbreak of the 2015 migration crisis, during which HC Gabčíkovo had already provided accommodation for migrants.) Subchapter 3.4 is devoted to the inductive analysis of our results, while Appendix B presents the distribution of all respondents reached during the field study of Gabčíkovo, Appendix C displays the questionnaire addressed to Ukrainian refugees accommodated in the HC, and Appendix D shows the questionnaire that circulated among locals. (In addition, see Appendix E for photos around HC)

Subordinately, Subchapter 3.5 is dedicated to the constantly growing need of addressing illegal migration in the V4 region, with main empirical focus on Slovakia, that has two police detention centres for foreigners: in Medveďov and in Sečovce. We came to the conclusion to subject the former one to in-depth research, as it is geographically located less than 15 kilometres from Gabčíkovo. (See Appendix F for a map). Despite the fact that the two facilities do not collaborate in any means – as both serve a very different purpose – we believe that researching both regular and irregular migration within the region will contribute to the thesis with useful additional information that might be crucial to derive final conclusions especially on the intercultural aspect within the topic of migration. As the Police Detention Centre in Medveďov (ÚPZC) is a closed camp with constant police supervision, we are not authorized to enter its interior. Therefore, quantitative data collection will be realized through statistical reports published by the Office of the Border and Foreign Police in SR, while qualitative data through key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, including a high-ranking police officer (further as respondent PO), a social worker (further as Respondent SW) from the Slovak Humanitarian Council who are both experiencing daily interaction with illegal migrants within the centre. Further information on KIIs around the ÚPZC Medveďov and respondents can be found in Appendix G.

It is important to highlight that all the respondents (excluding the citizens of Gabčíkovo who submit anonymous questionnaires online) signed a consent form that repeats the objectives of the work and describes how the collected data is processed: respondents are pseudonymized and none of their sensitive personal data will be published. Furthermore, they had the right to stop the interview process any time or skip/delete questions without having to explain. Although this last point might limit our research, we are still dedicated to this approach in order to show solidarity as we are fully aware of the sensitivity of the topic.

3 Empirical Research

The empirical research, which forms the main body of this thesis, not only helps to draw final conclusions based on analysis (and subsequent deduction and induction), reasoning and argumentation but also collects evidence, looks for correlations, and provides additional information. Therefore, the empirical research will consist of several sub-research to fulfil the objectives of the work.

3.1. Migration Governance of the V4 Countries during the 2015 Crisis

The first subsection of the empirical part is dedicated to the migration crisis of 2015/16 by investigating migration governance within the V4 region, also examining the approaches of the four countries separately. In this case, the central element lies in the analysis of migration governance strategies and/or political measures of the four countries, while placing great emphasis on the influential politicians (already presented in the theoretical overview) who played a decisive role in the development of resolute policies within state borders and abroad.

3.1.1 Intensive Political Measures of PM Viktor Orbán in Hungary

As demonstrated in Subchapter 1.3.3, Hungary functioned as a popular transit and destination country for both regular and irregular migration. As a state on the external border of the European Union, it was affected by the crisis in an intensive way and therefore applied the most intensive political measures among the V4 countries, including some legislative changes within the field of migration policy that tightened the conditions for immigrants and asylum seekers. On the 6th of July the Hungarian Parliament adopted the amendment of law which enables a 10-meter-strip from the border mark to be used for the construction, installation and operation of facilities ensuring the protection of order at the state border [CXXVII Amendment of Law; 2015]. When Hungary began to build fences as physical barriers to prevent further migration flows, it received criticism from all over Europe. As a matter of fact, the former PM of Slovakia, Robert Fico, supported the idea of building a fence on the external border of Hungary, arguing that the protection of the external borders

of the Schengen area should be in the general interest of the European Union. [BEŇOVÁ, Z.; 2019] [29]

The idea of the Hungarian Government to set up a border barrier on the Hungarian-Serbian border was already present in June 2015, however the construction of the fence was found to be slow, because of which the Minister of Defence Csaba Hende was forced to resign at the beginning of September the same year. [METZ, R.; 2017] Regarding the matter of the minister´s resignation, Orbán said the following to a television reporter: *´Look, there is a bad Hungarian habit [...] if a Hungarian is told that the deadline is in 30 days, then it will be finished on the 30th day, but it means that it is the latest date.[...] And when we are running for our lives, when it comes to the fact that we want to enforce a legal order in Hungary, then we cannot implement something by the deadline, if it would otherwise be possible earlier. In this sense, the minister is not held responsible, because he would have completed the work on time, but I would have liked to see much faster progress, and so I had to accept his resignation.* [kormany.hu; 2015b] This case also demonstrates that building a fence to stop the flows of migrants arriving to Hungary (or the EU) became one of the central topics in Orbán´s policy.

Secondly, migrants who wanted to enter Hungary from the south could submit an application for asylum only in Röszke and Tompa, the so-called transit zones, both located on the Serbian-Hungarian border. These were set by the government to function as a ´sluice´ in regulating the migration flow. According to the Hungarian Migration Research Institute the two transit facilities fulfilled this role but alone were not able to prevent the spread of illegal migration. [MRI; 2016] In addition, an unmanageable situation gradually developed. Researchers of the Central European University criticize the circumstances as follows: *´By forcing migrant entering at the Serbian border into busy transportation hubs in Budapest, supplying them with little information and thereby prompting them to stay in transit zones without basic amenities, the government could create a now visible image of the migrant as a dirty, unkempt, and potentially dangerous foreigner.[...] The chaotic images of these zones also presented ammunition for the ongoing media campaign: for instance, media imagery on state television [...] where government officials were wearing medical masks when interacting with migrants.* ´ [SZALAI, A. and GŐBL, G.; 2015; p.23]

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[29] Some other countries also installed or started installing fences on their borders, namely Austria, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Croatia. [METZ, R; 2017]

Last but not least, Orbán´s billboard campaign and its slogans (see Subchapter 1.3.8) not only conveyed the very negative approach of the Orbán-led Fidesz[30] towards migrants arriving in the EU, but also served an additional purpose in 2016: to influence the results of the upcoming national referendum – held on the 2nd of October 2016 – where the voters were asked the following question: ´Do you want the European Union to be able to impose the mandatory resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the Parliament? ´ [National Election Office HU; 2016] The results of the referendum prove that the Hungarian Government´s anti-migrant propaganda was successful. *Graph 6* shows the final results of the aforementioned referendum.
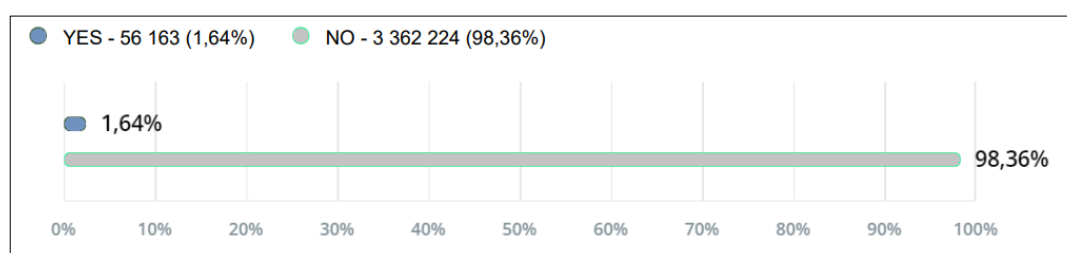
Graph 6: Final Results of the Referendum on the 2nd of October 2016 in Hungary - Valid Votes

Source: National Election Office HU

However, the referendum is considered invalid as less than half of citizens entitled to vote cast a (valid) vote, which is below the validity threshold. The distribution of valid and invalid votes is demonstrated in *Graph 7*.
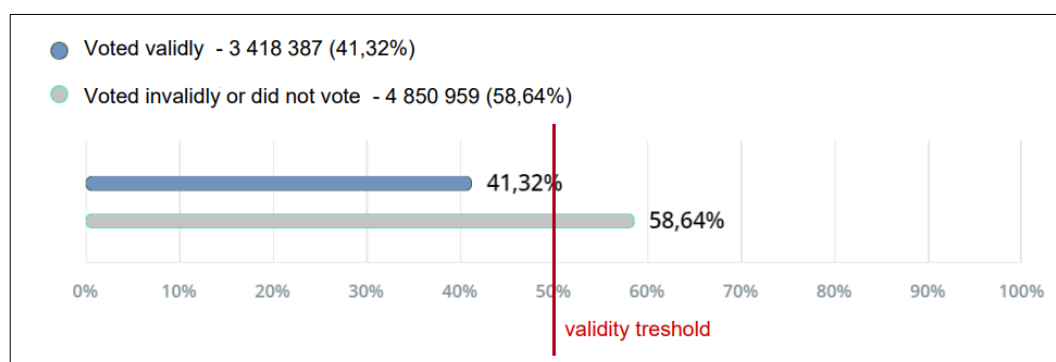
Graph 7: The Number of Votes Cast in the Referendum - Distributed by Validity

Source: National Election Office HU

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[30] right-wing populist and national-conservative political party

3.1.2 The (un)willingness of Slovakia to Cooperate with the EU

Before 2015, the phenomenon of migration was not dealt with very intensively in Slovakia as there was no objective reason to do so. However, as the situation changed throughout the EU, it became necessary to respond to new challenges in Slovakia as well. At the time when the refugee crisis hit Europe, the country´s migration policy was not defined strictly. *The Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic - Perspective until the year 2020* was approved by the Government already in 2011, which marks that the document covers a relatively broad time framework.[31] The Perspective defines four main objectives within the migration policy: to create appropriate conditions while taking into account the priorities and needs of migrants (including their integration); to strengthen the effectiveness of border controls and suppress illegal migration; to contribute to a unified European asylum system; to develop a global partnership with countries of origin and transit counties in order to strengthen cooperation. [Government of the SR; 2011] Additionally, the document highlights that Slovakia is a member of various international organizations, among which the EU has the strongest determining basis on the country´s migration policy. With this document Slovakia communicates its *´readiness and willingness to participate in the harmonization of migration policies of individual states within the European Union and a manifestation of solidarity with the basic principles and the manner of functioning of the EU within the management of individual migration processes. ´* [GOVERNMENT OF THE SR; 2011; p.3]

However, the harmonization of the Slovak asylum and migration policies with the EU had not been completed by 2015 [BAUEROVÁ, H.] and the country´s cooperation with the EU cannot be considered successful since Slovakia and Hungary filed a lawsuit against the Council. (See Subchapter 1.3.2) Therefore, the chances of implementing a unified European asylum system have further decreased. Despite the facts that the Perspective highlights Slovakia´s efforts to cooperate with the EU in the regulation of migration and it does not even mention aspirations for collaboration within the V4, the way how Slovakia

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[31] The Perspective acknowledges that the situation of migration is unforeseeable, therefore it is obvious that the mentioned strategies will be revised as soon as they do not reflect the real requirements and priorities of the Slovak Republic.

handled the question of the relocation quotas was rather in an agreement with other V4 states than with the EU policy.

All in all, the 2015 migration crisis required advanced actions from all EU states and the Slovak Council realized the need for more inclusive measures. On the 15th of October in 2015, the first extraordinary meeting on the subject of the refugee crisis was held, after which the Council officially called *all actors in the public debate about refugees, migrants, and the current refugee crisis [...] to actively contribute to greater tolerance in society, [...] respect for the human dignity of all persons, including refugees and migrants.* [Government Office of the Slovak Republic; 2015b] Moreover, the Government Office emphasizes that refugees and migrants are people, protected by human rights and the right to personal freedom. However, by observing the rhetoric and political actions of the Slovak policy makers we can state that they did not act in accordance with the call of the Council. As already presented in Subchapter 1.3.8, the term *migration* took on a negative connotation in political debates.

Another common element of the crisis management of Hungary and Slovakia lies in the misuse of the situation before the political elections. The issue of migration and asylum became a central topic of discussion at the time of the Slovak parliamentary elections, held in March 2016. During their political campaign, PM Fico and his SMER-SD Party continued to accuse illegal migrants of heading for the EU single market and link them with terrorism and possible threat of the Islamization of European society. [KAJÁNEK, T.; 2022] Kajánek further points out that an important part of the election campaign of SMER-SD was to portrait the party as the one supporting and protecting the Slovak nation and its interests. This might have contributed to the repeated election win of the party and another government coalition led by Fico.

3.1.3 Mixture of Dismissive Rhetoric and Signs of Effort in Czechia

The decision of the EU on the quota system involved Czechia too: from September 2015 the country was supposed to accept a total of 2691 migrants within the relocation program. This number was determined based on two EU Council decisions: at first, Czechia voluntarily agreed to accept 1100 people from Greece and Italy. The Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic identifies this move as the country´s expression of its willingness to participate in the voluntary redistribution of migrants. Later that month the majority of the EU Member States adopted a second, mandatory relocation decision, which the Czech

Ministry criticized by the fact that the decision was made without analysing the consequences of the previous one. The republic expressed its disapproval of increasing the number of relocated people, relying on legal and technical objections, calling the requirements absurd. Despite this negative opinion Czechia was obliged to relocate further 1591 people. [Ministry of the Interior, CZ] In the end, Czechia only received 12 refugees. [European Commission 2017]

Dismissive political speeches were also present in Czechia - similarly as in Hungary and Slovakia. Mostly President Zeman has repeatedly criticized the immigrants coming to the Union. His negative posture became famous across Europe, especially after his Christmas message. The message, delivered on the 26th of December 2015, contained controversial comments on the migrants, accusing them of coming to Europe in an organized manner and blaming the young men from Syria and Iraq for not fighting back home. [The Guardian;2015] The following was said in his speech: ´I am profoundly convinced that we are facing an organised invasion, and not a spontaneous movement of refugees. Those who defend the immigrants talk of compassion and solidarity. But compassion is possible for the old, infirm, and primarily for children. But a large majority of illegal migrants are young, healthy men without families. I am asking: why don't these men take up arms and battle for the freedom of their country and against Islamic State? ´ [Radio Prague International; 2015] Moreover, a month later Zeman went as far as claiming that it was practically impossible for the Muslim community to integrate into European society and therefore, they should not take their culture to Europe. [The Guardian; 2016]

By considering the facts that the Czech Republic was not a popular target destination for immigrants [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018], and the country relocated only 12 refugees based to the EU quotas [European Commission; 2017], we can state that there was a lack of interpersonal contact between Czech citizens and refugees, which proves that the outstandingly high level of xenophobia in the country [Freedom House; 2016] was rather provoked by political and media campaigns than real-life experience. Furthermore, the reality that Zeman was re-elected as a president for a second term in 2018 also confirms that the majority of the Czech population recognized his views.

Then PM Sobotka criticized Zeman´s radical comments, saying that the President´s message was based ´on prejudices and his habitual simplification of things´. [The Guardian; 2015] On the other hand, Sobotka also opposed the EU quotas by claiming it was doomed

to failure, as most of the refugees had their favoured target countries like Germany. [The Guardian; 2016] Sobotka showed signs of efforts to relocate refugees when he met the board members of the Generace 21 endowment fund, that supports national and international humanitarian projects. According to the annual report[32] of the fund, *'the PM expressed his pleasure that there are non-governmental initiatives willing to help refugees and was interested in the possibilities of cooperation.'* During the meeting it was discussed what needs to be done and prepared for the fund´s Christian refugee resettlement project and the board members started working on the project plan: to find around a hundred Christian refugees who would be willing to and capable of integration in the Czech Republic. In December 2015, Sobotka informed about the government decision to resettle 153 refugees from Iraq and Lebanon, all Christians who should receive international protection in Czechia. [Generace 21] On the other hand, the project did not receive any money from EU funds or the state budget in 2015. The role of the Ministry of Interior was to ensure security checks and undertake the execution of asylum procedures. The project ended up in failure due to unforeseen non-cooperation of some refugees[33], because of which the Czech Government decided to suspend the acceptance of further people and terminated the project in April 2016. [Generace 21]

3.1.4 The Change of Perspectives in Poland

Similarly as in any other country, an important aspect in Poland´s migration policy lies in its politicians and ruling political parties. When the final decision on the EU quotas was made in September 2015, Poland stood out from the V4 countries by accepting it while Czechia Hungary and Slovakia openly opposed the system from the beginning of the discussions.[34] The then Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz argued that the decision had to be made in the spirit of solidarity with the EU and as a commitment to being a Member State by perceiving the question on a European level. [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018] The fact that Poland alone was supposed to accept more refugees than the other 3 countries together and the country still supported the quotas, also confirms Poland´s commitment to the EU.

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[32] The fund published a joint annual report of years 2015 and 2016.
[33] The project reported that some refugees attempted to travel to Germany illegally, while other refugees were not willing to integrate and returned to Iraq.
[34] We agree with Bauerová, who perceives this situation as a case pointing out the informal nature of the V4 arrangement.

However, PM Kopacz agreed with accepting migrants only under conditions: firstly, each state should determine its own capacities voluntarily. In September 2015 she said that *′Solutions not taking into account the given country's abilities may prove completely counterproductive. That is why we are against any automatic quotas, but we are willing to talk about the scale of our engagement on voluntary terms. ′* [Radio Poland; 2015] Secondly, as the Catholic religion strongly dominates in the country′s society, Kopacz gave preference to refugees with Christian fate. [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018] We would like to draw attention to the fact that Kopacz often changed her position regarding the quota issue. In September 2015, in solidarity to the V4 cooperation she agreed with the plan to reject the quota system. But she was also under pressure from the pro-European Civic Platform and wanted to show solidarity towards refugees fleeing death, therefore she finally agreed to the mandatory quotas and the Civic Platform started to build refugee centres. [BAUEROVÁ, H.; 2018]

Stronger Eurosceptic views in Polish politics can be observed from the Polish elections in October 2015, when the Law and Justice became the ruling party. Already during the election campaigns, the topic of accepting refugees became a question of discussion. To name an example, the Law and Justice Party blamed the Civic Party for not rejecting the quotas and thus endangering Polish culture and security while betraying Poland′s Central European allies. Moreover, the party argued that family members of relocated refugees might want to join the initially arrived, which would put a pressure on Poland to accept even more migrants in the future. [CSANYI, P.; 2020] The several demonstrations against refugees and Muslims held across Poland [CSANYI, P.; 2020] and the victory of the Law and Justice Party suggest that the public opinion of Polish citizens on migrants was rather dismissive.

At the end, Poland didn't accept any refugees based on the EU quotas. [European Commission 2017] For not complying with legal obligations regarding the relocations, Poland (together with Czechia and Hungary) was referred to the Court of Justice of the EU. Polish Interior Minister Mariusz Błaszczak – also a member of the Law and Justice Party – harshly reacted: *′The relocation system ... is a system that poses a threat. It degrades states, entire cities, city districts because the communities that are flowing in to Europe not only* do *not integrate with European, but ... form a hinterland for Islamic terrorists."′* [Radio Poland; 2017]

3.2 Modification of Migration Policies after the Crisis

As we have already demonstrated, the migration flows hit the EU unprepared, therefore both the Union and the individual Member States recognized a need for action to address migration regulation in more detail. In the following sections we cover some consequences of the migration crisis on migration policies.

On the 16th of September 2016, representatives of the 27 Member States met at the Bratislava Summit to discuss the role and future of the EU. In the Bratislava plan, proposed at the summit, the topic of migration is also dealt with and the prioritization of addressing the fear associated with migration is listed among the main objectives:

- *not to allow the uncontrolled flows of migration from the previous year to be repeated;*
- *to further reduce the number of irregular migrants;*
- *to ensure full control of the external borders and return to the Schengen area;*
- *to reach a broader consensus within the EU on long-term migration policy and apply the principles of responsibility and solidarity.* [The European Council; 2016; p.3]

The first two points of the proposed plan can only be considered partially successful. On the one hand, both the number of migrants arriving in Europe and the number reported missing and dead migrants gradually decreased after 2016. An increase can be observed again in 2021/22, but the figures still do not reach the heights of the years of 2015/16. [IOM, see table 7 in Subchapter 1.3.8] On the other hand, the estimated number of the dead or missing still did not drop below 2000 people/year, furthermore, the actual numbers might be even higher. Secondly, given the facts that the Russian-Ukrainian war next to the EU border is still raging and that Europe has seen an increased flow of illegal migrants from third countries since the outbreak of the war [Visegrad Group; 2022b], we assume that the statistics will not show a (significant) decrease by the end of 2023 either.

The full control of the external borders of the Schengen area is ensured by Frontex, that not only took on their current title as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in 2016, but also increased the number of their personnel by five times since that year,[35] which shows that more attention has been paid to border protection since the 2015 crisis. But as

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[35] According to Frontex´s official website, their personnel consisted of 370 people in 2016 while 2000 in 2022.

long as there is a significant number of people staying illegally within the EU borders, the aforementioned – and coveted – full control cannot be considered unquestionably successful. However, the website of Frontex also reports about their plans to create the first EU uniformed service, that will predictably consist of 10 000 officers. [Frontex]

In order to address the interdependence of Member States and thereby reach a broader unity within the EU, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum was signed on the 23rd of September 2020, that brought some actualizations in migration governance aiming to create a long-term system with fair management of external borders in accordance with European values[36]. In Addition, the EU has declared a support of more effective integration policies. The document also mentions a stronger crisis preparedness and response – this point was crucial to add mainly because of the 2015 refugee crisis, which revealed significant gaps in EU´s migration regulation and highlighted the complexity of the issue as it affects all Member States in a different way. [European Commission; 2020]

Slovakia also adopted a new strategic document on migration in September 2021[37]: *Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic: Perspective until the Year 2025.* The objective of the new policy is to create such conditions in the field of regulated legal migration that are in accordance with national interests and international obligations, moreover, puts emphasis on the preservation of the security of the Slovak Republic, the rights of its citizens, as well as the rights of foreigners staying in the territory of the Republic. The document describes that the new migration policy must be ready to respond to related challenges – such as the migration crisis in 2015 or the COVID-19 pandemic – as it is very likely that such situations will be repeated in the future. [Government of the SR; 2021]

3.2.1 Mutual Agreements of the V4 Concerning Refugee Flows in 2022/23

As already presented in Subchapter 1.4, the V4 region became a geopolitical area inflected with refugee flows again at the beginning of 2022. The four Prime Ministers of the V4 region held a meeting on the 8th of March 2022 to discuss the situation caused by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and issued a Joint Communiqué on Providing Joint V4 Assistance to Refugees from Ukraine. The document states the following points:

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[36] For values of the EU refer to Subchapter 1.1.3.
[37] Slovakia adopted a new migration policy as its previous document became outdated.

1. *V4 Heads of Governments reaffirmed their unwavering support to Ukraine in the context of the ongoing Russian invasion.*

2. *The V4 countries' governments and societies are mobilising significant financial and human resources to send aid to Ukraine and provide care and assistance to refugees from Ukraine. The V4 countries agreed on a support package of 1 million euros to help Ukraine via the International Visegrad Fund. An extraordinary call for applications will shortly be available to non-governmental institutions, organisations and municipalities from the V4 countries and Ukraine.* [Visegrad Group; 2022a; p.1]

In the following paragraphs we examine whether the V4 countries fulfilled these promises. Firstly, when the V4 representatives met in December 2022, they confirmed their continuous support for Ukraine, its independence and sovereignty. Moreover, Russia´s war and aggression is still strongly condemned by all the V4 states. [Visegrad Group; 2022b]

Secondly, the so-called Visegrad 4 Ukraine Grant was carried out as promised. This special grant, run and financed by the Visegrad Fund, aimed to reduce the negative effects of the war on refugees arriving from Ukraine and residing in any V4 country. The financial help may strengthen the capacities of both public and civil society institutions and organizations who provide help for refugees or assist in mitigating potential tensions between refugees and locals (usually caused by social or economic differences, language barriers or information gap). [Visegrad Fund; 2022] The fund received hundreds of applications within the deadline, out of which 72 projects were approved and supported by 1 million euros in total. The successful applicants are from all the 4 Visegrad countries and Ukraine.[38]

By taking the aforementioned facts into account, it is already obvious that the V4 states and their representatives address the refugee flows from Ukraine (2022/23) with significantly different measures and tools than the migration flows from Syria and Afghanistan (2015/16). Based on chapter 1.5 on cultural differences we agree with Seresová, who highlights that the disparities of approaches also lies in the fact that the migrants of 2015 were often presented as threats to European culture and well-being, while Ukrainian

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[38] The complete list of approved grants within the Visegrad 4 Ukraine grant is available under the following link: https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/uploads.mangoweb.org/shared-prod/visegradfund.org/uploads/2022/05/APPROVED_to_web-1.pdf

citizens are concepted to come from the same cultural background. [SERESOVÁ; 2022] However, it is yet unclear what proportion of the Ukrainian refugees will settle (or plans to settle) in the V4 region for long term, how many of them will move on to another country and how many returns back to Ukraine, while it was clear during the 2015 refugee crisis that the V4 region is not a primarily target of migrants. Furthermore, it is noticeable that migration-related issues are being addressed more systematically now than in 2015, the EU and the Member States seem to be better prepared to deal with (large scale) migration flows. However, gradually more and more detailed goals are being set and the success of the implementation and the outcome are still a question of the future.

3.3 Case Study of Two Ukrainian Refugees

This subchapter presents case studies of two Ukrainian refugees who fled their country because of the war and sought international protection in the V4 region. Respondent A and B both confirmed that they feel comfortable in Czechia and Hungary and expressed their gratitude to the governments for providing shelter.

Respondent A[39] has been living in the Czech Republic since the 2nd of March 2022, left Ukraine due to the war as their family did not feel safe in their district when the nearby explosions started. First, the whole family fled westwards, but it was quickly decided that Respondent A will leave the country and go to acquaintances who live in Czechia and can provide temporary accommodation to them. After arriving, they immediately applied for temporary shelter at the Assistance Centre for Ukrainian Refugees at the Brno Exhibition Centre. *'I remember there was a long queue, the whole place was overcrowded, but the application process itself was not complicated. There was a minor problem around my passport, which expired two days before the war, and I didn't hurry to prolong it as I didn't expect to leave Ukraine. The assistants were helpful at the centre, they knew how to act in this matter, and I received the document the same day I applied for it. '* [KII, Respondent A; 2023] They received a temporary shelter for one year, now they renewed the document for one more year. *'Now it is fine, I have a new passport since that, and I didn't have any problems when I had to prolong the document at the Foreign Police in Brno. '* [KII, Respondent A; 2023]

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[39] Respondent A – female, 20 years old

Currently, Respondent A lives in a dormitory as they study at the Charles University in Prague: even though Respondent A was already a 3rd year student at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, they suspended their studies to be able to attend classes in Prague, where they decided to start over from the beginning in a different field. During the interview, they highlighted the differences they observed within the Czech population: ´at the university, scholars are friendly and welcoming all the time, but outside the campus there are different people and different situations (…) I have never experienced any form of discrimination, but my friend did (…) They were working in a shopping mall and got insulted by a customer who told them to go back to Ukraine after noticing their accent ´. [KII, Respondent A; 2023] Respondent A, when interacting with the locals, tries to communicate in Czech, as they have been learning the language since May 2022, when started to attend a four-month preparatory Czech course offered free of charge by the university, opened for those who received temporary protection and applied to any study field of the university. During this period, participates also received a scholarship of 11 800 CZK/month[40]. By the end of the course they obtained a B2 language certificate and were able to matriculate to their selected field of study. Just like most of the Ukrainian refugees who fled the country, they are also uncertain about the duration of their stay in the CZ: ´I never planned to come to Czechia, but now I´m here and I don´t know how long I am staying. Before the war I was a big planner, but I´m not anymore, as I see that everything can be crashed very quickly. (…) I definitely want to finish my studies here, to get at least one degree. ´ [KII, Respondent A; 2023]

Respondent B[41] left Ukraine in March 2022, they with five other people – fled to Hungary, as respondent's mother works in an insurance company that operates branches in the V4 countries. After 14 hours of travelling, one of the mother´s Hungarian co-workers accompanied them to their accommodation in Budapest, which was provided and financed by the afore-mentioned insurance company. ´We didn't receive any financial help from the Hungarian Government because we didn't have a job in Hungary. My mom was working online, I was working online, so there was no reason to look for a job in Hungary. [KII, Respondent B; 2023] Way before going to Hungary, Respondent B started to work online for a German employment agency that is responsible for connecting Ukrainian candidates with German companies. In addition, respondent B is a university student, studies German

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40 Around 500 EUR/month.
41 Respondent B – female, 20 years old.

Language – Education and Translation at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv in Ukraine. During their stay in Hungary, Respondent B was informed about the possibility to attend an Erasmus exchange semester at the University of Tübingen in Germany – which they had always wanted – so they decided to take advantage of this opportunity and left Hungary in September 2022. *'It was interesting to see Budapest, the life in Hungary seemed very cheap, much cheaper than in Germany. On the other hand, it was difficult as not many Hungarians speak good English, for example we had some difficulties in the bank, when we wanted to open an account, but they asked us to come back the next day because that day there was no one who spoke English. (…) Some people even continued to speak to us in Hungarian after we told them that we didn´t understand anything of what they said. (…)* [KII, Respondent B; 2023] From other Ukrainians they often heard that the Hungarian government is against the immigrants and refugees, but in their experience, locals were really nice and were trying to help them in general.

Back when they arrived in Budapest, they immediately applied for temporary protection, volunteers were helping them with language barriers. They received a so-called Humanitarian Residence Permit for Asylum Seekers. However, they did not stay in Hungary for a long time. In order to move to Germany, Respondent B had to cancel the document and apply for temporary protection in Germany. Now they complete their second exchange semester at the German university, attend both online classes at the Ukrainian sending institution and in-present classes at the German receiving institution. They do not receive financial aid from the German Government either, as they are a holder of the Erasmus scholarship. They decided to continue to study German language and to teach English and German to Ukrainian children.

What is similar in the two cases, that neither Respondent B has ever intended to go to Hungary, nor Respondent A has ever planned to go to the Czech Republic before the war. Their choices of CZ and HU were justified by the countries´ geographical proximity to Ukraine and by having a local acquaintance who was ready to assist them. Secondly, they both talked about the importance of small Ukrainian informal communities they are part of, as they find it easier to befriend Ukrainian fellows than with locals. The (possible) interaction between refugees and locals is further researched in the field study conducted in Slovakia, presented in the next chapter.

3.4 Field Study of the Humanitarian Centre in Gabčíkovo

The accommodation facilities in Gabčíkovo hosted refugees already in early 1990´s in the course of the Bosnian War. During the migration crisis, between September 2015 and August 2016, Syrian applicants for asylum and temporary protection were also sheltered in the Humanitarian Centre – which is a special-purpose facility of STU –, based on an agreement between The Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic and the Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Austria, taking into account a memorandum of understanding between the two ministries. *'Those accommodated were placed in facilities No. 3 and 4 with a maximum capacity of 500 people. However, the utilization of our capacities for the mentioned period was only 71% occupied'* – wrote the centre director through email exchange – *The care of the refugees was provided by the Austrian company ORS, which ensured the entire operation of the camp with its social workers, interpreters, and guard service. The total number of their employees was 20. ´* [email, Respondent D; 2023]

In March 2022, the Ministry of the Interior of the SR requested again for provision of the premises for applicants for temporary protection, who are this time citizens of Ukraine fleeing the war in the country. The Centre grants accommodation to refugees on the basis of an agreement on the provision of accommodation. *´The highest number of accommodated persons reached 960 people[42]. Currently, the number of refugees has a slightly decreasing tendency. Employees of the Migration Office provide care for refugees with the help of non-governmental organizations that are also responsible for the care of both minors and senior citizens. These works are provided by non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF, Mareena, UNHCR, League for Mental Health, Slovak Humanitarian Council. ´* [email, Respondent D; 2023] To name some examples, access to online classes is ensured for school children, while some others attend local schools, various language courses and after-curricular activities. Moreover, lectors of Slovak language visit the center regularly, any resident can attend these classes. The construction works of a playground in the broad courtyard of the HC have already started, and a meeting room inside the building serves as a place for social interaction for teenagers and young adults. The silent hours start at 10 pm. The centre area (both inside and outside) is consistently kept clean by cleaners, the waste is

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[42] The current capacity of the centre is 1000, this limit has never been reached.

collected in containers that are emptied as soon as needed, five times a week on average. *´Some of our residents were provided job at the HC, they either work as cleaners or help out at the canteen. We are absolutely satisfied with their work, they often voluntarily take shifts on the weekend or assist with ad-hoc solutions. ´* [KII, Respondent D; 2023]

It is important to emphasize that this is an open camp where residents can enter or leave anytime. However, there is a constant provision by security guards who ensure that only authorized people can enter the center. Currently, residents are required to identify themselves based on the validation document received from the Foreign Police, but there is also an ongoing innovation project to install a turnstile at the entrance door in the near future, which will function with the help of chip cards. [KII, Respondent D, 2023]

Refugees can apply for accommodation by submitting a request through the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior of SR (further as MÚ). *´At the beginning of the war, Ukrainian refugees were arriving by buses in an organized manner with the assistance of the Foreign Police. Recently we are rather receiving individual requests for accommodation, especially from those refugees who already have relatives or acquaintances living in the centre. ´* [KII, Respondent D; 2023] The centre management is taking into account special requests, for example family members or friends arriving together are never separated.[43] The interior of the building is structured according to a so-called cellular system, which means each pair of rooms[44] share a toilet and a bathroom. In addition, every room has a balcony. There is a common room with washing machines and dryers. *´Despite the fact that three meals a day[45] are served in the canteen, there is a well-supplied kitchen at the end of every corridor where residents can prepare meals based on their personal or cultural tastes. (...) They often bake cakes that are characteristic of their country of origin, and some of them, mainly those who have been living here for a while, usually offer a few slices to us. (...) We are here at the reception 24/7 to help them[46] if they need anything, this is their way to say thank you´*. [KII, Respondent R, 2023]

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[43] As refugees are usually from the same country of origin, their cultural background does not have to be taken into account.
[44] Rooms are usually double or triple rooms.
[45] Five meals a day for children and pregnant.
[46] Continuous operation of the reception is ensured by receptionists who are distributed to 12-hour day/night shifts. Receptionists are the first contact persons for the residents in case of any questions, requests, or issues. Moreover, household appliances such as vacuum cleaner and iron can be borrowed at the reception. Some receptionists communicate with residents in English, while others in a mixture of Slovak and Russian.

The gratitude and satisfaction of refugees can be observed in the answers submitted to questionnaires, as none of the 10 respondents complained, neither about the centre, nor about the town. All 10 respondents are female refugees who fled Ukraine because of the war, 8 of them came with their children or grandchildren. The reasons underlying their decision of Slovakia were the following:

- the geographical proximity of Slovakia to Ukraine;
- the similarity between the Slovak and Ukrainian languages;
- having an acquaintance in Slovakia who was ready to assist them with relocation.

When arriving in Slovakia, they applied for a temporary shelter either in Bratislava or in Dunajská Streda. While some of them report about a long queue and a crowd, they are basically satisfied with the organization of the process. They needed to submit an official request, fill their personal data, show up their ID card (birth certificate in case of children) and the document was ready within some hours. Moreover, Respondent 6[47] wrote about the circumstance in detail ´I applied for temporary shelter in Bratislava at Bottova 7, everything was very well organized. We received some food and drink, there was a room with toys where volunteers played with the children. ´ Respondent 6 later decided to submit an application for asylum, which they received after a consultation with lawyers, moreover, they were called for an interview with the police and with the members of the UNHCR.

According to the UNHCR, applying for temporary protection is the fastest way to receive legal status in Slovakia. By the moment of submitting this thesis, the temporary protection granted for Ukrainian refugees is valid until 4th of March 2024 (can be prolonged if necessary). This form of protection includes access to Slovak health care, education, and the possibility to apply for accommodation and food. Moreover, this document opens the door to the Slovak labour market and provides basic cash assistance. [UNHCR][48]

3.4.1 Interaction between Refugees and Locals in Gabčíkovo

During our key informant interview with the Centre Director, it was repeatedly pointed out, that working with immigrants and refugees is not easy, that their work requires not only patience, but also a high level of empathy and emotional intelligence. ´Everyone

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[47] Respondent 6, 44-year-old female, arrived in Slovakia in June 2022, has been living in the HC for 5 months.
[48] All necessary information can be found in 4 languages under the following link:
https://help.unhcr.org/slovakia/information-for-people-coming-from-ukraine/temporary-protection/

here has their own story and sometimes they tell me about it. Not long ago an elderly woman was living in the centre, who was emotionally broken because her son was serving as a soldier in the war, it was very difficult for me to see her cry all the time. After all these years of experience, I am still very empathetic. Therefore, I need a lot of patience, we do our best to ensure comfort to the residents and to fulfil personal needs. ´ [KII, Respondent D] Both the director of the centre and the receptionist are frequently asked about their work with migrants and refugees. *´I´m not saying that it is easy, but I´m not saying that it is hard either, but one thing is for sure: it is emotionally demanding.* ´ [KII, Respondent D] They say, people sometimes have no idea about how the centre works. In reality, they have never experienced any major intercultural issue, only minor interpersonal misunderstandings may occur occasionally.

Our online questionnaire reached 74 locals– 44 females and 30 males –, all has been living and/or working in Gabčíkovo for a minimum of 8 years. From a demographic point of view, respondents are between 18 and 78 years old, however, the biggest proportion is younger than 30. All 74 respondents are unanimously aware of the fact that the Humanitarian Centre in Gabčíkovo accommodates migrants and refugees. In addition, 54 of the 74 locals claim that they often meet migrants and refugees in the town – for example in the supermarket, in the park, on the playground etc. –, while the rest of them (20) meet them occasionally. The afore-mentioned results are also visualized in *Graph 8* and *Graph 9.*
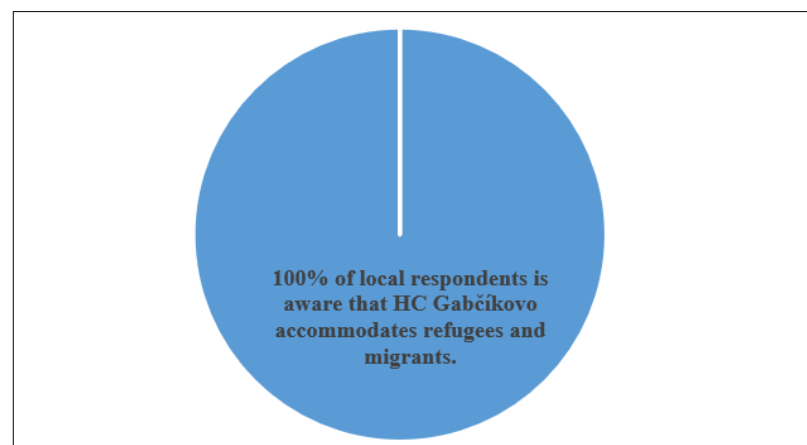
Graph 8: Questionnaire Result: Locals´ Awareness of the Presence of Migrants in Town
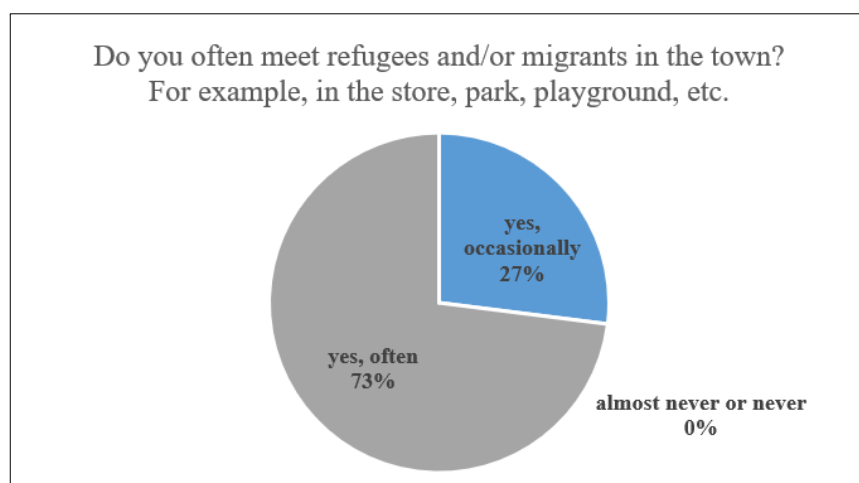
Graph 9: Questionnaire Result: Locals Meeting Migrants in Town

These findings would suggest a regular interaction between local citizens and immigrants, which is a main subject of this subsection. On the other hand, only 2 out of the 74 locals claim to have a friend or a close acquaintance among the refugees - presented in *Graph 10.*
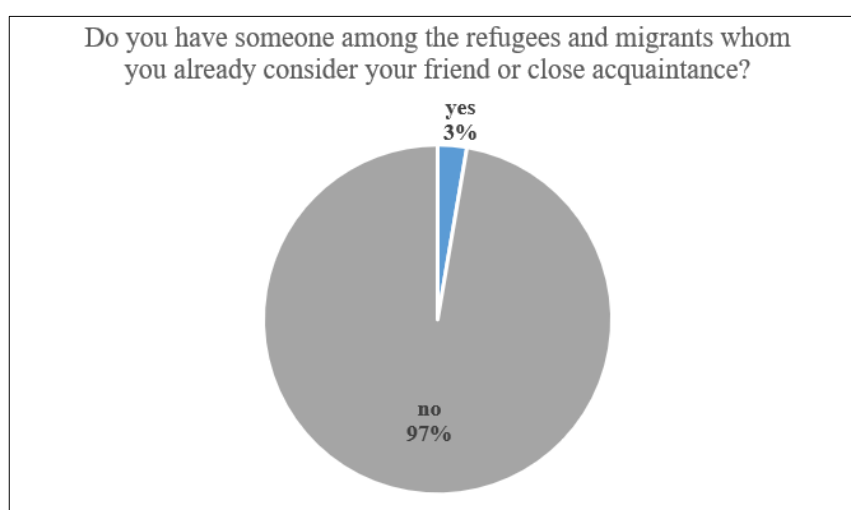
Graph 10: Questionnaire Result: Locals Befriending Migrants

Refugees accommodated in the HC predominantly report about having local friends only from work and/or are establishing new friendships mainly within the HC. Answers from refugees such as ʹ*I have friends here with whom I often meet in the canteen or the washing room*ʹ[49] and ʹ*we all know each other in the Centre*ʹ[50] or ʹ*I know some people from work, but we have a closer clique with other refugees*ʹ[51] conveys the message that they rather feel

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[49] Respondent 6, 44-year-old female, has been living in the HC for 5 months.
[50] Respondent 2, 56-year-old female, has been living in the HC for 1 year and 1 month.
[51] Respondent 10, 46-year-old female, has been living in the HC for 1 year and 1 month.

being part of the minority group. We justify their preference for more active interaction within the minority group with the following reasons:

1. By taking into account that most Ukrainian refugees came to Slovakia approximately a year ago, we assume that they did not have enough time to fully integrate into the local society. Moreover, while living in a Ukrainian community and preserving their own cultural values, they share a sense of cultural identity.

2. Considering the situation they occurred in by fleeing the war and seeking for international protection, refugees from Ukraine also share a sense of solidarity.

3. Ukrainian respondents living in the HC report about the reality that before the war they never intended to live in Slovakia, and still do not know how long they will stay. Some of them wrote about their plans to return to Ukraine as soon as returning will be safe. Therefore, this approach might lead them to not actively seeking opportunities for integration.

4. They might feel isolated from locals because of language barriers. Despite the fact that 7 out of the 10 refugees reported about speaking or trying to speak Slovak when talking with locals[52], none of them mention Hungarian as a possible language of interaction. However, according to the 2021 Census, 80% of the inhabitants of Gabčíkovo declared themselves to be of Hungarian nationality, while only 14% to Slovak. [Gabčíkovo Town; 2021]

5. Based on the negative propaganda of both Slovak and Hungarian politicians towards immigrants [Subchapter 1.3.8] and the strong influence of this negative approach on the population [Subchapters 3.1.1 and 3.1.2] we assume, that the locals might not always be welcoming with refugees and immigrants or might occasionally display discriminative or xenophobic attitude.

However, none of the 10 Ukrainian refugees have encountered any form of violence or discrimination neither in the centre nor in the town, furthermore they did not mention any kind of intercultural conflict. Based on the online questionnaires, only 6 of the 74 locals reported about experiencing arguments or misunderstandings with migrants due to intercultural differences, and 7 others reported about being aware of such arguments or misunderstandings. However, some of the provided examples like ʹthey were drunkʹ or ʹthey stole glasses from the pub and threw them to the wallʹ cannot be considered as intercultural

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[52] Residents of the HC have the possibility to attend Slovak language classes.

conflict. Some of the cases are rather the question of interpersonal than intercultural issues, such as ´It was raining, and one car splashed the refugees at the crossroad. They ran to the driver, threatened the driver verbally and hit them´. Furthermore, most of the examples provided by locals are rather general, therefore it is impossible to determine further information on these cases, such as the date of the conflict, migrants´ country of origin or cultural background and religious affiliation, whether they live in the HC, what was the reason of the conflict and who initiated, etc. We would like to highlight one more example that has been provided by a local: ´I work as a shop assistant and I haven't seen any concrete conflict, but I have to say that migrants can be very messy, they make a mess among the goods, and they don't understand when I speak Slovak. They should try more to understand the Slovak language. ´ [53]

By considering all the responses from both questionnaires, the answers suggest that slight intercultural conflicts exist within the town, however, only to a small extent. 62 of the 74 locals are not aware of any kind of intercultural issue, even though they have lived and/or worked in Gabčíkovo for a minimum of 8 years. Moreover, within the HC, where refugees and workers closely interact on a daily basis, no problems have been reported. The spirit in the HC seems to be pleasant, rather a family-like atmosphere prevails.[54] ´Since the centre has hosted refugees already since the 1990´s, I think that the local citizens are already used to having foreigners in the nearby´ - said the Centre Director. [KII, Respondent D; 2023]

3.5 Fighting Illegal Migration in the V4

Since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war an increased volume of illegal migration from the third countries was detected, which affects the EU to the greatest extent since 2015. [Visegrad Group; 2022b] On the 4th and 5th of December 2022, the Chairpersons of the Defence and Security Committees of the V4 Parliaments met in Bratislava to review current security issues. At the meeting, the reduction of illegal migration to the lowest possible level was set as a common future goal. To reach this, 3 measures were formulated:

1. The external borders of the EU should be properly protected and managed; all attempts for illegal actions should be refused. To implement this, it will be necessary to actively involve Frontex.

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[53] Female respondent, 23 years old.
[54] Own observation.

2. The support of the EU and the cooperation between partner countries are essential to address the root cause of migration, to avoid loss of lives and to fight against illegal smuggling networks.

3. It is also crucial to build a more resilient migration and asylum system and to reform the EU´s migration and asylum policy by finding compromises. [Visegrad Group; 2022b]

As only a few months have passed since the meeting and the objectives set are very broad, it goes beyond the capacities of this thesis to confirm whether the set measures could be fulfilled, therefore we recommend this topic for future research. However, in order to study and analyse approaches to addressing illegal migration, we conducted empirical research focusing on the operation of the Police Detention Centre for Foreigners (further as ÚPZC) in Medveďov, located in southwestern Slovakia on the Slovak-Hungarian border. The research was supplemented with key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, including a high-ranking police officer who has been performing duties at the centre for 23 years (further as Respondent PO) and a social worker of the Slovak Humanitarian Council (SHR) who has been assisting migrants in the aforementioned detention centre on a daily basis for almost 11 years (further as Respondent SW).

The Office of the Border and Foreign Police has two police custody units for foreigners in Slovakia, one is the afore mentioned ÚPZC in Medveďov and the second one is ÚPZC in Sečovce. The police forces of both units deal with migrants who have been caught staying illegally on the territory of the Slovak Republic, including cases when migrants do not have mandatory records such as visas or other valid travel documents, or in cases when migrants used to be, but for whatever reason are no longer authorised to stay in the country. Our empirical research revolves around ÚPZC in Medveďov. This field study distinguishes itself from the field study of Gabčíkovo in that ÚPZC Medveďov exclusively focuses on addressing illegal migrants. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, at the time of writing this thesis, there are no migrants of Ukrainian origin present in the ÚPZC.

3.5.1 Field Study of the Police Detention Centre for Foreigners in Medveďov

First of all, it is important to mention that daily duties of police forces serving in ÚPZC do not include an active inspect of foreigners on whether they are staying legitimately or illegitimately on the territory of Slovakia, but illegal migrants are reported either by

civilians or other police officers, which is followed by the act of verification of the identity of those reported, who will be placed in ÚPZC if their unauthorized stay is confirmed. [KII, Respondent PO; 2023] Both Respondent PO and Respondent SW repeatedly emphasized during the interview that the V4 states are in most cases not target countries of these migrants.[55] Statistics published by the Office of the Border and Foreign Police support their experience: despite the fact that any migrant can apply for asylum in Slovakia during their stay in Medveďov, only a very few of them do so, which confirms that they do not plan to remain in the country. *Graph 11* presents the proportion of foreigners placed in ÚPZC Medveďov and those who applied for asylum during their stay, the graph was elaborated based on annual statistics.
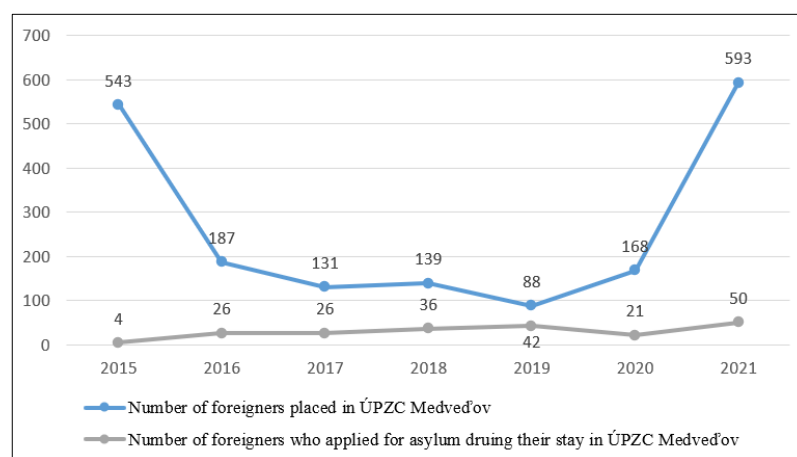
Graph 11: Foreigners Placed in ÚPZC Medveďov vs. those who Applied for Asylum during their Stay

Source: Office of the Border and Foreign Police (2015-2021); own elaboration of data based on annual statistical reports.

The graph clearly shows the growing number of illegal migrants in the centre, which the police officer commented with the following words: ´*A very intensive migration crisis was presented in the media in 2015, both Hungarian and Slovak politicians were warning us from the large number of illegally arriving migrants, especially around the time of political elections (…) the situation calmed down for some years, but now it became very challenging again. A large number of migrants have been caught this year for staying illegally within the territory of the EU. But the reality is not presented in the media.* ´ [KII,

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[55] According to the 23-year-experience of the police officer, he can confirm that most of the illegal migrants are heading to the West, for example to Germany or France. The social worker also confirmed this view and said that a large proportion of migrants is aiming towards those Western countries where they already have family members or acquaintances.

Respondent PO, 2023] The social worker agreed to the previous statements but added: *´there is a growing number of illegal migrants caught, but maybe the increasing police controls and the use of more innovative technology also contribute to this´*. [KII, Respondent SW; 2023]

The ÚPZC in Medveďov has a maximum capacity for 200 foreigners, and the number of staff members is around 60 people, that can be divided to policemen and civilians including maintenance workers, cooks, or cleaners[56]. In spite of the fact that ÚPZC in Medveďov is a closed camp with constant police supervision, a regular care is placed on the well-being of the migrants. Firstly, every inmate receives a basic package containing pyjamas, slippers and tools ensuring personal hygiene.[57] Secondly, they undergo medical inspection, and they have the right for consultation with psychologists, psychiatrists and/or music therapy. Legal representation[58] is ensured by lawyers[59] while the communication barriers are solved by interpreters provided and financed by the government. Thirdly, the Slovak Humanitarian Council regularly launches long-term projects – for example Kompas I, II, III – that aim to contribute to ensuring adequate and appropriate living conditions for third-country nationals placed in ÚPZC[60] whose needs are ensured by providing social counseling and assistance, psychological counseling, material assistance, the implementation of leisure activities and other additional and supporting services for persons placed in these facilities. [SHR] To name some examples, the daily tasks of the social worker working on the afore-mentioned projects in ÚPZC Medveďov include communication with the management of the facility, forwarding of requests and complaints of migrants towards other parties, suggestions for improvement. Moreover, he assists refugees when there is a need to contact a lawyer, doctor, psychologist etc. Secondly, SHR also provides supplies for migrants such as clothing, medicine or caffe and ensures equipment for leisure activities, such as for table tennis, badminton, football or for other exercises, moreover tools for board and card games. [KII, Respondent SW; 2023] *´These SHR projects are financed from the budget of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, namely from its Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration (AMIF), which can be distributed to two sources: 85% of the fund money comes from the EU while 15% from SR.´* [KII, Respondent SW; 2023]

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[56] It is important to mention that civilians are never left alone with foreigners without police supervision.
[57] This is crucial as they cannot keep their personal belongings during their stay. Alternatively they can request for them.
[58] Of course, migrants have the right to file a lawsuit. But legal representation is provided in any other matter.
[59] Through the Centre for Legal Aid.
[60] These projects of the Slovak Humanitarian Council exceed to both ÚPZC in Medveďov and in Sečovce.

Last but not least, specific requirements of migrants regarding their cultural practices and religious affiliation are paid attention to – this was confirmed by both the police officer and the social worker during the interviews. As example they both (individually) provided the period of the Ramadan[61], when it is taken into account that Muslims are fasting during the daylight, therefore their daily allowance of food is delivered to them in the evening. Another example that occurred during both interviews is that migrants are never disturbed during practicing prayer, regardless of their religious affiliation.

´Of course, there are occasional intercultural conflicts between the migrants at the centre. It is a closed camp where many cultures are mixed. Therefore, for example, some people have a very different notion about what basic personal hygiene means than the others. This may cause some misunderstandings or conflicts between them. But also there is a big fluctuation at the centre, no one stays there for years, everything is changing quickly. ´ [KII, Respondent SW; 2023] The maximum time that a foreigner spends in the centre is 180 days, during/after which they are either dismissed or expelled. In these cases the following scenarios may occur:

- positive decision on granting international protection on the territory of SR;
- forced readmission of the migrant to the country of origin through readmission agreements;
- forced transfer of the migrant to the country defined by the Dublin regulation[62];
- voluntary return[63];
- other. [Office of the Border and Foreign Police]

The goal is to prevent the status of the so-called legal limbo – a case when authorities refused to grant any kind of legal status to migrants, who also cannot go back to their country of origin – therefore the Union promotes the return of illegal migrants, in particular through readmission agreements. [European Commission] The Migration Office of the Ministry of

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[61] At the time of both interviews the Ramadan period was still ongoing.
[62] See Subchapter 1.3.8 for Dublin regulation.
[63] The police officer said the following about voluntary returns: *´We´ve had a lot of cases during the last years when illegal migrants voluntarily agreed to return home. These people came to Europe with hopes for a new life, but from what I see they often have false information about Europe. They have illusions that everything is perfect here and they will get everything they need, without having to work for it … but when they see the reality they don't mind going back home. (…) It is of course not my job to decide who receives international protection, but after so many years of experience I have developed an inner feeling, I now often see the difference between people who are actual refugees fleeing war or persecution, and those who primarily want to misuse the Union. (…) I don't say I agree with all the policies of Orbán, but without the fences he built in the South, there would have been a much bigger chaos in Slovakia too. ´* [KII, Respondent PO; 2023]

the Interior of SR (further as MÚ) is responsible for the reception of all asylum seekers in the territory of Slovakia. In addition, the MÚ is the first level authority deciding on granting or not granting international and supplementary protection. [Ministry of Interior of the SR] MÚ´s role extends to assisting in integration of persons who have been granted protection, as well as to documentation and international cooperation in these areas. However, should the decision be negative, the MÚ also fulfils tasks in cases when the Dublin proceedings are applied, while the proceedings in cases of the so-called readmission is carried out with the cooperation of relevant embassies (occasionally Frontex is involved, too). Voluntary returns are assisted and financed by IOM, which, if necessary, also provides them help with reintegration through various projects.

In all cases, an operational cooperation between the EU Member states and relevant authorities is inevitable. In addition, in order to implement the EU´s return policy in practice, synergy, and effective negotiations between EU and third countries are necessary.

Conclusion and Discussion

The topic of international migration has been a much-discussed socio-political and geopolitical issue especially since the 2015 migration crisis hit Europe. After examining the occasions from several perspectives, we can conclude that Europe experienced both a migration crisis and a crisis in migration governance, as the afore-mentioned event highlighted the unpreparedness of the EU for implementation of unified policies throughout its territory. The relocation and resettlement quotas set by the EU Council did not fulfil the desired role of a clear pressure-reducing system but led to disputes between individual Member States and created noticeable divergence in attitudes between the West and the East. While for example Germany loosened their measures regarding the reception of migrants, Hungary rather implemented more intensive ones or tightened those already existing in order to reduce the influx of immigrants arriving on its territory. Moreover, despite the initial hesitations that can be observed in Poland, the four countries of the V4 region unanimously rejected the quotas, referring to them as an unnecessary and unsuitable response to the crisis. Secondly, most of the influential V4 politicians and representatives of that time openly expressed their negative attitude towards immigrants, which is evidenced in their rhetoric, during which they repeatedly referred to incoming immigrants as a threat to European culture and/or accused them of misusing the Union. Thirdly, some V4 politicians – such as Orbán, Fico, or members of the Polish Law and Justice party – even used the situation as a political tactic to influence election results. Overall, xenophobic references to migrants by politicians were present across all four V4 countries. However, we are of the opinion that negatively influencing public opinion and spreading xenophobic ideology do not solve issues around migration management but are unprofessional approaches that may lead to escalation of a crisis.

After comparing the occasions of the 2015 migration crisis with the current state of refugee flows from Ukraine, we are now able to understand the direction in which migration regulation has developed over the past years. The EU and its Member States have recognized a need for action and migration related issues are being addressed more systematically. It is still a question of the future whether the new measures will be implemented successfully, but an enhanced harmony within the EU can already be observed. In addition to the EU´s condemnation of Russia´s military aggression, the V4 states jointly reinforced their support for Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees arriving in the region.

The difference of approaches may also lie in the geographical and cultural proximity of Ukraine to the V4. Despite we came to the conclusion that some intercultural conflicts may exist between Ukrainian refugees and locals, these are rather minor, and cultural differences are respected in institutions where migrants and refugees are concentrated, while their welfare is also paid attention to. Not only national and international organizations, but also volunteers assist in various projects that serve their wellbeing. However, the V4 region is typically not a target destination for migrants as most of them either head for Western Europe or desire to return back home as soon as it will be safe and possible.

Last but not least we found out that meaningful, real-life interactions between locals and migrants are relatively low, while prejudices fuelled by the xenophobic rhetoric of influential politicians may pull back potential initiations for interaction from both sides. In order to delve deeper into this matter, we propose scholars conducting further research to investigate to what extent the public speeches of influential politicians influence the level of xenophobia among citizens, and whether those individuals who have closer, real-life contact with immigrants show reduced xenophobia.

The main objective of the present thesis was to *provide a comparative analysis of migration management strategies of the V4*. In addition to the primary objective, we set several secondary goals, the fulfillment of which required the application of a diverse spectrum of scientific research methods. As with the help of the appropriately used methods, we managed to fulfill the main and secondary objectives, we are of the opinion that the presented thesis can provide a basis for academic researchers to address the same or similar research questions within other regional collaborations – such as the Benelux or the Baltic Assembly. However, our research was slightly limited due to lack of our language proficiency in Polish and Ukrainian, therefore we recommend that researchers conduct their studies in a territory where they either know the local language or are familiar with the language spoken by the majority of immigrants and/or refugees arriving in the region. Secondly, the sensitive nature of our research topic, which we carefully considered, further restricted the scope of our research, as we decided to address questionnaires to only a relatively smaller number of Ukrainian refugees.

In connection with the goals of the work, a hypothesis was formulated, which is as follows: *The V4 states demonstrate a common approach to migration governance.* Based on the evidence collected during the research, we can partially confirm the hypothesis, as we

concluded that the four countries of the region are rather in harmony when addressing issues related to migration governance, moreover, the country representatives are also regularly consulting on the subject. On the other hand, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia all dispose of their own migration policies that are in most cases prioritized based on the given situation or on actual needs of the individual country. Although we assume that the cooperation of the V4 will maintain its flexible and open character in the near future, we recommend that the state representatives continue their regular consultation on the issues, since harmony and coherence in migration policies within the region may reduce the extent of any emerging crisis. Furthermore, we are convinced that continuous monitoring of the situation evolving around international migration contributes to more accurate and up-to-date migration policies that are in accordance with human rights and European values.

Having recognized some of the main barriers to address issues of international migration transparently and effectively within the V4 region, we suggest a better promotion of mutual understanding and cross-cultural exchange, as these are inevitable traits in our rapidly changing, globalized world.

Resume

Regulácia medzinárodnej migrácie je často diskutovanou sociálno-politickou a geopolitickou témou. Otázky týkajúce sa problematiky okolo témy sú často neskutočne kontroverzné a zložité hlavne kvôli tomu, že sa k nim dá pristupovať z rozličných pohľadov. Medzinárodná migrácia má obrovský vplyv na krajiny pôvodu, ako aj na cieľové krajiny migrantov – výrazne ovplyvňuje nielen sociálnu, kultúrnu a ekonomickú štruktúru krajín, ale aj medzinárodné vzťahy na celom svete. Interdisciplinárny charakter témy potvrdzuje jej pravidelná prítomnosť v iných študijných odboroch, akými sú sociológia, ekonómia, právo, environmentalistika a interkultúrna komunikácia.

Významným medzníkom bolo obdobie okolo roku 2015, kedy Európu zasiahli utečenecké toky a masová imigrácia. Tieto udalosti preukázali na nepripravenosť Európskej únie zvládnuť situáciu, ktorá sa odvtedy často označuje ako kríza – migračná kríza alebo aj kríza migračného manažmentu. Následne sa k tejto téme začali približovať vedci a politológovia častejšie ako kedykoľvek predtým. Zdá sa, že vlády a štátne orgány tiež venujú čoraz väčšiu pozornosť riešeniu problémov súvisiacich s migráciou. Je nevyhnutné, aby aktuálne migračné politiky boli flexibilné a prispôsobiteľné novovznikajúcim geopolitickým situáciám, akým je napríklad súčasná vojna medzi Ruskom a Ukrajinou, kvôli ktorej milióny Ukrajincov hľadajú medzinárodnú ochranu v Európskej únii a počet nelegálne prichádzajúcich migrantov sa začal znova narastať. Predkladaná diplomová práca sa primárne zameriava na tieto dve udalosti v rámci regiónu Vyšehradskej štvorky, menovite Česko, Maďarsko, Slovensko a Poľsko.

Pre lepšie pochopenie sociálneho, kultúrneho a politického pozadia regiónu V4, prvá podkapitola teoretického prehľadu predstavuje alianciu Vyšehradskej štvorky, v ktorej sa sústreďujeme nielen na vznik a na *flexibilný a otvorený* charakter spolupráce, ale aj na výzvy, ktorými všetky štyri štáty čelili, aby sa mohli stať súčasťou Európskej únie. Členstvo potom prinieslo do regiónu niekoľko zásadných zmien, z ktorých asi najdôležitejšou je, že krajiny V4 sa stali súčasťou Západu a môžu teraz aktívne ovplyvňovať politiku Európy.

Druhá podkapitola vysvetľuje pojmy súvisiace s medzinárodnou migráciou a vymenúva niektoré bežné príčiny v podobe takzvaných push a pull faktorov. Tretia podkapitola postupne uvádza najdôležitejšie udalosti počas migračnej krízy, ako napríklad rozhodnutie Rady EÚ o povinných relokačných a presídľovacích kvótach, ktoré ideologicky

rozdelili Európu: kým západné krajiny schválili opatrenia, systém kvót vyvolal odpor členských štátov strednej a východnej časti únie – vrátane krajín V4. Napriek tomu, že tieto štyri krajiny mali prijať spolu viac ako 8000 migrantov, Česko prijalo iba 12, Slovensko 16, zatiaľ čo Maďarsko a Poľsko žiadneho. Situácia sa vyhrotila natoľko, že v roku 2017 Európska komisia zažalovala Česko, Maďarsko a Poľsko pre porušenie práva EÚ, keďže nerešpektovali mechanizmus prerozdeľovania migrantov. Tretia podkapitola – pomocou grafov a tabuliek – tiež prezentuje, že všetky štyri štáty Vyšehradskej štvorky boli zasiahnuté migračnou krízou v rôznej miere. Jedna z hlavných trás prichádzajúcich migrantov viedla cez Maďarsko, kde premiér Viktor Orbán opätovne zdôraznil, že odmieta migrantov. Rôzne billboardy a heslá o ochrane Európanov, Európskej kultúry, hodnotách a náboženstve sa stali dôležitou súčasťou jeho politiky. Podobne ako v Maďarsku, aj na Slovensku bolo možné pozorovať výrazne odmietavú rétoriku vplyvných politikov voči migrantom. Zdá sa však, že po vrcholiacej kríze sa situácia upokojila a obavy z masovej migrácie sa v Európe relatívne vytratili aspoň dovtedy, kým sa nezačala súčasná ruská invázia na Ukrajinu.

Štvrtá podkapitola teoretickej časti uvádza konflikt medzi Rakúskom a Ukrajinou, kvôli ktorej milióny Ukrajincov hľadajú medzinárodnú ochranu v Európskej únii. Súčasný prístup štátov V4 k ukrajinským utečencom je však úplne odlišný v porovnaní s tým, aký bol k utečencom v roku 2015: Česko, Maďarsko, Poľsko a Slovensko otvorili svoje hranice pre Ukrajincov. Je dôležité spomenúť, že sú značné rozdiely medzi geopolitickými konfliktmi, ktoré vyústili do migračnej krízy v roku 2015, a medzi rusko-ukrajinskou vojnou, ktorá spôsobila masové toky utečencov do Európy v roku 2022. Medzi hlavné rozdiely dvoch udalostí patrí aj to, že od začiatku ruskej okupácie Ukrajiny bol konflikt častokrát vykresľovaný aj ako vojna proti Európe, alebo že región teraz čelí prílevu utečencov z krajiny, ktorá je nielen geograficky bližšia, ale je aj oveľa viac podobná krajinám V4 napr. v kultúrnych a etnických aspektoch, vrátane dominantného náboženstva.

Piata podkapitola sa venuje dôležitosti interkultúrneho aspektu, ktorý pri skúmaní oblasti medzinárodnej migrácie nemôže byť ignorovaný, keďže zachovanie kultúrnej identity je často kľúčovým bodom aj pre miestnych aj pre imigrantov. V tomto zmysle sme prezentovali význam krajiny pôvodu imigrantov: zatiaľ čo kultúrne praktiky moslimov a náboženské presvedčenie islamu môžu byť pre občanov strednej a východnej Európy neznáme, Ukrajina vykazuje určité historické, kultúrne a jazykové väzby s V4, čo môže pozitívne ovplyvniť prístup Európanov k ukrajinským utečencom.

Po pochopení teoretických východísk sú v druhej kapitole s názvom Ciele a Metódy definované hlavné a vedľajšie ciele práce, formulovaná hypotéza a predstavené metodologické prístupy pre empirický výskum. Napriek tomu, že v regióne V4 sú neustále prítomné rôzne politické a ekonomické rozdiely, a že spolupráca medzi V4 štátmi nadobúda radšej neformálny charakter, na základe spoločného historického a kultúrneho pozadia štyroch štátoch navrhujeme myšlienku, že tieto krajiny spolupracujú v riadení migrácie. Vzhľadom na toto presvedčenie práca skúma nasledujúcu hypotézu, podľa ktorej *štáty V4 demonštrujú spoločný prístup k riadeniu migrácie*. Hlavným cieľom tejto práce bolo *poskytnúť komparatívnu analýzu stratégií riadenia migrácie krajín V4*. Pre naplnenie hlavného cieľa bolo definovaných niekoľko vedľajších cieľov, ktorými sú:

- *preskúmať, ako a do akej miery je región V4 zasiahnutý masovou migráciou.*
- *preskúmať, či je región V4 cieľovou destináciou pre imigrantov.*
- *preskúmať, či migračná kríza z roku 2015 ovplyvnila migračnú politiku V4 a spoluprácu štyroch štátov.*
- *poskytnúť analýzu interkultúrneho aspektu interakcie medzi utečencami prichádzajúcich do regiónu V4 a miestnymi obyvateľmi.*

V rámci našej empirického výskumu sme sa rozhodli využiť kvalitatívne aj kvantitatívne výskumné metódy, ktoré môžu prispieť k naplneniu vyššie uvedených cieľov. Po prvé, vzhľadom na množstvo dostupných údajov a informácií na tému riadenia migrácie je zahrnutý aj kvalitatívny výskum, počas ktorého siahame po už existujúcich zdrojoch, ako sú publikácie domácich a zahraničných autorov, prejavy a reči vplyvných politikov a rôzne online zdroje ako napríklad autoritatívne webové stránky, štatistické databázy a politické vyhlásenia. Táto kvalitatívna výskumná metóda nám umožňuje nielen detailne skúmať stratégie riadenia migrácie štyroch vyšehradských štátov jednotlivo, ale aj analyzovať niektoré potenciálne zmeny v migračných politikách od migračnej krízy v roku 2015 pri sledovaní spolupráce v rámci V4. V podkapitole 3.1 sme analyzovali intenzívne politické opatrenia proti migrantom, porovnávali sme ako niektorí vplyvní politici V4 zneužívali situáciu, aby ovplyvnili politické voľby vo svoj prospech, a skúmali sme, či politici vôbec prejavili nejakú snahu prijať migrantov do ich štátov. V podkapitole 3.2 sme sa venovali následkom migračnej krízy na migračnú politiku, keďže aj Európska únia aj jednotlivé členské štáty uznali potrebu prijať nové opatrenia na podrobnejšie riešenie regulácie migrácie. Všimli sme si, že problémy súvisiace s migráciou sa teraz riešia systematickejšie

ako v roku 2015, zdá sa, že EÚ a jej členské štáty sú lepšie pripravené na riešenie (veľkých) migračných tokov.

Podkapitola 3.3., pre hlbšie pochopenie a prezentovanie témy, uvádza prípadové štúdie dvoch ukrajinských utečencov: respondenta A, ktorý utiekol z Ukrajiny do Česka, a respondenta B, ktorý v čase vypuknutia vojny odišiel do Maďarska, potom sa však rozhodol pokračovať v ceste do Nemecka. Tieto prípadové štúdie nám poskytli prehľad toho, ako prebieha proces podania žiadosti o medzinárodnú ochranu. Čo je podobné v oboch prípadoch, že ani respondent A nikdy pred vojnou neplánoval ísť do Českej republiky, ani respondent B do Maďarska. Ich výber týchto štátov bol odôvodnený geografickou blízkosťou krajín k Ukrajine a tým, že mali miestneho známeho, ktorý im bol pripravený pomôcť. Po druhé, obaja hovorili o dôležitosti malých ukrajinských neformálnych komunít, ktorých sú súčasťou, pretože je pre nich ľahšie spriateliť sa s ukrajinskými kolegami ako s miestnymi obyvateľmi.

(Možná) interakcia medzi utečencami a miestnymi obyvateľmi je ďalej skúmaná v terénnom štúdiu realizovaného na juhozápadnom Slovensku v meste Gabčíkovo, kde Humanitárne Centrum (ďalej ako HC) ubytováva utečencov z Ukrajiny. Pred prípravou terénnej štúdie nám výskumný tím projektu MAGYC poskytol materiály vo forme vzorových otázok, ktoré by mohli byť užitočné pri riešení pred alebo počas výskumu. Tento materiál bol postupne prepracovaný na základe cieľov a obmedzení práce a slúžili nám ako návod, ako sa zamerať na relevantné informácie. Ďalej sme uskutočnili rozhovory s kľúčovými informátormi: s riaditeľom centra (ďalej ako respondent D), ako aj s recepčnou (ďalej ako respondent R), ktorí sú obaja v každodennom kontakte s ubytovanými migrantmi. Po tretie, adresovali sme dotazník s otvorenými otázkami ukrajinským utečencom žijúcim v HC, keďže vedenie ústnych pohovorov by bolo náročné z dôvodu jazykových bariér. V neposlednom rade sme rozoslali krátky online dotazník lokálnym obyvateľom s cieľom pozorovať kontakt medzi miestnymi obyvateľmi a utečencami a preskúmať potenciálne interakcie medzi nimi. Výsledky terénneho štúdia v Gabčíkove sú ďalej analyzované v podkapitole 3.4. Po zvážení všetkých odpovedí z oboch dotazníkov odpovede naznačujú, že v meste sú prítomné nezávažné (interkultúrne) konflikty, avšak len v malej miere. Väčšina respondentov si nie je vedomá žiadnej interkultúrnej problematiky v Gabčíkove. Navyše v rámci HC, kde utečenci a pracovníci úzko spolupracujú na dennej báze, neboli hlásené žiadne problémy. HC v Gabčíkove funguje bez veľkých problémov, prevláda príjemná, skôr rodinná atmosféra.

V podkapitole 3.5 je rozpísané druhé terénne štúdium, pri ktorom sme adresovali riešenie nelegálnej migrácie v regióne. Úrad hraničnej a cudzineckej polície má na Slovensku dva útvary policajného zaistenia pre cudzincov (ÚPZC): v Medveďove a v Sečovciach. Obe zložky sa zaoberajú s migrantmi, ktorí boli prichytení pri nelegálnom pobyte na území SR, vrátane prípadov, keď migranti nemajú povinné platné dokumenty ako sú víza alebo iné cestovné doklady, alebo prípady, keď napr. daní migranti boli ale z akéhokoľvek dôvodu už nie sú oprávnení zostať v krajine. Náš empirický výskum bol realizovaný v ÚPZC Medveďov, keďže sa geograficky nachádza len 15 kilometrov od Gabčíkova. Napriek tomu, že HC Gabčíkovo a ÚPZC Medveďov nespolupracujú – keďže obe slúžia veľmi odlišný účel – verili sme, že skúmanie legálnej aj nelegálnej migrácie v rámci regiónu prispeje k práci užitočnými doplňujúcimi informáciami, ktoré môžu byť kľúčové pre odvodenie konečného záveru najmä o interkultúrnom aspekte v rámci témy migrácie. Okrem toho, vykonávanie výskumu v blízkom okolí autorov môže uľahčiť zber kvalitatívnych údajov.

Keďže ÚPZC Medveďov je uzavretý tábor s neustálym policajným dozorom, nemáme oprávnenie vstupovať do jeho vnútorných priestorov. Kvantitatívny zber údajov bol preto realizovaný prostredníctvom štatistických výkazov, ktoré zverejnil Úrad hraničnej a cudzineckej polície SR, a kvalitatívne údaje prostredníctvom rozhovoru s vysokopostaveným policajtom (ďalej len respondent PO) a so sociálnym pracovníkom (ďalej ako respondent SW) zo Slovenskej humanitnej rady, keďže obaja zažívajú každodennú interakciu s nelegálnymi migrantmi v rámci centra. Ako sme to predpokladali, tieto rozhovory nám slúžili užitočnými informáciami: v oboch rozhovoroch bolo potvrdené, že sa venuje pozornosť špecifickým požiadavkám migrantov na ich kultúrne zvyklosti a náboženskú príslušnosť. Ako príklad, obaja (individuálne) pomenovali obdobie Ramadánu, kedy sa berie do úvahy, že moslimovia sa počas dňa postia, a preto im dennú dávku jedla doručujú večer. Ďalším príkladom, ktorý sa vyskytol počas oboch rozhovorov, bolo, že migranti nikdy nie sú prerušení počas praktizovania modlitby, bez ohľadu na ich náboženskú príslušnosť. Počas terénneho štúdia sme znova potvrdili aj to, že štáty V4 nepatria medzi cieľové krajiny migrantov: napriek tomu, že o azyl na Slovensku môže počas pobytu v Medveďove požiadať každý utečenec, len veľmi málo z nich tak urobí.

Podrobnejšie informácie o realizácii prípadových a terénnych štúdií sú uvedené v prílohách, pričom výsledky nášho výskumu sú zhrnuté a ďalej diskutované v záverečnej kapitole. Keďže pomocou rôznych metód sa nám podarilo naplniť hlavné aj vedľajšie ciele,

zastávame názor, že predkladaná práca môže poskytnúť akademickým pracovníkom základ pre skúmanie rovnakých alebo podobných otázok v rámci iných regiónoch – ako napr. Benelux. Náš výskum bol však mierne obmedzený z dôvodu našej nedostatočnej znalosti poľštiny a ukrajinčiny, preto výskumníkom odporúčame, aby vykonávali svoj výskum na území, kde poznajú miestny jazyk, alebo poznajú jazyk, ktorým hovorí väčšina prisťahovalcov a /alebo utečencov prichádzajúcich do regiónu. Po druhé, vzhľadom na citlivosť našej výskumnej témy, rozhodli sme sa adresovať dotazníky len relatívne menšiemu počtu ukrajinských utečencov, čo ďalej obmedzil rozsah nášho výskumu.

Na základe dôkazov zozbieraných počas empirického výskumu môžeme čiastočne prijať hypotézu, podľa ktorej štáty V4 preukazujú spoločný prístup k riadeniu migrácie. Dospeli sme k záveru, že štyri krajiny regiónu sú pri riešení otázok spojených s riadením migrácie pomerne v súlade, navyše zástupcovia týchto krajín pravidelne konzultujú na danú tému. Na druhej strane, Česko, Maďarsko, Poľsko a Slovensko disponujú vlastnými migračnými politikami, ktoré sú vo väčšine prípadov uprednostnené na základe danej situácie alebo aktuálnych potrieb danej krajiny. Po porovnaní prípadov migračnej krízy v roku 2015 so súčasnými prílevmi utečencov z Ukrajiny sme prezentovali, akým smerom sa v posledných rokoch vyvíjala regulácia migrácie. EÚ a jej členské štáty uznali potrebu konať a otázky súvisiace s migráciou už riešia systematickejšie a je možné pozorovať zvýšený súlad v rámci EÚ. EÚ odsúdila vojenskú agresiu Ruska a štáty V4 spoločne posilnili svoju podporu Ukrajine a ukrajinským utečencom prichádzajúcich do regiónu. Ústretový prístup môže spočívať aj v geografickej a kultúrnej blízkosti Ukrajiny k V4. Dospeli sme k záveru, že medzi ukrajinskými utečencami a miestnymi obyvateľmi môžu existovať medzikultúrne konflikty, ale ide skôr o menšie nedorozumenia. Kultúrne rozdiely sú rešpektované v inštitúciách, kde sa sústreďujú migranti a utečenci. Nielen národné a medzinárodné organizácie, ale aj dobrovoľníci asistujú pri rôznych projektoch podporujúcich imigrantov. Región V4 však zvyčajne nie je cieľovou destináciou pre migrantov, pretože väčšina z nich smeruje do Západnej Európy alebo sa chce vrátiť domov hneď ako to bude bezpečné.

V neposlednom rade sme zistili, že úroveň zmysluplných, reálnych interakcií medzi miestnymi obyvateľmi a migrantmi je relatívne nízka, pričom predsudky vyvolané xenofóbnou rétorikou politikov môžu obmedzovať potenciálne iniciatívy na interakciu z oboch strán. Uvedomením si týchto prekážok však navrhujeme podporu vzájomného porozumenia a interkultúrnej výmeny, keďže ide o nevyhnutné črty v našom rýchlo sa meniacom, globalizovanom svete.

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Attachments

The empirical research of the submitted thesis was realised through key informant interviews and questionnaires. Appendix A, B and G present the course of the KIIs and information on respondents, Appendix C and D showcase the questionnaires, while Appendix E and F include own photos and a map.

Appendix A

Information on Respondents A and B

Respondent	Status	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Date of Leaving Ukraine	Date of KII	Language of KII	Form of KII
A	refugee	20	female	Ukraine	02.03.22	25.04.23	English	oral, online
B	refugee	20	female	Ukraine	04.03.22	22.04.23	English	oral, online

Appendix B

Information on Respondents for the Field Study of Gabčíkovo

Respondent	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Leaving Ukraine	Date of KII	Language of KII	Form of KII
D (Centre Director)	__	female	Slovakia	__	Multiple dates in April ´23	Hungarian /Slovak	Email + oral, in-person
R (Receptionist)	__	female	Slovakia	__	24.04.23	Hungarian	oral, in-person
REFUGEES							
1	43	female	Ukraine	13.03.22	18.04.23	English /Ukrainian	written
2	56	female	Ukraine	11.03.22	18.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
3	39	female	Ukraine	13.03.22	18.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
4	33	female	Ukraine	01.12.22	18.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
5	37	female	Ukraine	01.04.22	18.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
6	44	female	Ukraine	22.06.22	20.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
7	32	female	Ukraine	15.01.23	20.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
8	36	female	Ukraine	09.04.22	20.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
9	54	female	Ukraine	09.04.22	20.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
10	46	female	Ukraine	11.03.22	20.04.23	-ll-	-ll-
CITIZENS	**Age range**		**Distribution by gender**		**Additional information**		
Number of respondents reached: **74**	18-78		Female: 44 Male: 30		The online questionnaire was open between 28.04-02.5.23, language: Slovak/Hungarian		

Appendix C
Paper-form Questionnaire Addressed to Ukrainian Refugees

Age:
вік:

Gender:
Стать:

Country of Origin:
Країна/місце народження:

Religion:
Віросповідання:

Date of arrival to Slovakia:
Дата прибуття до Словаччини:

What language(s) do you speak when interacting with locals?:
Якими мовами ви розмовляєте з місцевими?:

Since when do you live in the Humanitarian Centre of Gabčíkovo?:
Як довго ви проживаєте в гуманітарному центрі в Габчиково?:

Please answer each question in a minimum of **4 sentences**. But feel free to respond to the questions with longer answers, you can share any relevant stories or experiences, anything you can think of, I will be happy to read about you, and any small detail might be useful for my research.

Будь ласка, дайте відповідь на кожне запитання щонайменше **4 реченнями**. Але не соромтеся відповідати на запитання довшими відповідями, ви можете поділитися будь-якими актуальними історіями чи досвідом, усім, що вам спаде на думку. Я з радістю прочитати про вас і будь-яка маленька деталь може дуже домогти мені в моєму дослідженні.

1. For what reason did you leave your home country? Why did you choose Slovakia? Did you consider any other country? Do you know how long are you staying here?
   З якої причини/Чому ви залишили рідну країну? Чому ви обрали саме Словаччину? Чи розглядали ви якусь іншу країну? Чи знаєте, наскільки довго ви тут залишитеся?

2. What did you do before? For example, job, studies? How was your life? (e.g. who did you live with?)
   Чим ви займалися в своїй країні? Наприклад, працювали чи навчалися? Що б ви могли розповісти про своє життя? (наприклад, разом з ким ви проживали?)

3. What do you do now (e.g. work, studies…)? How does your life look like now?
   Чим ви займаєтесь зараз (наприклад, працюєте, навчаєтеся…)? Як сильно змінилося ваше життя і як воно виглядає зараз?

4. <u>How do you feel in the town of Gabčíkovo? Do you feel safe? Have you experienced any form of discrimination or violence?</u>
Чи подобається вам в місті Габчиково? Чи відчуваєте ви себе в безпеці? Чи стикалися ви з будь-якою формою дискримінації або насильства?

5. <u>Do you have any local friends/close friends in Gabčíkovo? When and how did you get to know them? What does your relationship look like (e.g.how often do you meet, what do you do together?</u>
Чи є у вас місцеві друзі/близькі друзі в Габчиково? Коли і як ви з ними познайомилися? Як виглядають ваші стосунки (наприклад, як часто ви зустрічаєтеся, що ви робите разом?

6. **A** <u>Answer only in case if you were granted **temporary shelter** in Slovakia:</u>
Відповідайте лише в тому випадку, якщо вам було надано **тимчасовий прихисток** у Словаччині:

<u>When and where did you ask for temporary shelter? What did you have to do? F.e. what documentations were needed etc.?</u>
Коли і де ви подали заяву про надання тимчасового прихистку? Що ви повинні були зробити, аби отримати прихисток, наприклад, які документи були потрібні і т.д.?

<u>How long did the process take?</u>
Скільки часу тривав процес?

6 **B.** <u>Answer only in case if you were grated **asylum** in Slovakia:</u>
Відповідайте лише в тому випадку, якщо ви отримали **притулок** у Словаччині:

<u>When and where did you ask for asylum? What did you have to do to receive asylum? What documentations were needed?</u>
Коли і де ви подали заяву про надання притулку? Що ви повинні були зробити, щоб отримати притулок? Які документи були потрібні?

<u>How many interviews / meetings did you have before you were granted asylum? What did they ask you?</u>
Скільки співбесід/зустрічей ви пройшли для того, аби вам надали притулок? Що вас запитували?

<u>How long did the process take</u>?
Скільки часу тривав процес?

Online Questionnaire Addressed to Gabčíkovo Citizens

Dotazník Gabčíkovo - Bős kérdőív

Som študentkou odboru Cudzie jazyky a interkultúrna komunikácia na Ekonomickej Univerzite v Bratislave. V diplomovej práci sa zaoberám témou migrácia. Vážení občania Gabčíkova, rada by som Vás požiadala, aby ste venovali čas vyplneniu môjho dotazníka. Vyplnenie zaberie približne 5 minút a dotazník je anonymný. Ďakujem!

A pozsonyi Közgazdaságtudományi Egyetem Idegen nyelvek és interkulturális kommunikáció szakos hallgatója vagyok. Diplomamunkámban a migráció témájával foglalkozom. Tisztelt bősi lakosok, szeretném megkérni Önöket, hogy szánjanak időt kérdőívem kitöltésére.
A kitöltése körülbelül 5 percet vesz igénybe, és a kérdőív anonim. Köszönöm!

* Označuje povinnú otázku

1. **Vek**/Kor *

_____

2. **Pohlavie**/Nem *

   Označte iba jednu elipsu.

   ◯ žena/nő
   ◯ muž/férfi
   ◯ nechcem odpovedať/nem szeretnék válaszolni

3. **Je nasledujúce tvrdenie pre Vás pravdivé?: ´V Gabčíkove bývam a/alebo pracujem už minimálne 8 rokov´/** *
   Igaz Önre a következő állítás?: ´Már legalább 8 éve Bősön lakom és/vagy dolgozom´

   Označte iba jednu elipsu.

   ◯ áno/igen

4. **1. Viete, o tom, že Humanitárne centrum v Gabčíkove ubytováva utečencov a migrantov?/**   *
   1. Tisztában van azzal, hogy a Bősi Humanitárius Centrum menekülteknek és migránsoknak ad otthont?

   Označte iba jednu elipsu.

   ◯ áno/igen
   ◯ nie/nem
   ◯ možno/talán

5. **2. Stretávate sa často v meste s utečencami a/alebo migrantmi? Napr. v obchode, v parku, na ihrisku, atď. /** *
   2. Gyakran találkozik menekültekkel és/vagy migránsokkal? Például az üzletben, parkban, játszótéren stb.

   Označte iba jednu elipsu.

   ◯ áno, bežne / igen, gyakran
   ◯ áno, občas / igen, alkalmanként
   ◯ takmer nikdy alebo vôbec nikdy / szinte soha vagy egyáltalán soha

6. **3. Máte medzi utečencami a migrantmi niekoho, koho už považujete za svojho priateľa alebo blízkeho známeho?/** *
   3. Van valaki a menekültek és migránsok között, akit már barátjának vagy közeli ismerősének tekint?

   Označte iba jednu elipsu.

   ◯ áno / igen
   ◯ nie / nem

7. **4. Boli ste už súčasťou nejakého interkultúrneho konfliktu s utečencami/migrantmi? Ako napr. hádky, nedorozumenia kvôli interkultúrnym rozdielom atď.** / 4. Volt már része bármilyen interkulturális konfliktusban a menekültekkel/migránsokkal? Mint például, veszekedések, félreértések interkulturális különbségek miatt stb. *

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ⬭ áno, ale bol to len menší konflikt / igen, de csak kisebb konfliktus volt
- ⬭ áno, a bol to dosť veľký konflikt / igen, és elég nagy konfliktus volt
- ⬭ nie, nebol(a) som súčasťou žiadneho konfliktu / nem, nem voltam részese semmilyen konfliktusnak

8. **5. Viete o nejakom konflikte, ku ktorému došlo medzi obyvateľom Gabčíkova a utečencom/migrantom - kvôli interkultúrnym rozdielom?** / *

5. Tudomására jutott bármilyen konfliktus, amely egy másik bősi lakos és egy menekült/migráns között zajlott - interkultúrális különbségek miatt?

Označte iba jednu elipsu.

- ⬭ áno, ale bol to len menší konflikt / igen, de csak kisebb konfliktus volt
- ⬭ áno, a bol to dosť veľký konflikt / igen, és elég nagy konfliktus volt
- ⬭ nie, nie som vedomá/ý žiadneho konfliktu / nem, nem vagyok tudatában semmilyen konfliktusnak

9. **ak ste na niektorú z 2 predchádzajúcich otázok odpovedali *áno*, prosím stručne opíšte dôvod a pirbližný dátum konfliktu** / ha az előző 2 kérdés bármelyikére *igennel* válaszolt, kérem röviden írja le a konfliktus okát és hozzávetőleges időpontját

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. **+ Ďakujem veľmi pekne! Ak máte niečo, o čo by ste sa so mnou chceli podeliť ohľadom témy alebo dotazníka, dajte mi, prosím, vedieť tu:**
+ Köszönöm szépen! Ha bármit meg szeretne osztani velem a témával vagy a kérdőívvel kapcsolatban, kérem, jelezze itt:
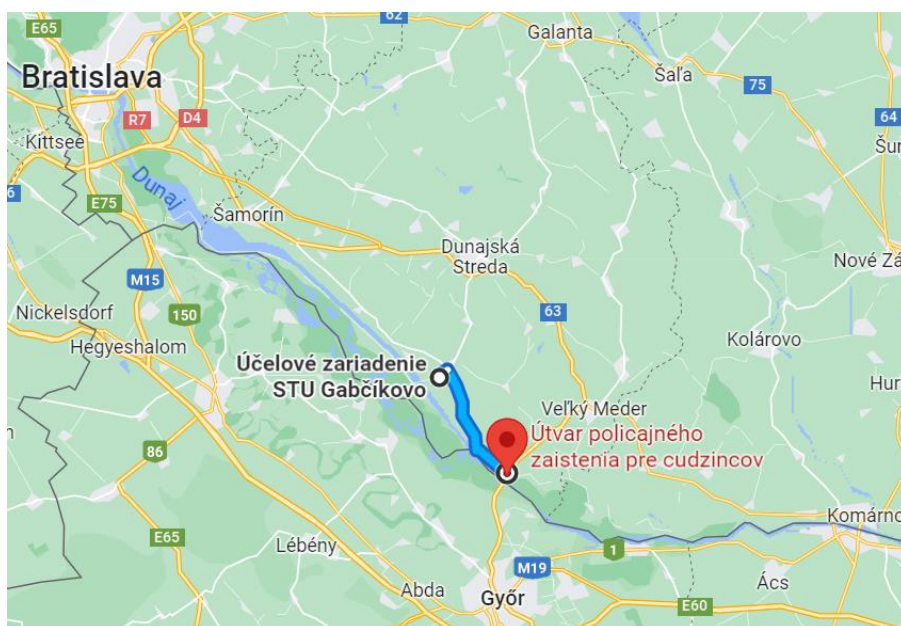
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Appendix E

Own photos around the Humanitarian Centre in Gabčíkovo (04.2023)

Appendix F

Map showcasing the location of HC Gabčíkovo and ÚPZC Medveďov (screenshot from Google Maps, 30.04.23)

Appendix G

Information on Respondents for the Case Study of Medveďov

Respondent	Country of Origin	Date of KII	Language of KII	Form of KII
Police Officer (PO)	Slovakia	Multiple dates in April and May ´23	Hungarian/Slovak	oral, in-person
Social Worker (SW)	Slovakia	19.04.23	Slovak	oral, online