Where does Slovakia belong?

Facts, paradoxes and challenges for our security

1. What have we learnt so far?

- People want Slovakia to remain in NATO. 71% of adults want the country to stay in the Alliance. This is a clear majority, representing more than 3.1 million adults who support Slovakia's place in the West.
- Reluctance to invest in defence. Almost 50% do not want defence spending to rise by even a tenth of a percentage point of GDP, although NATO members are increasing expenditure in response to new security threats.
- Mixed perceptions of security threats. 51% see Russia as a threat and 39% do not. 39% see the United States as a threat and only 16% see Germany as one. We see this as evidence of the long-term effects of disinformation in Slovak society.
- 50% support military neutrality, while 40% favour remaining in military alliances. This tension suggests that some see NATO as a protective umbrella that requires neither investment nor active participation in its defence.

2. The problems we need to address

- Hybrid warfare and disinformation are effective. Despite Russia's aggression against Ukraine, a considerable share of the population does not see Russia as a threat. We believe this reflects the long-term influence of Russian propaganda across multiple platforms.
- A desire for security without responsibility. People want Slovakia to belong to NATO and share in European security but reject increases in defence spending. Political leaders, the media and civil society must address this tension. Political leaders need the courage to make strategic decisions even when they run counter to short-term public preferences.
- Neutrality is an illusion. In today's world of intense geopolitical rivalry, neutral countries survive only when larger powers guarantee their security. For Slovakia, entertaining neutrality carries security risks.
- Anti-American sentiment is a legacy of propaganda. The high share who see the United States as a threat points to the effects of decades of anti-American narratives. Addressing this requires sustained engagement with the public and a clearer explanation of geopolitical realities.
- The government is weakening Slovakia's strategic ties while people want security. If 71% want to stay in NATO while the government takes steps that move Slovakia away from the West, it is not acting in accordance with the will of the majority.

3. How can Slovakia resist hybrid warfare?

- Counter disinformation and Russian propaganda. Exposing manipulative narratives, educating the public and fostering evidence-based debate are essential.
- Discuss changing security needs. Slovakia cannot rely on security guarantees without participating and investing.
- Explain NATO's role clearly. NATO is a guarantee of Slovakia's survival in today's geopolitical environment. 71% understand this, but the share must grow.
- Political leaders must take responsibility. They must shape public debate and make strategic decisions, including when public opinion is sceptical.
- Prepare for a change in Europe's defence arrangements. If the United States substantially reduces its military presence in Europe, Slovakia will face the question of higher defence investment. We need to make room for a reasoned discussion now.

Where do we go from here?

The nine survey questions published so far, out of 13, give us a clear picture of public sentiment. The answers highlight four challenges: hybrid warfare, disinformation, the illusion of neutrality and reluctance to take responsibility for our own security.

The whole of society must help answer these questions. We are organising a public online discussion with experts, who will take questions from the audience and offer ways for Slovakia to strengthen its strategic ties to the West.

Follow us at www.future-slovakia.eu and join the discussion. What do you think? How can we improve public debate about Slovakia's security?

Project experts

Miroslav Wlachovský, Michal Vašečka, Milan Nič, Martin Slosiarik and Miroslav Kollár contributed to "Where does Slovakia belong? Facts rather than conjecture".

Survey and funding

FOCUS used an online panel. The representative sample comprised 1,006 adults in Slovakia. Fieldwork took place from 3 to 6 March 2025. The questionnaire contained 13 substantive questions.

The release reported that 176 donors had helped fund the survey through the Donio crowdfunding platform. The average donation was €26.

Media contact

Future Slovakia Forum. Dávid Bořuta, chair of the civic association. +421 911 802 407 · forum@future-slovakia.eu

The original release lists a chart comparing responses to the questions published to date as an attachment.