

WISEGRAD YOUTH FORUM 2022



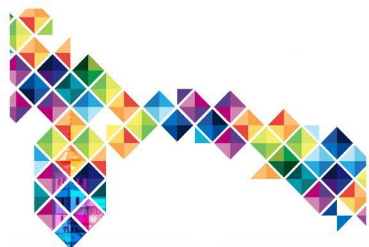
Lessons Learned from the War in Ukraine

On the first of December, a workshop was held, which was part of a larger project called Visegrad Youth Forum, organized by the EAC student association. The topic of this workshop was: Lessons learned from the war in Ukraine.

The speaker opened the workshop with a brief historical insight into Ukrainian history and its history of strong will and determination to separate itself from the russification efforts. Also, the very important fact was mentioned, that students were often at the center of these efforts to fight for national identity and to fight against russification. Often the dissident's movements would get in touch with students and would try to start these protests. Examples of these protests are protests that happened after the Chernobyl tragedy, or Orange revolution, or one of the latest Euro maiden. These dissidents and students helped to build Ukrainian national identity. National identity, that is strong and independent and doesn't need a bigger brother telling them what to do.

After this, we moved to another part: the Impacts of the war in Ukraine on the world. There are many levels at that we can discuss this issue. The most obvious one is that we should not second-guess the Ukrainian people. There were many assumptions that if Russia attacked they will conquer Ukraine in a matter of days if not hours. But after more than a half year, Ukraine still stands strong and it is even pushing Russians out of their territory. Another key fact that the world can learn from this war is the need for a strong and decisive leader as president Zelensky. He did not flee when Russia attacked, even though he was offered safe transport. He gives hope to people. He stood up to a larger and stronger bully and showed the world that fighting for a righteous cause will bring its reward. From a military point of view, this war showed that western equipment is superior to that of Russian origin. Also, the decentralized model of command that NATO members are using is more effective than that centralized that Russia is using.





WISEGRAD YOUTH FORUM 2022



One of the most important lessons learned from this war for Europe is the need for the diversification of its energy sources. Being dependable on a totalitarian regime is not a good call and it can easily backfire.

One of the last parts of this workshop was focused at the Putin's regime in Russia. There is no space for agreements with Russia. After these few months, we can assume there is no space for agreements with Russia. We cannot precisely tell what is a plan of Putin, if it is to reestablish the soviet satellite states, or something more, but we should do what we can to try to prevent his plans from becoming reality. And NATO is trying to do that. The countries of the eastern flank increased the number of soldiers from other NATO countries. Also, many economic sanctions target the ability of Russia to produce military equipment, of the higher grade or basic ones. These sanctions also have a psychological effect, many western brands pulled out of Russia, and this affects the daily life of every Russian citizen This war should be a wake up call to invest more in their armies at least those 2 percent that we primised. We should not only relial on USA to protect whole NATO.

The final part of this workshop focused on V4 countries and their approach to war. Among the V4 countries, Poland is arguably the most active since the beginning of the war. It is also conditioned by their bad relationship with Russia from history. Poland accepted the most refugees, they are actively modernizing their army. Czechia is one of the top contributors of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and its parliament marked Russia as a terrorist state among the first in the world. Slovakia sends a lot of heavy armaments to Ukraine, and also is strongly advocating for Ukraine to become a member of the EU. The black sheep of the V4 family is Hungary whose official statement is to stay out of the war, but Hungary is advocating to stop sending weapons to Ukraine, and it is often undermining the common EU attempts to help Ukraine. At the end the participants summarized the key takeaways from this workshop: We should still do more to help Ukraine. The EU and V4 should try to persuade Hungary to stop undermining its common policy towards Russia and Ukraine.

