

Current Intelligence Report Circular

CLASSIFICATION: DECLASSIFIED AND APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Report Topic: Responses to war in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania

Production Date: 29 March 2022

CMC Director: Kevin Joyce

Report Author(s): Tessa Bentley and Kevin Joyce

Hungary receives criticism over war response, as election puts increasing pressure on Orbán

Hungary will continue to prohibit supplying weapons to Ukraine through its territory, and will not stop using Russian gas and oil, according to Hungary's Foreign Minister of Affairs and Trade, Péter Szijjártó. During the European Union (EU) summit in Brussels on 24 MAR, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky repeated his requests for weapon supplies to travel through Hungary and for Hungary to stop importing natural gas and oil from Russia. Szijjártó denied these requests. Instead, he reaffirmed that keeping Hungary secure, and not paying the price of the war in Ukraine were of paramount importance for his administration. Hungary depends on Russia for 86 percent of its natural gas and 60 percent of its oil. In his speech to the EU, President Zelensky also directly called on Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to decide who he wants to side with in this conflict. Polish President Andrzej Duda has also openly criticized Orbán's policy on the ongoing war in Ukraine, given the thousands of deaths and shelling of residential areas by Russian forces. Orbán has built a close relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin during his 12-years in power. The Russo-Ukrainian War has forced Orbán to temper his pro-Russian stance, in order to maintain popular support for the election in Hungary on 03 APR. In a poll conducted between 23 MAR and 25 MAR, Orbán was leading with 41 percent of the vote, while the opposition, led by Peter Marki-Zay, held 39 percent. END

CMCD Note

Prime Minister Orbán has openly stated that sanctioning Russian energy is where Hungary draws a 'red line'. Orbán's political party controls the majority of the popular media, which has assisted in his campaign narrative of shifting away from Russia. However, the state media have also reportedly attacked President Zelensky on a few occasions. Zelensky's calls on Orbán to 'pick a side' will likely further influence the 03 APR elections, as many polls report that response to the war is weighing heavily on voter opinion. Polish President Andrzej Duda's criticism of Hungary is likely to continue as Hungary refrains from providing major support to Ukraine. At the same time, Poland continues to bear the financial and political strain of the refugee crisis. Hungary currently is pressing for funds to be unfrozen from the European Union. However, the release of these funds will be dictated by the handing and results of the 03 APR election.

Sources

YouTube, Guardian News

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1iCM5h-cSE>

Reuters, Hungary's governing Fidesz two points ahead of opposition alliance, according to poll

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungarys-governing-fidesz-two-points-ahead-opposition-alliance-poll-2022-03-28/>

Interfax, Hungary won't allow supplying of weapons to Ukraine through its territory, won't stop using Russian oil, gas - Hungarian FM [DNGTS] <https://ifax.com/newsroom/top-stories/77391/>

AA, Polish president criticizes Hungary's policy on Russian attack on Ukraine

[DNGTS] <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/polish-president-criticizes-hungary-s-policy-on-russian-attack-on-ukraine/2547937>