



The publication was prepared by the NGO «Centre for East European Studies» with the support of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, Kyiv-Ukraine Office. The published opinions, conclusions and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, the Kyiv-Ukraine Bureau and the German government.

Coverage of Ukraine's relations with Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia in the Ukrainian media: topics and accents monitoring

On the cases of *Ukrainska Pravda*, *Zaxid.net* and *Ukrinform*

Rationale for the selection of publications: *Ukrainska Pravda* is one of the most prominent and influential independent media outlets, covering a wide range of topics nationwide. *Zaxid.net* is a media outlet that primarily covers the western region of Ukraine, including the border regions. *Ukrinform* is a state news agency that publishes a wide range of news. The importance of state communication and official information is undeniable during martial law.

Monitoring period: September 2023 - September 2024.

The media analyzed provided the most detailed information about relations with Poland, less about relations with Hungary, and the least - with Slovakia.

Below is a breakdown by country. The main topics are not listed in any particular order but are based on the number of published materials.

Poland

- ***Blockade of the Polish-Ukrainian border by Polish farmers and carriers***

The topic of blocking the border dominated *Ukrainska Pravda's* (*UP*) coverage from September 2023 to April 2024. *UP* explained the positions of Polish and Ukrainian authorities, emphasizing their determination to the positions they expressed - [Poland will continue to ban imports of Ukrainian grain, despite the EU's permission - Moravetskyi \(15.09.2023\)](#), [Kyiv is not ready to accept Poland's ban on imports - Stefanyshyna \(14.09.2023\)](#). *UP* also provided information about the criticism of the grain embargo by the then-Polish opposition of Tusk ([Polish opposition leader criticizes government over grain embargo on Ukraine, 21.09.23](#)) while drawing attention to the sharp words of Prime Minister Morawiecki, who called on President Zelensky not to offend Poles after the latter's speech at last year's UN General Assembly. The publication also drew attention to the words of Polish officials who warned that the grain crisis could lead to a decrease in support for Ukraine ([There were rumors in Poland that they reduce support for Ukraine due to the grain crisis, 20.09.23](#)), and also considered the situation of the border blockade in the context of the parliamentary elections held in October 2023 (article by Mykhailo Dubyniatsky [White, red, blue, yellow, 14.10.23](#)).

Despite hopes that the situation at the border would improve after the elections, the vast majority of news focused on the blockade. For example, of the 90 stories published in December 2023, more than half (46) were about the situation at the border. *UP* quoted representatives of the new Polish government saying that a quick resolution of the blockade would be difficult ([Tusk says the blockade of the border with Ukraine will be difficult to resolve because of predecessors, 18.12.23](#)) and drew attention to criticism of the actions of Polish blockers by EU institutions ([Unions in the EU call for boycott of Polish carriers because of the blockade of the border with Ukraine, 8.12.23](#)). In February 2024, two-thirds of *UP* publications covered the situation at the border. This was due to high-profile events on the part of protesters, such as the discharge of grain from trains and a poster calling on Putin to bring Ukraine back in order. Notably, the journalists quoted not only the officials but also, for example, the mayor of Lviv and the Polish Consul General in Lviv. ([Sadovyi on Ukrainian grain discharged by Poles: Shame and disgrace, 12.02.24](#), [Consul General of Poland in Lviv on the actions of farmers at the border: Shame and disgrace, I don't believe they are Poles, 21.02.24](#)), *UP* also drew attention to the initiative of the President of Ukraine to hold a meeting between the two governments on the Polish-Ukrainian border, which did not take place. A separate topic mentioned by the media was the detention of *UP* journalist Mykhailo Tkach, who covered

Poland's trade with Russia across the Belarusian border ([“Granica na myazhy”. How Poland is increasing trade with Russia through Belarus, 29.02.24](#)). *UP* published an editorial that accused Polish law enforcement officers of obstructing journalistic activity in this regard. ([Statement of Ukrainska Pravda on the detention of journalists Mykhailo Tkach and Yaroslav Bondarenko in Poland, 28.02.24](#)).

After the border blockade was lifted in April 2024, the number of news stories about Poland dropped sharply. While 87 news items were published in March, 55 in April, and 39, 44, 37, and 29 in May, June, July, and August, respectively, this indicates that the border blockade and related difficulties were the main topic covered by *UP* and that the general trend is that heated topics directly result in the increased number of news and analysis pieces.

Analytical materials on the grain crisis were published mainly on *European Pravda* (*EP*, a special project of *Ukrainska Pravda*, tr.). Several articles by Yuriy Panchenko explained the reasons for the blockade and the mistakes made by Ukraine in its relations with Poland ([Ingratitude or a matter of principle: What Mistakes Kyiv Made in the Grain Conflict with Poland, 22.09.23](#)), *EP* also published an overview of the discussions in Poland on the border blockade (Olena Babakova's [article Warsaw has billed for help: how Poland perceives the trade war with Ukraine, 21.09.23](#)), as well as an appeal by the International Renaissance Foundation calling for a de-escalation of conflict that harms both countries ([To stop the conflict and learn from it: an appeal by participants of the Ukrainian-Polish forum, 29.09.23](#)). *EP* tried to unearth which forces were behind the blockade of the border ([Who is behind the blockade of Ukraine: telling about the radicals who blocked the Polish border? 10.11.23](#)) and to calculate the losses incurred by Polish farmers and carriers from this initiative, emphasizing the significant losses for the Polish economy ([The price of the blockade: what are the consequences of the protest on the Ukrainian-Polish border, 14.11.23](#)). In addition, *EP* published materials by Polish authors who predicted that after the change of government, the border would be unblocked ([Polish view of anti-Ukrainian protests on the border: under what conditions the blockade could end, 11/16/23](#)). However, this did not happen immediately. That is why *EP* consistently and thoroughly covered the situation at the border, publishing expert commentaries ([Illusion of protecting Poland: why banning imports from Ukraine will not solve the problems of farmers, 10.10.24](#), [New blockade of the Ukrainian border: what went wrong and what Kyiv should do now, 5.02.24](#)) and reports directly from the border ([Report from the border: how Polish authorities and protesters block trade with Ukraine, 2.03.24](#)). In the publications of *EP*, one can notice some disappointment with the fact that the new Polish government failed to quickly resolve the problem of the border blockade, even though immediately after the elections, the headlines were optimistic ([Donald of a healthy man: what Prime Minister Tusk's visit to Kyiv changed, 23.01.24](#)). After the border was unblocked, the number of analytical publications on Polish-Ukrainian relations decreased sharply: 7 articles were published in February, 4 in March, 2 in April, and only 1 in May. This trend continued in the summer, indicating that the exhaustion of the conflict directly affects the decrease in the number of publications.

For *Zaxid.net*, the topic of blocking the Polish-Ukrainian border was also one of the main ones in the period from September 2023 to April 2024. The web-media paid attention to the comments of the Polish side, sometimes mutually contradictory and mutually exclusive ([Poland declared readiness for compromises on Ukrainian grain, 16.09.23](#), [Poland will block Ukraine's accession to the EU if grain exports are not settled, 25.09.23](#)) Also, the scandalous demand of the protesters ([Polish farmers demand Putin to restore order with Ukraine, Poland and Brussels, 20.02.24](#)) and the sharp reaction of the Polish President ([Andrzej Duda accused Russia of protests on the Polish-Ukrainian border, 21.02.24](#)) were not ignored. In addition, during the protests, *Zaxid.net* quoted Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi, whose wife owns the media ([Lviv mayor calls on poles to end border blockade, 26.11.23](#)), emphasizing that he addressed the blockers in Polish. However, this step can also be interpreted as the media sticking to its regional focus. This assumption can be supported by the coverage of the reaction of a Polish diplomat in Lviv to the spilled grain ([Consul General Polish called “disgraceful” the actions of farmers on the board, 21.02.24](#)).

The outlet paid special attention to the Russian trace in the border blockade, in particular, to the activities of the odious leader of the Confederation party, Janusz Korwin-Mikke ([Russian special services financed the organizers of the border blockade in Poland before the full-scale war, 9.02.24](#)). In this context, a column by Polish writer and activist Dominik Gąsiorowski ([How the Kremlin built a Ukrainophobic network in Poland, 18.03.24](#)) was published, accumulating the arguments that not all Poles supported the protests.

Zaxid.net also covered the protests of Ukrainian farmers ([Ukrainian farmers exhibited destroyed agricultural machinery on the border with Poland, 23.02.24](#)) and the high-profile detention of journalist Mykhailo Tkach ([Ukrainska Pravda journalist detained on the border with Belarus in Poland, 27.02.24](#)).

In its analytical publications, *Zaxid.net* emphasized both the mistakes of Ukrainian diplomacy and the blackmailing and increasing stakes approaches on the part of Poland. The author of the material ([Peculiarities of Polish Friendship with Ukraine 15.09.23](#)) emphasized that the politicization of the grain crisis complicates the solution to this problem and benefits Russia in the first place. The media outlet also conducted a detailed study of the political forces and activists behind the blockade of the border (article by Maria Masyuk "[Who is behind the border blockade,](#)" 9.11.23). It emphasized that some individuals had been known for anti-Ukrainian statements even before the blockade. The article "[What kind of Poland is real](#)" (7.12.23) called for a realistic and pragmatic attitude to relations with neighbors so as not to be surprised and confused when neighborliness rhetoric suddenly becomes unfriendly. The report "[If Putin attacks Poland, we will defend ourselves without you](#)", 23.02.24, shows the types of Polish protesters who, in tense conversations with a journalist from *Zaxid.net*, express their absurd and sometimes conspiratorial demands and considerations.

With the end of the blockade, the number of news and analytical publications on *Zaxid.net* also decreased. In February and March, 59 and 55 articles were published, respectively, and in May and June, 33 and 30 were published. However, it should be emphasized that the topic of the Ukrainian-Polish border remains constantly present on *Zaxid.net* as a regional media outlet, which is stated in a separate section.

For *Ukrinform*, the topic of the border blockade was also one of the main ones. As a state-owned media outlet, the agency consistently broadcast statements by various Ukrainian officials ([Ukraine's Foreign Ministry calls on Poland to put aside emotions in the grain issue](#), 21.09.23), by Ukraine's ambassador to Poland, for example ([Zvarych: Blocking of the border by Polish carriers jeopardizes "solidarity corridors"](#), 6.11.23, [Ambassador Zvarych hopes that there will be no more blockade of the border between Ukraine and Poland](#), 29.04.24) or the President of Ukraine ([The situation on the Polish border has long gone beyond economics and morality - Zelensky](#), 3.03.24). Of course, the media did not limit itself to statements and reported on high-profile events related to the blockade ([Ban on grain imports: Ukraine Filed a WTO Complaint Against Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary](#), 09/18/23, [Driver from Ukraine dies in Poland at a border checkpoint](#), 11/12/23). At the same time, the media outlet gave the floor to Polish experts who unequivocally condemned the blockade ([Blocking the borders with Ukraine will remain in history as a shame and betrayal - Polish journalist](#), 12/1/23) and cited opinion polls that showed a deterioration in attitudes toward Poland ([Fewer Ukrainians consider the United States and Poland friendly countries](#), 02/21/24). *Ukrinform* actively covered the preparations for a meeting between the Ukrainian and Polish governments at the border, initiated by the Ukrainian President. However, when this initiative failed, the agency limited its coverage to a quote from Prime Minister Shmyhal, who simply stated that the meeting had not occurred.

Ukrinform published several analytical materials, emphasizing that the blockade not only benefits Russia but also that Moscow could have been involved in its orchestration ([Ukraine-Poland:](#)

[conflict of interests in the grain market](#), 21.09.23, [Why Polish carriers block the border with Ukraine](#), 9.11.23, [blockade of the border with Poland: conceived by Moscow, we have to overcome it together](#), 28.11.23). The blockade was also discussed in the context of European integration processes ([Blocking the western borders: A lesson for Ukraine to protect national interests on the way to the EU](#), 22.02.24, [Does Ukrainian agricultural exports really threaten the EU economy](#), 29.02.24).

A "positive tone" that occasionally appeared in some materials is characteristic for this media ([Ukrainian-Polish consultations in Warsaw: from emotions to constructive dialogue](#), 29.03.24 Intergovernmental talks brought closer to solving the agrarian problem and confirmed unity in countering the aggressor).

With the end of the border blockade, the number of stories on Poland decreased, as did on *Ukrainska Pravda* and *Zaxid.net*. The media outlet also noted positive changes ([After unblocking the border with Poland, trade turnover increased by 20% - Ministry of Agrarian Policy](#), 3.05.24) and traditionally quoted the Ukrainian ambassador to Poland ([Ukraine and Poland made the right conclusions about the border blockade - Ambassador](#), 25.07.24).

Military and humanitarian aid has also become a kind of hostage to the border blockade ([Polish blockers do prevent humanitarian aid from crossing the border, 20.11.23](#)). Amid the grain crisis, Polish authorities stated that they would no longer supply weapons to Ukraine. *UP* covered this topic and quoted the reaction of European politicians ([German MP calls Morawiecki's statement on weapons for Ukraine a "disgrace", 21.09.23](#))

After the parliamentary elections, *UP* covered the efforts of the new Polish government to persuade US congressmen to vote for a defense package for Ukraine ([Polish Foreign Minister warns of deep consequences for the US in case of rejection of aid to Ukraine, 23.02.24](#)). The media outlet also covered other Polish initiatives aimed at strengthening Ukraine's defense capabilities ([Poland and Germany to launch 'armored vehicles coalition' for Ukraine in March](#), 18.03.2024, [Polish Foreign Minister proposes to use frozen Russian assets for funding weapons for Ukraine](#), 18.03.2024).

UP wrote about the Polish Ministry of Defense's reports of "stressed nights" when the military raised aircraft during Russian missile attacks on Ukraine and that the idea of shooting down enemy air targets that could potentially threaten Poland in Ukrainian airspace was not supported ([Polish Defense Ministry says NATO is skeptical about Poland's shooting down Russian air targets, 28.08.24](#)).

Zaxid.net informed readers about the gratitude of Ukrainian authorities for non-governmental assistance (Volodymyr [Zelenskyy awarded Polish volunteers in Lublin and thanked Poland, 23.09.23](#)), as well as about the initiative to create a Ukrainian legion ([Poland plans to create a military unit from Ukrainian emigrants, 31.05.24](#)), which as of October 2024 has not been realized. *Zaxid.net* also informed about the conclusion of a security agreement with Poland ([Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Donald Tusk signed a security agreement in Warsaw, 8.07.24](#)) and the financing of a Czech initiative to purchase ammunition for Ukraine ([Poland to allocate 100 million euros for the purchase of ammunition for the Armed Forces](#), 13.09.24). However, a few days later, *Zaxid.net* reported that the funding had not been allocated ([Poland did not allocate funding for the Czech initiative to purchase shells for Ukraine](#), 16.09.24).

The media outlet, according to its regional focus, covered Polish aid ([Rescue workers of Prykarpattia received a catamaran, a quad bike, and equipment worth UAH 1 million from Poland, 17.01.24](#)). After the Russian shelling of Lviv, *Zaxid.net* covered in detail Poland's role in the future restoration of infrastructure ([Polish Foreign Minister witnessed the destructions in Lviv](#), 12.09.24; [Polish Polonika Institute to help restore monuments damaged by shelling in Lviv](#), 4.09.24).

Ukrinform prioritized the topic of Polish military and humanitarian aid. Traditionally, the media outlet primarily covered the activities and statements of state officials ([Arms and security situation: Stefanchuk and Polish Senate Marshal discussed Ukraine's needs](#), 18.04.24; [Zelenskyy discussed the situation in Ukraine and preparations for Peace Summit with Polish Senate Marshal](#), 24.05.24; [Ukraine counts on Poland's assistance in supplying energy equipment - Shmyhal](#), 24.05.24; [Umerov discussed attracting EU Resources for development of Ukrainian defense industry with Polish delegation](#), 15.09.24). Statements and initiatives of Polish politicians were also cited quite often ([Duda spoke on assistance to Ukraine: About \\$3 billion in military aid alone](#), 26.08.24; [Poland considers transferring MiG-29 aircraft to Ukraine in next aid packages - Sikorsky](#), 13.09.24; [Poland is ready to help rebuild Lviv after missile attack - Tusk](#), 4.09.24).

Ukrinform covered in detail the visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Poland in July, where a security agreement was signed and other initiatives were announced ([Poland to consider transferring MiGs to Ukraine after receiving new aircraft - Tusk](#), 8.07.24, [Poland ready to supply electricity from its coal-fired power plants to Ukraine - Tusk](#), 8.07.24, [Zelenskyy on F-16 for Ukraine: We have a positive decision of the Polish government](#), 19.07.24).

In addition to quoting officials and covering official events, the agency cited the results of public opinion polls, which showed that Polish society continued to support Ukraine ([Poles donated over 10 billion zlotys to help Ukrainians through NGOs](#), 8.12.23, [Over 69% of Poles believe that Poland should intercept Russian missiles in the border regions](#), 1.02.24). At the same time, *Ukrinform* emphasized that the Polish armed forces were not ready to listen to public opinion regarding shooting missiles down ([Polish defense minister explains why they did not shoot down Russian missiles that breached airspace](#), 24.03.24).

Ukrinform also focused on initiatives aimed at humanitarian support for border regions ([Four health care projects are being implemented in Zakarpattia in cooperation with Poland](#), 23.12.23).

- ***Ukrainians in Poland***

Considering the large number of Ukrainians living in Poland, especially after the full-scale invasion (which is about 1.5 million), coverage of their situation seems not only logical but also quite appropriate. As for *Ukrainska Pravda*, it focused primarily on negative news: murders, road accidents, and other accidents. Here are some common headlines:

[Death of a Ukrainian in a Wroclaw sobering-up center: video shows that the police resorted to torture](#), 4.10.23

[A Ukrainian who illegally transported migrants will be tried in Poland](#), 9.10.23

[A Ukrainian detained in Poland for threatening border guards with a knife](#)

31.10.23

[A Ukrainian minibus with passengers gets into a road accident in Poland; one person is killed](#).21.12.23

[A hotel with Ukrainian refugees in Poland caught on fire: there are victims](#), 5.01.24

[Ukrainians arrested in Poland for selling drugs improving sexual performance](#) , 1.03.24

During the border blockade, *Ukrainska Pravda* drew attention to the protests of Ukrainians in Poland near the Polish Parliament ([Border blockade: Ukrainians protested near the Polish Sejm](#), 6.12.23).

Other aspects of Ukrainians whereabouts in Poland, such as education, *UP* covered rather sporadically ([Almost 300 thousand Ukrainian children go to Polish schools and kindergartens - media](#), 11/24/23).

When covering the topic of Ukrainians in Poland, *Zaxid.net* also paid more attention to negative news:

[In Poland, 14-year-old Ukrainian dies on railroad while saving girlfriend, 7.09.23](#)
[Ukrainian detained in Poland for transporting migrants under the influence of drugs 1.11.23](#)
[Bus with Ukrainians crashes in Poland, killing two women and a child, 11/19/23](#)
[49-year-old Ukrainian sentenced to 25 years in Poland for murder and rape, 30.01.24](#)
[In Poland, a 48-year-old man killed a migrant worker with many children from the Ternopil region, 18.02.24](#)

The publication also provided statistical data illustrating various aspects of Ukrainians' stay in Poland:

[One-fifth of Ukrainian refugees in Poland are young men, 5.01.24](#)
[Most Ukrainians in Poland receive a minimum wage, 24.04.24](#)

Zaxid.net also reported on those Ukrainians who were able to realize themselves in Poland ([Over 10% of new entrepreneurs in Poland were registered by Ukrainians, 25.01.24](#)), as well as on the success of Ukrainian business in the neighboring country ([Lviv emotions holding "Fest" to open the first "Rebernia" in Poland, 29.03.24](#)).

From time to time, the newspaper informed about the situation of the Ukrainian diaspora in Poland ([Myron Sych, a member of the Association of Ukrainians, died in Poland, 5.04.24](#)), and also monitored the issue of the possible forced return of Ukrainian men of conscription age to Ukraine, especially those who are staying in the neighboring country illegally ([Polish Defense Minister does not rule out the forced return of Ukrainian men, 25.04.24](#)).

Unlike *Ukrainska Pravda* and *Zaxid.net*, *Ukrinform* almost did not pay attention to negative reports about Ukrainians in Poland. Instead, the outlet promoted a positive agenda ([In Poland, Ukrainians contribute more to the country's budget than receive aid - expert, 14.10.23](#)) and published materials about opportunities for self-realization ([What kind of work is offered to Ukrainians in Poland, 25.10.23](#)). It is worth noting that the agency published the results of a study according to which feelings of pride and national identity correlate with the desire of Ukrainians to return home, including from Poland ([More than residence and work. How identity and homesickness affect the desire of Ukrainian refugees to return home, 14.07.24](#)), which indicates a different approach to covering this topic.

Traditionally, for a state media outlet, *Ukrinform* informationally supported official state visits ([Zelenskyy met with the Ukrainian community in Poland, 8.07.24](#)).

- **Historical disputes between Poland and Ukraine**

Ukrainska Pravda paid attention to different interpretations of history by Poland and Ukraine rather sporadically ([Polish Foreign Ministry called the speech of SS Galicia veteran in the Canadian Parliament shameful, 27.09.23](#), [Polish Foreign Ministry said that without an agreement on exhumation, Ukraine "should not dream" of the EU, 7.11.23](#)), as the priority topics were the border blockade, parliamentary and local elections, and military aid. However, in the summer of 2024, misunderstandings about historical events once again came to the forefront of bilateral relations, so *UP* began to actively cover and comment on them. On the anniversary of the Volyn tragedy, Polish officials once again made political statements ([Polish Defense Minister: Ukraine will not join the EU without resolving the Volyn issue, 28.07.24](#)). Representatives of the new Polish government, who were widely expected to resolve the problematic issues between the two countries, supported the pretentious tone ([Tusk: Ukraine will not be a member of the EU unless it resolves historical issues with Poland, 30.08.24](#), [Sikorski in Kyiv calls for lifting the moratorium on exhumation work in Volyn, 13.09.24](#), [Sikorski on the historical conflict with Ukraine: "I don't think we are asking for too much", 16.09.24](#)). *UP* reported on the sharp reaction of Polish politicians

to the words of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, that if the issue of exhumation is in question, the victims of the "Vistula" operation should not be left out also ([Some Polish politicians attacked Kuleba because of his words about the "Vistula" operation](#), 30.08.24), and also drew attention to the critical remarks of Polish President Andrzej Duda on the tone of recent claims regarding history issues ([Attempts to block Ukraine's accession to the EU because of Volyn \(tragedy, tr.\) fit into Putin's policy - Duda](#), 24.09.24).

The publications of *European Pravda* devoted to the Polish-Ukrainian conflict on history topics emphasized that the next outbreak of Polish claims against Ukraine was primarily caused by the internal political struggle ([From Volyn to F-16: what is behind new problems in relations with Poland](#), 26.07.24, [Tell me who your ambassador is: how the conflict between the President and the Prime Minister of Poland reached Kyiv](#), 2.09.24). However, the *EP* did not limit itself to this depth of the problem, trying to trace the genesis of the conflict in an interview with historian and politician Volodymyr Viatrovykh ([Volodymyr Viatrovykh: "We thought that the elections in Poland would be held and we would be able to reach an agreement. But it is not so"](#), 23.08.24). For balance, the opinion of Polish activist Lukasz Adamski is also presented (["To the EU with Bandera: Polish view of the "historical" conflict with Ukraine"](#), 12.09.24). Finally, the *EP* states that, despite the war, Poland's policy toward Ukraine has become tougher, and the aid would depend on concessions, including in the historical sphere ([Warsaw is increasing pressure: how relations between Ukraine and Poland have already changed](#), 23.09.24).

Despite the dominance of the grain crisis in the news agenda, *Zaxid.net* published an analytical piece on Polish-Ukrainian history disputes in the context of a report on Poland's negative reaction to an unscheduled speech by a veteran of the SS Galicia Division in the Canadian Parliament ([Facing Defeat, 20.09.23](#)). The author of the article, Artur Levchenko, links this reaction to the election race and places it in the broader context of Polish-Ukrainian conflicts over complex historical events. In his opinion, the sharp rhetoric of the acting Polish government at that moment was caused by the threat of losing its majority in Parliament, evidenced by opinion polls. The author also directly accuses Poland of politicizing history and compares this strategy to Russia's.

Zaxid.net has been consistently covering the history issue. For example, it wrote about the conclusion of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, which refused to recognize Operation Vistula as a crime against humanity ([Poland closes the case on the forced relocation of Ukrainians during Operation Vistula, 5.12.23](#)).

In the summer of 2024, even before the history dispute escalated, an interview was published with Polish journalist Tomasz Terlikowski, who assessed the problematic issues of Polish-Ukrainian relations - the commemoration of Stepan Bandera and the Volyn tragedy - in a balanced manner ([Some Poles find it painful that Bandera became a national hero of Ukraine, 21.06.24](#)).

After Polish politicians began to actively refer to the Volyn issue in Polish-Ukrainian relations in July 2024, this topic became one of the main ones for *Zaxid.net* ([Ukraine's accession to the EU is impossible without resolving the Volyn tragedy, - Polish Vice Prime Minister, 24.07.24](#), with the media ironically adding in the subtitle "The official did not specify how the historical issue should be resolved").

Zaxid.net provided information about a resolution of the Polish Sejm, where deputies condemned the "criminal nature of the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army, tr.)" ([Polish Sejm adopts resolution on the 81st anniversary of the Volyn tragedy, 28.07.24](#)) and quoted top Polish officials who related the Volyn issue to Ukraine's European integration ([Polish Foreign Ministry to block talks on Ukraine's accession to the EU without exhumation of victims of the Volyn tragedy](#), 30.09.24).

To comment on another outbreak of Poland's historical claims against Ukraine, *Zaxid.net* published an interview with Andriy Deshchytzia, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and longtime Ambassador of Ukraine to Poland, the headline of which emphasized the Russian factor, although the conversation also touched on unresolved bilateral issues ("[Russian agents are doing everything to break Ukrainian-Polish solidarity](#)," 19.09.24). Finally, in early October, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance decided to resume the recovery missions, as *Zaxid.net* also reported ("[Ukraine to resume exhumation of victims of Volyn tragedy](#)," 2.10.24).

Ukrinform covered the topic of Polish-Ukrainian historical conflicts in its traditional style of quoting top officials and prominent politicians and diplomats of Poland ("[Polish Prime Minister reacts to the discovery of a mass grave of victims of the Volyn tragedy in Ternopil region](#)," 27.10.23, "[Poland and Ukraine will continue discussing historical issues with "mutual sensitivity" - Tusk](#)," 22.01.24) and Ukraine ("[The "dot" in the investigation of the Operation Vistula has not yet been set - Ukrainian Ambassador to Poland](#)," 3.12.23). The latter message concerns the decision of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance to terminate the investigation of Operation Vistula and refuse to recognize it as a crime against humanity.

This indicates that the media generally did not "smooth the sharp corners" and illustrated the depth of historical misunderstandings between the two countries. At the same time, it preferred to quote prominent politicians ("[Without solving historical problems with Poland, Ukraine will not join the EU - Tusk](#)," 30.08.24).

On the other hand, in covering the topic of historical disputes between Poland and Ukraine, *Ukrinform* cited statements by Ukrainian and Polish officials that were oriented toward mutual understanding ("[Shmyhal: Ukraine and Poland are working to resolve historical issues, but military cooperation is a priority](#)," 10.09.24, "[Duda equates Katyn with Bucha on the 85th anniversary of Stalin's aggression against Poland](#)," 17.09.24), and also predicted an optimistic scenario for historical misunderstandings ("[Poland is unlikely to raise historical issues with Ukraine during its EU presidency - expert](#)," 20.09.24). After the scandal with former Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba's statements about the Vistula action, his removal from office, and the decision of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance to resume the work on the search for victims of the Volyn tragedy, the publication cited Poland's positive reaction ("[Volyn tragedy: Poland welcomes UINR's plans for search operations](#)," 3.10.24).

In the context of finding a positive agenda, *Ukrinform* covered the events that seemed to be of secondary importance but which were ignored by other analyzed media outlets ("["Flame of Brotherhood": Ukrainians and Poles to jointly honor the memory of UPR soldiers in Warsaw](#)," 22.07.24, referring to the commemoration of the soldiers of the Ukrainian People's Republic buried at the Volske Cemetery in Warsaw by members of the Ukrainian scouting organization Plast and Polish scouts).

- **Parliamentary elections in Poland in October 2023.**

The problem of blocking the Polish-Ukrainian border was highlighted in the context of the election campaign. "[Kuleba believes that Ukraine and Poland will "inevitably" overcome the crisis in relations, 28.09.23](#), "[Kuleba - about Poland: We hope that emotions were left in the election campaign, 10/16/23](#), "[Zelensky on the Polish border blockade: We need to give our neighbors some time, 11/25/23](#)) At the same time, *UP* emphasized the unfriendly statements of the Polish leadership during the election process ("[Polish Foreign Minister: We believe in Ukraine's victory, but its policy is harmful and offensive](#)" 22.09.23), as well as the fact that the ruling party used the services of Hungarian political advisers ("[In Poland, the ruling party hired Orban's advisers for the election - media, 20.10.23](#)"), which was intended to highlight the deliberate nature of anti-Ukrainian rhetoric. However, *UP* also reported that the Polish government, even during the election campaign, did not support the pro-Russian attacks of representatives of Hungary and Slovakia ("[The Polish Prime Minister did not support Orban and Fico's statements on assistance](#)

[to Ukraine, 27.20.23](#)). A controversial article by Mykhailo Dubyniysky, "[White, red, blue, yellow,](#)" published on *UP* on the eve of the vote, states that the root cause of the conflicts between Ukraine and Poland is the model of historical policy borrowed by Ukrainians from Poles, which glorifies nationalist forces. However, the main analytical materials on the elections were published on *European Pravda*: a series of articles by Yuriy Panchenko, which discuss how the defeat of the Law and Justice (Polish: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) political party would affect future relations with Ukraine ([Poland is losing its mono-majority: what new coalition will look like and what does it mean for Ukraine, 10.10.23](#)), as well as an article by former Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin ([A Model for Central Europe. Why the Polish elections will change not only Polish politics, 19.10.23](#)) about the impact of the election results on the entire Central European region.

When covering Polish elections, *UP* emphasized the importance of this event for Ukrainian-Polish relations and highlights that the coming to power of the coalition led by Donald Tusk would improve relations, which had been in obvious crisis.

Zaxid.net's coverage of the parliamentary elections in Poland was not as detailed as that of *UP*. However, the media outlet published several analytical pieces ([The winner of the Polish elections will be determined by third forces, 13.10.23, How will relations between Ukraine and Poland change?, 16.10.23](#)), one of which ([Tusk's Polish Euro-victory, 18.10.23](#)) assessed the victory of Donald Tusk and his allies as a salvation of Central Europe and the EU from populists and Eurosceptics.

Ukrinform also did not cover the election process as deeply as *Ukrainska Pravda* did but published an analytical piece on the eve of the vote to explain to the audience the main trends in Polish politics ([Elections in Poland: between Kaczynski and Tusk, 13.10.23](#)).

In its coverage of the campaign and especially of the election results, the media outlet favored the opposition forces and Donald Tusk ([Parliamentary elections in Poland: Kaczynski's Pyrrhic Victory, 10/16/23, Poland will demand that the world mobilize to help Ukraine - Tusk, 12/12/23](#)). The agency often cited experts and politicians who were positive about the outcome of the election ([Relations between Kyiv and Warsaw will warm up again after the Polish elections - expert, 10/16/23, Kuleba on Poland: Let's hope emotions remain in the election campaign, 10/17/23](#)).

- **Poland's efforts to rearm**

Ukrainska Pravda and *Zaxid.net* occasionally covered the rearmament of the Polish army and the overall growth of Polish military power, both in the context of strengthening NATO's eastern flank and the possible transfer of the replaced equipment to Ukraine ([Polish Defense Ministry calls on people to join the Territorial Defense Forces, 1.10.23, US allocates \\$2 billion to Poland to buy F-35 fighter jets, Patriot air defense systems and Abrams tanks, 9.07.2024, The first F-35 fighter jet to be delivered to Poland will be presented in the US - media, 28.08.2024](#))

Ukrinform also kept the topic of rearmament of our western neighbor and partner in focus ([Poland buys more than 150 more self-propelled howitzers from South Korea, 3.12.23, A base for more than a thousand US troops built in Poland, 17.07.24, Poland approves budget for next year, almost 5% of GDP for defense, 28.08.24](#)).

Ukrainian-Polish border

As a regional publication, *Zaxid.net* constantly informs its readers about the situation on the Ukrainian-Polish border. Of course, this is not about the border blockade by Polish protesters, which was a separate topic, but about various violations during the crossing or simply about the situation at various checkpoints. Below are some common headlines:

[Poland shows photos of the new checkpoint on the border with Ukraine, 20.01.24](#)

[Smuggled Starlink worth UAH 600 thousand was seized from a driver on the border with Poland, 15.01.24](#)

[A flock of sheep from Poland crossed the Ukrainian border in search of pasture, 30.03.24](#)

[Smuggled cryptocurrency mining devices seized on the border with Poland, 6.03.24](#)

[On the border with Poland, customs officers detained a truck with an old wooden house, 29.03.24](#)

[Border guards warn of repairs at two checkpoints on the border with Poland](#), 20.09.24

Ukrinform also reported from time to time on the situation at the checkpoints ([Delays are possible at two checkpoints on the border with Poland due to repairs](#), 21.09.24), while for *Ukrainska Pravda* this topic was rather out of focus.

- ***The situation on the Polish-Belarusian border***

Tracking Polish-Belarusian relations, in particular, the situation on the border, was another occasional but constant topic addressed by the analyzed media outlets. *Ukrainska Pravda* covered it more often and in-depth ([Belarus says Poland violated its airspace twice on 28.09.23, In Belarus, a day later, "violation" of airspace by Poland was "recorded", 3.11.23](#), [Most Poles support the ban on border crossing for migrants from Belarus](#), 5.08.24), while *Zaxid.net* covered it less often ([Poland to build a 65 million euro barrier on the border with Belarus](#), 13.09.24).

Ukrinform also reported in detail on the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, especially in the context of Belarus' use of illegal migrants to destabilize relations between the two countries and in Eastern Europe as a whole. ([Poland denies Belarus' accusations of airspace violations](#), 29.09.23, [Poland's border is being "stormed" by illegal immigrants from Belarus - more than 300 attempts to break through in two days](#), 05/31/24, [Poland says situation on the border with Belarus has deteriorated dramatically](#), 06/21/24, [Illegal immigrants throw stones at Polish patrols on the border with Belarus](#), 07/15/24, [210 attempts to illegally cross the border with Belarus in three days recorded in Poland](#), 08/19/24).

The Ukrainian media's attention to this topic is quite justified, as it is about the activities of Russia's military and political ally, which are aimed at distracting Ukraine's closest neighbor from the events at the front.

- ***Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in cultural and other spheres***

Zaxid.net occasionally covered cultural events, particularly in the context of Ukrainian-Polish cooperation ([Polish and Ukrainian actors to read Eliza Ozheshko's novel in Lviv, 7.09.23](#), [Two Ukrainian films won awards at the Warsaw Film Festival, 16.10.23](#)). The media outlet reported on events in the field of cinema ([Agnieszka Holland's film "Green Border" was released in Ukraine, 21.03.24](#), [Poland nominated a film with Ukrainian actors for the Oscars](#), 20.09.24). *Zaxid.net* also covered Polish assistance in the restoration of cultural sites ([Restoration of medieval church paintings began in Drohobych, 3.07.24](#))

Ukrinform also reported on restoration work on Ukrainian cultural heritage sites ([In Lviv, thanks to Poland, the sculpture of St. John of Dukla was restored](#), 5.02.24). The topic of awards in the cultural sphere was also covered ([Zhytomyr Orchestra won the Grand Prix at the Festival of Carols and Christmas Carols in Poland](#), January 15, 24; [Polish translator Kotynska won the Drahomán Prize-2023](#), April 23, 24, for her translation of Oksana Zabuzhko's book *The Longest Journey*). In the traditional official style, the media outlet reported on Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in agriculture and education ([Ukraine and Poland to deepen cooperation in dairy industry](#), 18.06.24, [Ukraine and Poland to sign agreement on education - Ministry of Reintegration](#), 19.06.24).

For *Ukrainska Pravda*, the topic of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation was not a priority, perhaps, so the media outlet practically did not cover it. In general, it should be noted that even for the analyzed media, which briefly touched upon it, the topic of culture was shadowed by other issues.

Hungary

- ***The policy of Orban's government on the Russian-Ukrainian war***

Ukrainska Pravda actively monitored the statements and actions of the Hungarian leaders in the context of their attitude to the Russian-Ukrainian war. It can be argued that the lion's share of news reports was devoted to two individuals - Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó. In particular, *UP* covered Putin's first meeting with Orban after the start of the full-scale invasion ([Putin meets with EU leader for the first time in over a year, 17.10.23](#)) and further contacts between the Hungarian authorities and the Russian authorities ([Orban sends cynical letter to EU about "peace for Ukraine" after meeting with Putin, 8.07.24](#), [Hungarian Foreign Minister meets with Lavrov in the US: they talked about Ukraine, 17.07.24](#)). The newspaper also repeatedly quoted Orban and Szijjarto with their statements about the unacceptability of Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO ([Orban said Ukraine should be a "buffer zone" outside the EU and NATO, 11.02.24](#), [Hungarian diplomat: Ukraine will not be in the EU during the war - there is no freedom of speech and elections, 8.11.23](#)). At the same time, *UP* also cited data from opinion polls in Hungary ([Most Hungarians are against Ukraine joining the EU, 12.09.24](#)). *Ukrainska Pravda* often drew attention to openly unfriendly moves of the Hungarian authorities ([Orban lacked the resolve to condemn Russia's attack on Okhmatdyt and called for a "ceasefire", 9.07.24](#), [The only EU country: Hungary did not sign the statement condemning Russia in the UN Security Council, 16.07.24](#)) and its pseudo-peacemaking steps ([Hungary will join the format "for peace in Ukraine" established by China and Brazil, 27.09.24](#)).

A separate topic covered was the blocking of EU funding for Ukrainian military and humanitarian needs ([Hungary will oppose the EC's proposal to transfer Ukraine the proceeds from frozen Russian assets, 21.03.24](#), [Szijjártó promises to block EU aid to Ukraine because of the "hunt" against Hungarian companies, 23.04.24](#), [Orban agrees to unblock €50 billion for Ukraine under one condition, 30.01.24](#)). A kind of response to these unfriendly steps by Hungary was Ukrainian sanctions, which stopped the transit of Russian oil through Ukraine to Hungary and Slovakia. *UP* covered this story in detail ([Slovakia and Hungary notified about the stop of the transit of Russian Lukoil oil due to Ukrainian sanctions, 18.07.24](#); [Hungary negotiated the supply of Russian oil through Ukraine - Bloomberg, 9.09.24](#)).

Meetings between Ukrainian and Hungarian officials were covered in detail by *UP*. In particular, the media outlet wrote about Orban's first visit to Kyiv since the invasion as the leader of the EU presidency and emphasized the politician's controversial statements ([Orban in Kyiv asked Zelensky for a ceasefire favorable to Russia, 2.07.24](#)). Meetings at the level of foreign ministers were also monitored ([Kuleba After meeting with Szijjarto, 3.04.24](#), [Sybiga went to Hungary for talks with Szijjarto on Zelensky order, 30.09.24](#)).

Positive news were rather exceptional in the context of Ukrainian-Hungarian relations ([Hungary to join NATO coalition to demine Ukraine, February 16, 24](#); [Hungarian Defense Minister unexpectedly praised "heroic and brave struggle of Ukrainians," August 2, 24](#)). Obviously, it was not because *UP* failed to notice them.

Most analytical articles on Ukrainian-Hungarian relations were published in *European Pravda*. The media focused on Hungary's demands to Ukraine in the context of European integration, calling them absurd and those crossing red lines in bilateral relations ([11 demands of Orban. How Hungary has crossed the red lines again in blackmailing Ukraine on its way to the EU, 27.06.24](#)) and

called for dropping at least some of them ([Orban's Crooked Mirror. Why Ukraine should not fulfill some of Hungary's demands](#), 4.07.24). Analyzing the reasons why Hungary has turned the process of European integration into blackmail, the EP emphasizes primarily financial benefits for Budapest rather than any ideological principles ([Nothing personal, only money: how and why Hungary blocks Ukraine's European integration](#), 28.11.23)

The topics related to Hungary were not a priority for *Zaxid.net*, unlike Polish ones. This is evidenced by the number of publications: about 700 on Poland and about 200 on Hungary. However, the outlet did cover the main events related to Hungarian-Ukrainian relations, mostly focusing on obstructing European integration and blocking financial aid ([Hungary proposes to reduce the new EU aid package to Ukraine](#), 4.10.23, [Instead of EU membership, Hungary proposes to grant Ukraine a "privileged partnership"](#), 9.11.23, [Orban vetoes 50 billion euros of macro-financial aid from the EU to Ukraine](#), 15.12.23). *Zaxid.net* did not limit itself to listing the main events but also tried to analyze the reasons for Hungary's unconstructive, if not outright hostile, behavior towards Ukraine ([Orban's compromise](#), 10.01.24, [Orban's insincere peacemaking](#), 4.07.24).

Ukrinform covered Ukrainian-Hungarian relations in an extremely detailed and comprehensive manner, publishing more news stories than *Ukrainska Pravda*. The media outlet profusely quoted European politicians who condemned Orban's meeting with Putin and pseudo-peacekeeping initiatives ([Orban does not represent the EU during his visit to Moscow - Borrell](#), 5.07.24, [Michel - on Orban's "peace mission": Hungary has no mandate to negotiate](#), 16.07.24, [Orbán's visit to Moscow was not a peace mission, but appeasement of the aggressor - von der Leyen](#), 19.07.24). The agency quoted European politicians who directly accused the Hungarian prime minister of working for the enemy ([Orban "plays" for the enemy team - Estonian Foreign Minister on Russia's war against Ukraine](#), 3.10.24). Of course, the constant blocking of funding for Ukraine from the EU budget was not ignored either ([Hungary will block €6.5 billion from the European Peace Fund for Ukraine - Szijarto](#), June 24, 24; [Hungary, which blocks funds for Ukraine in the EU fund, plans using it to support Chad, September 10, 24](#)). *Ukrinform* also published analytical materials on the attempts of the Hungarian authorities to disrupt or at least slow down Ukraine's European integration prospects ([Putin's trojan horse, the EU, and Ukraine's European integration. What does Orban want?](#), 11.12.23, [Putting Orban in his place: the EU has options - up to the elimination of the veto](#), 29.11.23).

The media outlet covered Orban's visit to Ukraine in detail, emphasizing that it was the first visit of a Hungarian prime minister in 12 years ([Hungarian Prime Minister Arrives in Ukraine for the First Time in 12 Years](#), 2.07.24) and then analyzed its results ([Orban's Visit to Ukraine: What Did He Bring and What Did He Leave With?](#), 4.07.24).

As already mentioned, *Ukrinform* is characterized by frequently quoting Ukrainian officials. This trend was also clearly visible in the "Hungarian issue". However, sometimes the quoted statements contained opposite messages ([Zelenskyy about Orban: He could not answer why Hungary does not support Ukraine](#), 20.12.23, [Shmyhal: We have a fairly constructive dialog with Hungary now](#), 10.09.24). On this issue, the media outlet frequently informed about the activities of the head of the Presidential Office, Andriy Yermak, and quoted him ([Yermak and Szijarto discussed Ukraine's progress towards the EU](#), 6.12.23, [Ukraine is ready for good neighborly relations with Hungary - Yermak](#), 31.01.24).

The news agency did not leave out the reprehensible statements of the Hungarian prime minister about Russia's attack on Ukraine ([Orban calls Russia's war against Ukraine a "special operation"](#), 21.12.23). At the same time, it quoted the words of the former Hungarian President, who, in her speech at the UN General Assembly, condemned Russia's actions ([President of Hungary: We clearly and unequivocally condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine](#), 20.09.23).

The agency also reported on the ban on imports of Ukrainian agricultural products imposed by Hungary and other western neighbors of Ukraine ([Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia decided to continue blocking imports of Ukrainian agricultural products](#), 15.09.23).

- **Hungary's international policy**

For *Ukrainska Pravda*, the topic of Hungary's international position was important. For example, the media outlet actively covered the conflict between the Orban government and him personally with the leadership of the European Union ([Orban compares Hungary's EU membership to Soviet occupation](#), 10/23/23, [Orban's party places billboards against Ursula von der Leyen across Hungary](#), 11/20/23, [European Parliament: Hungarian government threatens EU values and undermines its institutions](#), 18.01.24). *UP* also focused on the conflicts between the Hungarian government and other EU members, who accused Orban of pro-Russian sympathies ([Tusk: Orban's government has openly sided with Russia](#), 8.12.23, [Czech minister calls Orban a Trojan horse working in Russia's interests](#), 18.01.24, [EU presidency of Belgium calls for Hungary's voting rights in the EU](#), 3.06.24, [Finnish Foreign Minister: Hungary's EU membership is worth reconsidering](#), 07/23/24) and with the democratic US administration ([Hungarian government refuses to meet with US senators who came to Budapest](#), 02/19/24, [US ambassador criticizes Orban for supporting Trump, Russia and China](#), 09/18/24). Instead, Orban emphasized his friendly ties with former US President Donald Trump ([Trump about Orban: A great leader in Europe](#), 21.01.24) and China ([Xi Jinping arrives in Hungary to discuss the war in Ukraine](#), 9.05.24), and *UP* reported on this. The newspaper also covered the long process of Hungary's ratification of Sweden's application for NATO membership ([Hungary ratifies Sweden's NATO membership](#), 26.02.24).

For *Zaxid.net*, as a regional media outlet, Hungary's international relations were clearly not an important topic, although the outlet reported on conflicts between the country's leadership and EU representatives and European politicians. *Zaxid.net* also reported on Hungary's deepening cooperation with states hostile to Ukraine, in particular, with Belarus ([Hungary signs agreement with Belarus on nuclear reactor construction](#), 29.05.24). The publication informed about the scandalous decision to simplify the entry of Russians and Belarusians into the European Union, which caused a negative reaction from many EU members ([Hungary simplified the conditions of entry for Russians and Belarusians into the EU countries](#), 30.07.24).

The confrontation between the Hungarian government and EU structures is a topic for which *Ukrinform* has paid a lot of attention. The outlet quoted Orban's sharp and outrageous statements ([Orban urges supporters to help him "occupy Brussels" in the elections](#), 15.03.24, [Orban says the EU is "not the same" as the one Hungary joined 20 years ago](#), 3.05.24) and informed about disciplinary measures taken by EU structures for violating European rules ([EU Court of Justice punishes Hungary with €200 million fine for ignoring migration policy](#), 10.06.24).

The agency reported on the Hungarian government's conflicts with other EU countries ([Polish Foreign Ministry suggests Orban leave the EU and form an alliance with Putin](#), 29.07.24) and the United States ([White House concerned about corruption and "erosion of democracy" in Hungary](#), 13.03.24). At the same time, Orban's friendly relations with Donald Trump were emphasized ([Orban asked Trump to "come back and bring peace"](#), 9.03.24).

Ukrinform closely monitored Hungary's rapprochement with authoritarian states, primarily China ([Hungary secretly took a €1 billion loan from Chinese banks](#), 25.07.24; [Orban claims global power will shift from "irrational" West to China and Russia](#), 27.07.24). The newspaper devoted an analytical publication to this topic ([Orban's Celestial PR](#), 9.07.24).

- **Hungary's influence on Transcarpathia**

The important topic of Hungarian interests in the Transcarpathian region was not left out by *Ukrainska Pravda*, which cited the Hungarian prime minister's demands related to the rights of the local minority and their alleged violation ([Orban: The situation with the Hungarian language in Zakarpattia was better in the USSR than in Ukraine, 17.11.23](#), [Orban is demanding that all of Zakarpattia be recognized as "traditionally Hungarian", 27.06.24](#)). The publication provided comments by Ukrainian officials ([Stefanishyna: Ukraine will fully implement Hungary's 11 demands on national minorities as part of EU accession, 25.06.24](#)) and also covered an important meeting between the Foreign Minister and the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine with Szijjarto, which concerned the conflict points in bilateral relations ([Kuleba and Yermak met with Szijjarto in Uzhhorod, 29.01.24](#)).

UP also published several analytical publications that tracked Hungarian influence networks in Transcarpathia ([Forints don't smell. How Hungarian parties are strengthening their influence in Transcarpathia, 16.07.24](#), [Ukrainian parties and Orban's money. Who promotes Hungarian influence in Transcarpathia? 22.07.24](#)). *European Pravda* analyzed the Hungarian media sphere and found out its exceptional role in state propaganda, including for foreign Hungarians of Transcarpathia ([How Orban built an empire of propaganda for foreign Hungarians, including Transcarpathia, 4.01.24](#)).

Ukrainska Pravda quoted a scandalous statement by a representative of a Hungarian nationalist party who threatened to take Transcarpathia if Ukraine loses the war ([Leader of the Hungarian Party: If Ukraine falls, we will demand Transcarpathia, 28.01.24](#))

Zaxid.net reported on the appeal of Transcarpathian Hungarians to Orban with a request to support Ukraine's accession to the European Union ([Hungarian communities of Transcarpathia asked Orban to support Ukraine's accession to the EU, 11.12.23](#)) and on the initiative to create a special commission on the rights of Hungarians in Transcarpathia ([Ukraine and Hungary agreed to create a special commission on the rights of Hungarians in Transcarpathia, 29.01.23](#)). *Zaxid.net* did not cover the situation with Hungarian influence in Transcarpathia as comprehensively as *UP*.

Ukrinform provided detailed information about the meeting between Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba and the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Yermak, with Hungarian Foreign Minister Szijjarto, which took place in late January. The outlet tracked almost every step of both delegations ([Kuleba, Yermak, and Szijjarto honored the memory of Ukrainians who died for freedom in Uzhhorod, 29.01.24](#), [Kuleba, Yermak, and Szijjarto met with leaders of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, 30.01.24](#))

[Hungarian Secretary of State visits Transcarpathia to discuss infrastructure and humanitarian projects, 19.07.24](#)

[MP: Hungary's 11 conditions for minorities are an attempt to pressure Ukraine, 1.07.24](#)

[Hungary donates €1 million worth of medicines and medical equipment to Transcarpathia, 6.06.24](#)

[Szijjarto is in Uzhhorod: Hungary wants all the rights its minority had before 2015 restored, 29.01.24](#)

[Rumors of "persecution" of Hungarian minority in Ukraine are a big fake - Kuleba, 11.12.23](#)

- **Hungarian opposition**

Despite the obvious emphasis on the statements of Orban and other representatives of the Hungarian government, *Ukrainska Pravda* also paid attention to the activities of the Hungarian opposition ([Protest demanding Orban's resignation after reports of corruption, 26.03.24](#),

[Budapest mayor supporting Ukraine wins election by 324 votes, 10.06.24](#)). Particular attention was paid to the role of the leader of the opposition party, "Tysa" Peter Magyar, perceived as Orban's main opponent. *UP* covered in detail his visits to Ukraine in July 2024, just after the shelling of the Okhmatdyt children's hospital, and emphasized that he condemned Russia's actions, while Orban refused to do so ([Orban's opponent condemned Russia's attack on Okhmatdyt, 9.07.24](#), [Orban's main opponent will visit Transcarpathia and meet with the Hungarian minority, 10.07.24](#), [Hungarian Prime Minister's opponent visited "Ohmatdyt" and reproached Orban for visiting dictators, 11.07.24](#)). *European Pravda* dedicated an article to Magyar, tracing his political biography from a government official to Orban's main critic ([Alternative for Hungary. How Peter Magyar became a threat to Orban and what Ukraine should expect, 24.06.24](#))

Zaxid.net devoted an interview to the peculiarities of Hungarian domestic politics with a political analyst who believes that the key to Viktor Orban's long stay in power is that he successfully split the opposition ([Hungary as a test subject, February 1, 24](#)).

Ukrinform also paid attention to the activities of Peter Magyar, reporting on his initiative to provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine after the shelling of Kyiv and the organization of protests against the Hungarian authorities on the eve of the European Parliament elections ([Orban's opponent launched a fundraiser to help Ukrainian children and announced a visit to Kyiv, 9.07.24](#), [Orban's rival on the eve of the European Parliament elections gathered tens of thousands of supporters for a rally, 8.06.24](#)). The media also published an analytical article that explored the chances of the Hungarian opposition to replace Orban as prime minister ([Will Tysa become Orban's downfall?, 29.05.24](#)).

- ***The border with Hungary and Ukrainians in Hungary***

Hungary, like Poland and Slovakia, banned imports and blocked border checkpoints. However, these actions did not have the same scale and, consequently, resonance as the Polish ones. Therefore, *Ukrainska Pravda* published only a few reports on this topic ([Hungary to ban grain imports from Ukraine despite the compromise with European Commission, 15.09.23](#), [Hungarian farmers to protest against grain imports near the border with Ukraine in a week, 2.02.24](#)).

UP covered high-profile cases of illegal crossing of the Ukrainian-Hungarian border related to avoiding mobilization ([Absolute record: a group of 38 violators tried to leave for Hungary, 8.02.24](#), [In Transcarpathia, a truck broke through the state border: Hungarians detained 32 Ukrainians, 10.06.24](#), [An abandoned car was found near the border with Hungary: a group of Ukrainians could have escaped through a hole in the fence, 12.06.24](#)). The media outlet also quoted a Hungarian official strongly denying the possibility of extraditing Ukrainian men of conscription age from Hungary to Ukraine, including those staying illegally ([Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary: Budapest will not allow to "send to death" Ukrainian male refugees, 6.05.24](#)). It is worth recalling that Polish officials have not spoken so categorically on this issue.

Zaxid.net focused more than any other analyzed media outlet on violations of the law while crossing the Hungarian border. This localization was also inherent in the media outlet's coverage of incidents on the Ukrainian-Polish border. Usually, the media focused on funny events related to smuggling and the escape of draft evaders:

[On the border with Hungary, a couple hid 100 bags of jewelry on their bodies, 11/26/23](#)
[A freight train with ore carrying cigarettes to Hungary is stopped in Transcarpathia, 22.12.23](#)
[On Christmas night, three draft evaders tried to get to Hungary across the Tysa River for \\$17,000, 12/25/23](#)
[A resident of Zolochiv smuggled draft evaders to Hungary for 20 thousand euros, 04/27/24](#)
[In Zakarpattia, a 63-year-old villager smuggled 30 draft evaders to Hungary every month, 08/28/24](#)

The media outlet also sporadically reported on the situation of Ukrainian refugees, in particular, on the decision of the Hungarian authorities to limit social aid ([Hungary has limited aid to Ukrainian refugees, 21.08.24](#)). *Zaxid.net* also reported on the opening of the first school for Ukrainian-speaking children funded by the Hungarian budget ([In Hungary, the first school for Ukrainian-speaking children was officially opened, 31.08.24](#)). It is noteworthy that in this case, the amount of negative news was much lower than in the case of Ukrainians in Poland.

Ukrinform devoted the most attention to covering the topic of Ukrainians in Hungary. The outlet did not ignore even seemingly insignificant events:

[About 400 Ukrainian children become students of the first state bilingual school in Budapest, 3.10.24](#)

[Ukrainian and Hungarian citizens founded the "Imre Nagy Civil Bloc", 14.05.24](#)

[Church school in Budapest organizes spring celebrations and bicycle ride for Ukraine, 1.05.24](#)

[The Ukrainian community of Hungary presents an embroidered map of Ukraine to the embassy, 23.04.24](#)

[A series of events to honor Taras Shevchenko were held in Budapest, 12.03.24](#)

[Diaspora holds second literary tour in Budapest as part of LiteraTURE project, 20.11.23](#)

Interestingly, there was no such detailed presentation of the stay of Ukrainians in Poland.

Slovakia

- ***Ukrainian-Slovak relations after the election of Robert Fico as Prime Minister***

The main topic covered by *Ukrainska Pravda* during the analyzed period was the change in Slovakia's policy towards Ukraine after the elections. Slovakia has shifted from a pro-Ukrainian policy to a more Hungarian-style policy. However, *UP* reported that even before the election, the Slovak authorities, friendly to Ukraine, had banned the import of Ukrainian grain ([Slovakia follows Poland and Hungary in banning imports of Ukrainian grain, 15.09.23](#)).

Ukrainska Pravda closely followed the election results and the formation of the coalition and government, calling some politicians Ukrainophobes ([In Slovakia, anti-Ukrainian party wins - despite exit polls, 1.10.23](#), [Slovakia has a new government: pro-Russian Prime Minister Fico and Ukrainophobe Minister, 25.10.23](#)).

Later, the main newsmaker was the new Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, who made his entry with a scandalous anti-Ukrainian statement ([New Slovak Prime Minister Fico Calls Ukraine "the Most Corrupt in the World" 27.10.23](#)). *UP* reported not only on changes in rhetoric ([Slovak Foreign Minister said he could not imagine Ukraine in the EU under the current circumstances, 5.12.23](#)), but also on very specific steps that included refusal to supply weapons ([Slovak government did not approve €40 million in military aid to Ukraine, 8.11.23](#)). *UP* continued to inform about Fico's hostile rhetoric towards Ukraine ([Slovak Prime Minister makes new outrageous statements before meeting with Shmyhal, 20.01.24](#), [Slovak Prime Minister believes Russian war started "with Ukrainian neo-nazi's rampage" 24.02.24](#)) and other Slovak politicians ([Deputy Speaker of the Slovak Parliament says Russia is "not an aggressor" and "is defending own interests", 8.03.24](#)).

However, the media reported a sharp change in attitude, especially during or immediately after bilateral meetings ([Fico promised that Slovakia would not prevent Ukraine from joining the EU, 11.04.24](#), [Shmyhal signed a statement of "trust and respect" with pro-Russian Fico, 24.01.24](#)). When Fico's ally Peter Pellegrini won the presidential election ([Slovak elections won by pro-Russian candidate, 7.04.24](#)), he immediately issued a controversial pseudo-peacemaking statement

([Freshly elected Slovak President ready for 'peace talks' between Ukraine and Russia in Bratislava, 8.05.24](#)). However, after his meeting with President Zelensky, his rhetoric, at least temporarily, changed (["Fruitful Neighborly Discussion": Slovakia's new President meets Zelensky for the first time, 06/27/24](#)).

UP also monitored the sentiment in Slovak society, noting, on the one hand, anti-Ukrainian aspects ([14% of Slovaks would like Russia to defeat Ukraine, most of them among Fico voters, 1.07.24](#)). On the other hand, the media outlet provided detailed information about the Slovak crowdfunding initiative ([Slovaks raised almost 4 million euros for shells for Ukraine without government support, 22.04.24](#)), which was criticized by the Prime Minister ([Fico calls Slovak fundraising of €4 million for Ukraine useless, 29.04.24](#)). *UP* also reported that Ukrainian Slovaks asked Fico to support the start of EU accession negotiations ([Slovaks in Ukraine called on Fico to support the opening of negotiations with Ukraine on joining the EU, 12.12.23](#)).

A separate topic touched upon by *UP* was the sanctions against Russia's Lukoil, which made oil transit to Slovakia and Hungary impossible ([Slovakia and Hungary declare that oil transit of Russian Lukoil has been halted due to Ukrainian sanctions, 18.07.24](#)). The media outlet reported on the sharp reaction of the Hungarian prime minister ([Fico threatens Ukraine's ambassador with consequences for blocking Russian oil transit, 29.07.24](#)), simultaneously explaining that the point is not in the vital energy needs but rather in additional earnings from re-exports ([Slovakia earns up to \\$1.5 billion from transit and resale of gas from Russia, 9.08.24](#)).

Zaxid.net also reported in detail on the change in the vector of Slovak policy towards Ukraine after the elections ([Slovakia stopped helping Ukraine after the victory of the pro-Russian party in the elections, 7.10.23](#)). The news outlet, similarly to *UP*, focused on Robert Fico's scandalous statements ([Prime Minister of Slovakia announced his intention to establish relations with Russia, 11/30/23](#), [Prime Minister of Slovakia Robert Fico said he would veto Ukraine's accession to NATO, 12/20/23](#), [Prime Minister of Slovakia said Ukraine would have to give up some territories, 1/20/24](#)).

Even before the parliamentary elections, *Zaxid.net* published an interesting article explaining why some Slovak citizens are strongly influenced by Russian propaganda narratives ([Slovaks are exposed to Russian propaganda, 13.09.23](#)), so further coverage of the metamorphosis of the Slovak government was put into the appropriate context.

Zaxid.net also noted that the new Slovak government decided to investigate the actions of its predecessors, who had provided Ukraine MiG-29 fighters at a critical moment ([Slovak Ministry of Defense to Investigate the Transfer of MiG-29 Fighters to Ukraine, 21.06.24](#)). On the other hand, when the Czech Republic launched its initiative to supply Ukraine with ammunition, the new Slovak president announced joining in, as financial profits were in question ([Part of the ammunition will be produced at Slovak factories under the Czech initiative, 26.06.24](#)).

Immediately after the results of the early parliamentary elections in Slovakia were announced, the *Ukrinform* news agency reported that military assistance to Ukraine would be suspended. The then President of the country, Zuzanna Chaputova, explained that the winners of the elections professed an anti-Ukrainian course ([Slovak President explains her position on non-providing assistance to Ukraine, 8.10.23](#)). The agency quite unequivocally characterized the new Slovak prime minister ([Pro-Russian Fico again became the Prime Minister of Slovakia, 25.10.23](#)). *Ukrinform* also informed about Robert Fico's scandalous statements about Ukraine ([Fico says there is no war in Kyiv, 23.01.24](#)), but to a lesser extent than *UP* and *Zaxid.net*. Despite the fact that the new government has stopped arms supplies at the state level, Fico did not object to private supplies ([Slovak Prime Minister assures that private arms exports to Ukraine will not be blocked, 6.11.23](#)).

The agency meticulously tracked meetings between Ukraine and Slovakia at the intergovernmental level, publishing up to ten reports on various agreements and statements ([Prime Ministers of Ukraine and Slovakia signed a joint statement](#), 24.01.24; [Slovakia will not impede, but assist Ukraine in getting EU membership - Fico](#), 11.04.24; [Slovakia firmly stands for the territorial integrity of Ukraine - Shmyhal](#), 11.04.24). *Ukrinform* also covered in detail President Chaputova's farewell visit to Ukraine and her meeting with President Zelensky ([Weapons, Peace Summit, and EU accession: Zelenskyy met with Slovak president](#), 10.05.24).

The agency also provided detailed information about the attempted assassination of Robert Fico and the dynamics of his recovery ([Zelensky condemned the attempted assassination of Fico: Violence should not become a norm in any country](#), 15.05.24, [Slovak government and doctors report improvement in Fico's health after the assassination attempt](#), 27.05.24). When reporting on the motives of the attacker, the agency did not mention in the headline disagreement with the anti-Ukrainian course of the Prime Minister ([The attacker explained the attempt on Fico's life by disagreement with his policies - media](#), 23.05.24).

An important topic for *Ukrinform* was the cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia in the energy sector. First of all, it is about assistance in electricity supply, including emergency supply caused by Russian shelling ([Slovakia is preparing to supply Ukraine with electricity in the autumn and winter](#), 4.07.24; [Presidents of Ukraine and Slovakia discussed prospects for joint projects in the energy sector](#), 9.07.24; [Ukraine plans to attract emergency assistance from the energy systems of Poland and Slovakia today](#), 14.07.24).

Like *UP* and *Zaxid.net*, the agency reported on the conflict over the suspension of the Russian oil transit ([Fico threatens to cut off diesel fuel supplies to Ukraine due to the ban on Russian oil transit](#), 29.07.24). The outlet quoted Ukrainian Prime Minister Shmyhal, who assured that the sanctions did not undermine Slovakia's energy security ([Sanctions against Russian companies do not threaten Slovakia's energy security - Shmyhal](#), 1.08.24).

- **Slovak internal affairs**

UP monitored various processes in Slovak domestic life. In particular, it wrote about the threat of curtailment of democracy and liberal rights ([Slovakia to redirect EU funds for combating disinformation to roofs repairs, 12/1/23; Fico's government prepares controversial reform of public broadcaster, 04/14/24; EU warns Slovakia of consequences if it adopts law on "foreign agents," 07/24/24](#)). The news outlet reported not only on the EU's negative reaction to the curtailment of democracy but also covered protests of citizens ([Slovak opposition gathers new protests against Fico's government, 12/19/23, Thousands protest against Fico's government in Slovakia, 12/01/24, Hundreds of people take to the streets in Bratislava against restrictions on civil rights, 06/18/24](#)).

The attempted assassination of Prime Minister Robert Fico in June 2024 was, naturally, in the focus of *Ukrainska Pravda*. The outlet quoted the Ukrainian President as condemning the assassination attempt ([Zelensky strongly condemned the assassination attempt on Fico and wished him a speedy recovery, 15.05.24](#)) and reported on the attacker's pro-Ukrainian motive ([The attacker on Fico explained his act: he wanted to change Slovakia's policy towards Ukraine, 23.05.24](#)).

In the context of Slovak internal affairs, *Zaxid.net* covered the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Fico and protests of the Slovak opposition against the anti-liberal initiatives of the new government.

Ukrinform reported on the steps taken by the new Slovak government, which were qualified at the EU level as a curtailment of democracy ([In Slovakia, despite EU criticism, a special anti-corruption prosecutor's office was liquidated](#), 20.03.24, [In Slovakia, a public broadcaster was closed and a state media outlet was created instead](#), 2.07.24). Thus, the agency reported on the rejection of these steps both within the country ([Large-scale protests against Fico's government took place in Slovakia](#), 26.01.24, [Chaputova criticized Fico for contacts with Russia and attempts to weaken the rule of law](#), 10.03.24) and from the EU ([EU may freeze funds for Slovakia - media](#), 9.09.24).

- **Ukrainian-Slovak border**

UP briefly touched on the blockade of the border by Slovak carriers ([Slovak carriers again blocked trucks from crossing the border from Ukraine](#), 11.12.23) and reported on the current situation at the checkpoints ([Blockade: thousands of trucks on the border with Poland, hundreds with Slovakia](#), 11.12.23).

The media also occasionally reported on curious violations during border crossings ([State border guards of Ukraine detained a Kyiv citizen pretending to be a Nigerian on the border with Slovakia](#), 22.03.24).

Zaxid.net has traditionally paid a lot of attention to border crossing violations:

[In the mountains of Transcarpathia, a draft evader was detained on the way to Slovakia obtained from social networks](#), 2.10.23

[Transcarpathian smugglers tried to smuggle 5000 packs of cigarettes to Slovakia](#), 7.12.23

[Three draft evaders and the smugglers who helped them escape to Slovakia were detained in Transcarpathia](#), 18.01.24

[Two Transcarpathians are sentenced to 7 years in prison for smuggling draft evaders to Slovakia](#), 09/17/24

The *Ukrinform* news agency also drew attention to border crossing violations, but not as often as *Zaxid.net* ([A group of smugglers with a guide was detained near the border in Zakarpattia](#), 4.12.23, [The number of Ukrainian men illegally crossing the border has increased significantly in Slovakia](#), 10.05.24).