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Sergej Sinicyn, Mária Denciová, Gabriel Ešťok

An informational narrative on Slovakia's energy dependence on Russian gas

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Abstract

Energy security is a key factor shaping public policy in Central Europe. The issue of importing Russian natural gas to Slovakia became a major subject of public debate following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The topic remains particularly salient in Slovakia, which, together with Hungary, continues to rely heavily on Russian gas, where it occupies a dominant position in the energy import structure. Due to this dependence, issues such as attacks on energy infrastructure, the diversification of energy sources, and the application of sanctions have become matters of intense public debate. This article focuses on the analysis of narratives related to the import of Russian gas that emerge within the Slovak online information space. The objective of the study is to map the dynamics, and structure of discussions on Russian gas imports, with particular emphasis on identifying key political actors involved in the generation and reproduction of these narratives. The period under analysis spans from November 2024 to November 2025, covering discourse during the suspension of Russian gas transit through Ukraine and the campaign advocating for a referendum to stop applying anti-Russian sanctions. Data is collected using the Juno system developed by Gerulata. The methodological framework combines content analysis, discourse analysis, and frame analysis. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how narratives concerning Russian gas imports are formed and circulated in the Slovak information space.

Keywords: Russian gas imports, energy security, political communication, REPowerEU

I. Introduction

The issue of Russian gas imports to Slovakia has become a major topic of public debate, particularly following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The topic is particularly relevant in Slovakia, which, together with Hungary, remains among the last European Union member states to import significant quantities of oil and gas from Russia, with this source playing a dominant role in their imports thanks to the existing Bratstvo gas pipeline infrastructure, which

provided a cheap means of transport. Slovakia's dependence on Russian energy sources stood at almost 100% until 2022 (Oravcová 2023:2). This high dependence on Russian gas proved problematic as early as 2009, when the Russian Federation suspended gas supplies due to a dispute with Ukraine. Despite the gas crisis, Slovakia's efforts to diversify its gas sources proved limited and insufficient.

The situation only changed in 2022 following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Russian gas had become a tool of political pressure, and total dependence on it posed a security risk, not to mention a reputational risk vis-à-vis allies. Dependence on Russian gas therefore presenting weakness of EU member states. Russia targets the inherent weaknesses of open and democratic systems, playing a zero-sum game – it does not strengthen by building its brand, it strengthens by weakening other actors (Dubóczy – Dvorský 2025). Reducing dependence on Russian gas represented a gesture of solidarity with Ukraine. Slovakia, like other European Union member states dependent on Russian gas imports, sought to diversify its suppliers. By the end of 2022, the volume of Russian gas imported into Slovakia accounted for 60% of total imports (Funtíková – Grečko 2023), whilst in the following year the share of Russian gas fell to 50% (Ryník 2023). According to the latest information from the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, in 2025 Russian gas accounted for only 33% of natural gas supplies to the Slovak Republic. It should be noted, however, that this was primarily due to the cessation of gas transit through Ukraine, with the Slovak Republic importing Russian gas via alternative routes at the maximum possible volume (Funtíková 2025). Although the Russian Federation has lost its dominant position, it still maintains an important position in the Slovak natural gas market. Consequently, any attacks on energy infrastructure, or issues regarding the diversification of energy sources or the imposition of sanctions against Russia, are the subject of intense public debate in Slovakia.

In May 2022, the European Commission (2026) presented the REPowerEU initiative, which aims to reduce the EU's dependence on imports of Russian fossil fuels, diversify energy sources, accelerate the transition to renewable sources and enhance the energy security of Member States. Imports of Russian gas and oil are set to end by the end of 2027. Slovakia, together with Hungary, has been granted a transitional exemption to import Russian gas under its existing long-term contracts until 31 December 2027 (STVR 2025).

With the European Union's growing efforts to end imports of Russian fuels, combined with the fact that Ukraine ceased the transit of Russian gas as of 1 January 2025, there was a further reduction in Slovakia's imports of Russian gas in 2025, whilst part of the supplies were redirected via Hungary and the TurkStream pipeline.

Public debate regarding the import of Russian fuels intensified significantly in 2025. In connection with the REpowerEU initiative and further packages of anti-Russian sanctions, the extra-parliamentary party Slovak Revival Movement (SHO) launched a petition calling for a referendum to decide against imposing sanctions on the Russian Federation. The petition was supported by several political parties (the Slovak National Party, Republika, Domov – National Party) and prominent figures (Štefan Harabin, Tibor Eliot Rostas and Zoroslav Kollár). The petition organisers collected almost 400,000 signatures, exceeding the statutory limit. The referendum question asked whether Slovakia agreed to the non-application of sanctions which, according to the initiators, would negatively affect Slovak citizens and businesses. However, on 4 June 2025, the President of the Slovak Republic, Peter Pellegrini, refused to call a referendum, on the grounds that the question was not sufficiently precise, was unenforceable and could conflict with EU law regulating sanctions (Kéry 2025). The Slovak Revival Movement subsequently lodged a constitutional complaint, which was, however, dismissed, with the Constitutional Court confirming that the President had acted within the limits of his powers (TASR 2025). The initiative resulted in the adoption of *a resolution by the National Council rejecting the sanctions policy and trade restrictions against the Russian Federation and protecting economic and energy interests*, whereby the National Council of the Slovak Republic obliged members of the government not to vote in favour of adopting new sanctions and trade restrictions against the Russian Federation (National Council of the Slovak Republic, Parliamentary Print 759, 2025). The bill was successfully passed, but its enforceability in practice was questionable from the outset. The present study did not include posts from the petition's initiators themselves, as posts on the Facebook profiles of the Slovak Revival Movement or the movement's chairman, Róbert Švec, had a reach far lower than the specified 500 reactions. The overall dataset included supportive posts by the petition's co-organiser, Pavol Slotá; among the relevant political actors in the dataset, Andrej Danko expressed his support for the petition.

II. Literature review and methodology

The issue of political communication on social media has been the subject of a vast number of academic studies. In his publication *Analyzing political communication with digital trace data: the role of Twitter messages in social science research*, Andreas Jungherr (2015) provides a theoretical and methodological framework for analysing political communication on social media through digital traces. He uses data from the Twitter platform to examine political behaviour and electoral processes. The publication *The Routledge Companion to social media and Politics* (Bruns et al. 2016) offers an extensive collection of academic studies focusing on political communication in the online sphere across various regions of the world and provides insights into this issue within diverse political, cultural and social contexts. In recent years, interest in political communication has also grown within the Slovak academic community, with several publications on the subject already having been released. Among these, we can mention Ján Ruman's (2019) article "*Political-Ideological Inconsistency in Richard Sulík*", in which he qualitatively examines Richard Sulík's inconsistency using social media posts. We found the study *Narrative Dynamics in Times of COVID-19 on Facebook: A Quantitative-Qualitative Analysis of Slovak Political Actors* by Eštok, Dubóczy & Sinicyn (2025) particularly inspiring; the authors offer an extensive, qualitative and quantitative analysis of political communication in the Slovak online space during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The issue of energy security established itself as a subject of systematic research in European academic discourse, particularly following the gas crises of 2006 and 2009. In his monograph *EU and Russian Discourse on Energy Relations*, Lukáš Tichý (2017) identified three key sub-discourses shaping the European energy security discourse: the geopolitical sub-discourse, the securitisation sub-discourse and the diversification sub-discourse. The geopolitical subdiscourse frames energy relations through power asymmetries. The securitisation subdiscourse emphasises the risks arising from energy dependence on Russia, with the Russian Federation being labelled an unreliable supplier capable of using energy as a political weapon. In a later study, Tichý and Dubský (2013) analysed the EU's energy security discourse regarding

Russia between 2010 and 2021 and pointed out that the intensity of individual narrative strands correlates with the level of current geopolitical tension.

The concept of securitisation, as defined by Buzan, Wæver and de Wild (1998: 23–26), provides an analytical framework for understanding the process by which originally economic issues are transformed into security threats through a discursive act. In the Central European context, energy security became the subject of such securitisation most intensely following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Robert Folkner (2023) described this Kremlin strategy as the weaponisation of energy dependence, emphasising that preparations to use energy supplies as a tool of coercion began well before the full-scale invasion itself. Analysts Ogrodnik and Pastucha (2025) from the Polish Institute of International Affairs note that the slow pace of Slovakia's shift away from Russian energy sources is primarily a consequence of the current government's lack of political will.

In this study, we operationalise the concept of 'narrative' based on the intersections of narrative theory and political communication analysis. Following Roe (1994:2–3), in narrative analysis of policies we understand a narrative to be a coherent argumentative structure, a story or a line of argument that political actors repeatedly use to stabilise and legitimise their positions in conditions of uncertainty or polarisation. A narrative differs from an isolated statement in that it contains implicit or explicit elements of causal interpretation, value anchoring and recommendations for action. We assigned individual posts in the dataset to a specific narrative based on the presence of these structural elements, not on the mechanical occurrence of keywords. A single post could be assigned to multiple narratives if it contained several distinct lines of argument.

The issue of Russian gas imports is not merely an economic or energy problem in Slovakia, but a highly politicised topic that is the subject of intense public and political discourse. Given its links to security, geopolitical and values-based issues, the topic of Russian gas imports has recently become part of political communication in the digital sphere. This study therefore focuses on identifying the dominant actors in political communication regarding Russian gas imports in Slovakia in 2025 and on analysing their relative influence in the online sphere.

Although the Slovak Republic's energy dependence on the Russian Federation also includes imports of commodities other than oil, coal or nuclear fuel, and discussions on these commodities largely overlap, this article focuses exclusively on the topic of natural gas imports. This narrowing of the research scope aims to enhance analytical clarity. The focus on natural gas also reflects the importance of this commodity in Slovakia, as it is directly linked to domestic heating, industrial operations and thus the provision of the population's basic needs, a fact that is also reflected in the significant politicisation of this issue. Although gas is not explicitly mentioned in the analysed articles, those that generally discuss support for or opposition to Russian energy or energy sources are also considered.

The aim of the research is to identify the dominant actors, and main narratives present in political communication regarding Russian gas imports to Slovakia during the period under review, with a focus on the most active political actors in the online information environment of the Slovak Republic. The research focuses on the posts of political actors on the social network Facebook during the period between 30 November 2024 and 30 November 2025. The social network Facebook was chosen due to the high level of use of this platform by political actors for direct communication with the public.

Only those posts with more than 500 interactions were considered relevant, with this criterion serving as an indicator of the content's reach and visibility within the monitored information space. The analysed data was obtained via the Gerulata Juno monitoring system. The data was searched for using the following keywords: Russian gas OR gas from Russia OR Russian gas imports OR Gazprom OR sanctions against Russia OR anti-Russian sanctions OR gas transit OR energy security OR TurkStream OR REPowerEU. Based on the search using the above parameters, the authors obtained a dataset containing a total of 736 posts. Subsequently, duplicate posts, repeatedly shared content, irrelevant posts, as well as posts that were thematically related to the issue under study but whose content was not relevant to the analytical objectives of the research were removed from the dataset. The resulting dataset intended for analysis contained 147 posts.

Following a preliminary analysis of the posts contained in the dataset, the authors identified frequently occurring narratives, which they then systematically analysed and assigned to the relevant categories based on their

content. The aim of this article is not to assess the truth or falsehood of individual statements contained in the collected posts, but merely to map the dissemination of narratives.

Although the research focuses on the contributions of selected political actors, the data collection process was not restricted to specific political entities or actors during the search but was based on thematically defined keywords. The aim of the research was to capture the discourse on Russian gas imports in its broader form. The analysis will focus on the political communication of relevant political entities. For the purposes of this research, we consider relevant political actors to be those whose home party is represented in the 9th term of the National Council of the Slovak Republic or is above the threshold for election in opinion polls during the period under review.

Table 1:

Narratives under scrutiny and their occurrence in the dataset.

Narrative	Description of narrative	Number of posts
Russian gas positive	General positive assessment of Russian gas imports.	50
Russian gas is viewed positively because it is cost-effective	Russian gas is presented positively, but often without further explanation; the only argument used is its cheap transport.	26
Russian gas is viewed positively because it ensures energy stability	The argument presents Russian gas as a reliable, long-proven source that guarantees the continuity of energy supplies.	9
Russian gas is positive because alternatives are insufficient or expensive	Alternative sources of gas are currently not available, do not have sufficient capacity, or are not economically viable.	10

OVERVIEW

Russian gas is a positive option because it is in the national interest	Importing Russian gas as a step in line with the national economic and social interests of the Slovak Republic	16
Russian gas is positive because sanctions do not work and harm the EU more than Russia	The argument questions the effectiveness of sanctions against Russia and highlights their negative impacts on Slovakia and EU Member States.	11
Russian gas is a positive thing; cutting it off means dependence on other countries	The narrative warns that rejecting Russian gas only leads to a shift in dependence towards other suppliers, not to true energy independence.	5
Russian gas is positive; diversification means buying 'repackaged' Russian gas	Diversification of supplies is merely formal; in reality, it is the same Russian gas purchased through intermediaries.	7
Russian gas is positive; getting rid of it is "anti-Russian"	The narrative interprets the rejection of Russian gas as an ideologically motivated, anti-Russian stance, rather than a rational economic decision.	10
Russian gas is negative	General rejection of Russian gas imports	21
Russian gas is negative because it creates strategic dependence	highlights the risk of geopolitical and energy dependence on Russia as an unreliable and politically motivated actor.	14
Russian gas is negative because it undermines Slovakia's credibility with its allies	The argument emphasises that continuing to import Russian gas damages Slovakia's credibility with the EU and NATO.	8

Russian gas is negative because it finances the war against Ukraine	It frames the purchase of Russian gas as indirect financial support for Russian military aggression against Ukraine.	5
Russian gas is negative because it contradicts the EU's sanctions policy	It highlights the normative and political contradiction between the import of Russian gas and the EU's official sanctions policy.	4
Russian gas is negative because it is cost-inefficient	It questions the economic viability of Russian gas and highlights its rising costs.	9
Ukraine's attacks on energy infrastructure in Russia threaten the Slovak Republic. / The cessation of transit through Ukraine is perceived as a hostile act against the Slovak Republic.	interprets the disruption of transit or attacks on energy infrastructure as a security risk and a hostile act threatening the Slovak Republic.	15

Source: Authors' own work

III. Results

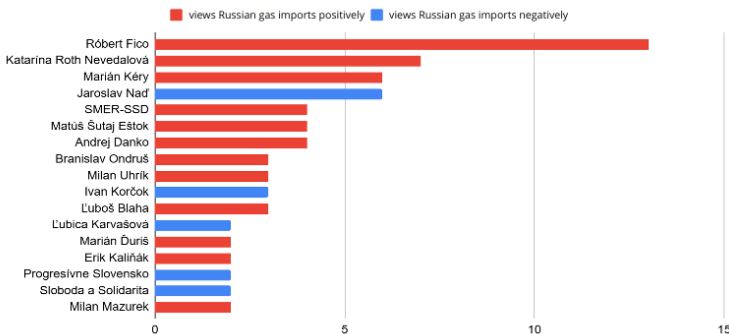


Figure 1. Number of relevant posts by the most active actors

Source: Authors' own work

Figure 1 shows a list of actors along with the number of posts they have published on the topic under review; we focus on actors who appear more than once in the dataset. The actor with the highest number of posts on the topic under review is Robert Fico (13 posts), who significantly outstrips other actors in terms of the number of published outputs. To a large extent, this stems from the fact that he held the office of Prime Minister during the period under review. Other leading actors include MEP Katarína Roth Nevedálová (7 posts) and Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic Marián Kéry (6 posts). They are followed by Jaroslav Nad' (6 posts), who proved to be the most active opposition politician in relation to the topic. The SMER-SSD party profile, Matúš Šutaj Eštok and Andrej Danko achieved a moderate level of activity (4 posts). Among the actors with a lower level of activity (3 posts) are Branislav Ondruš, Milan Uhrík, Ivan Korčok and Ľuboš Blaha. Other actors in the dataset (Ľubica Karvašová, Marián Ďuriš, Erik Kaliňák, Milan Mazurek, and the party profiles of Progresívne Slovensko and Sloboda a Solidarita) show a relatively low, even marginal, level of engagement with the topic of Russian gas imports.

The graph uses different colours to distinguish between actors who present Russian gas imports positively (red) and those who present them negatively (blue). In general, actors from the current coalition are much more heavily represented in the dataset, both in terms of the number of actors themselves and the number of published posts. Opposition actors and entities form a minority in the collected dataset. Regarding attitudes for or against Russian gas imports, we see a clear dividing line between coalition and opposition actors. Actors from the Republika movement (Milan Uhrík, Milan Mazurek and Marián Ďuriš), which currently has no representation in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, share the views of the current coalition on the issue of Russian gas imports.

The positions of those supporting Russian gas imports varied in their degree of firmness – ranging from more moderate stances, which, whilst accepting the need to diversify sources, but at the same time emphasised Russia's importance, to very hardline positions that unequivocally insisted on continuing large-scale imports of Russian gas and regarded the cessation of its supply as economically damaging or as a forced ideological move. For some actors, such as Robert Fico, these stances shifted, with harder and softer statements alternating. These changes cannot be explained by the development

of the situation over time, as this is not a linear shift (e.g. from soft to hard), but rather a fluctuation in positions. Negative attitudes towards Russian gas imports were, in most cases, consistent; the actors who expressed them unconditionally insisted on the cessation of imports.

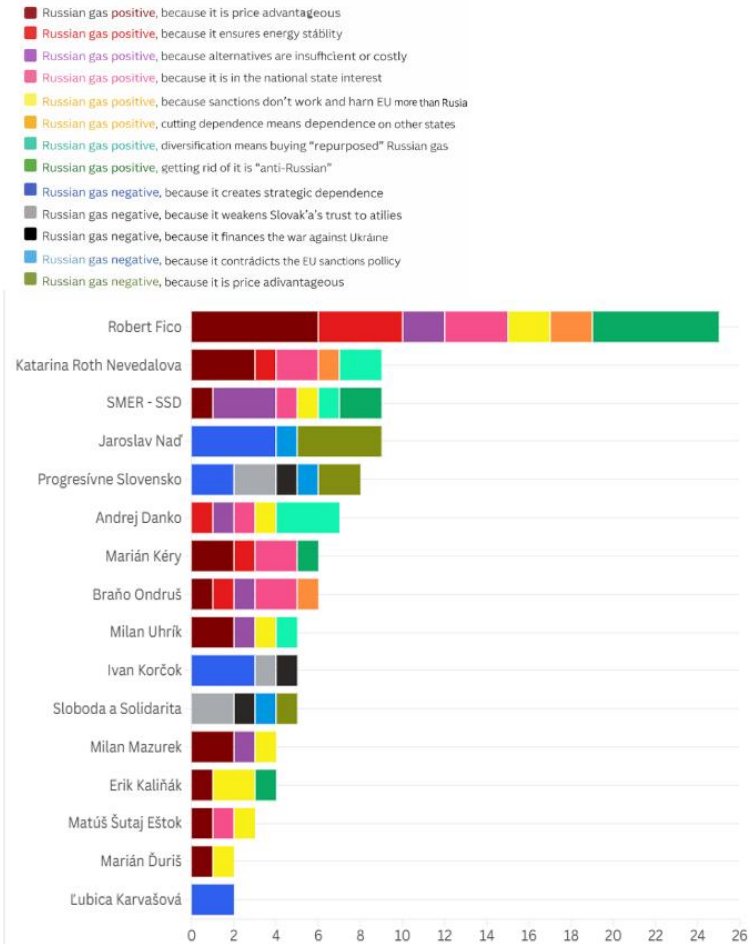


Figure 2. Contributions by actors, broken down by monitored actors
Source: Authors' own work

Figure 2 shows the distribution of monitored narratives concerning Russian gas among individual political actors and entities. For the actor with the highest number of posts, Robert Fico, 7 out of 8 monitored narratives supporting the import of Russian gas are represented. The most frequent arguments were its affordability and energy stability. Among the monitored actors, Robert Fico most strongly presented the termination of Russian gas supplies as a purely ideological move motivated by hatred towards Russia.

In general, the most widespread narrative supporting the import of Russian gas was its affordability and the preservation of the Slovak Republic's energy security. The narrative presenting the affordability of Russian gas appeared among all the monitored actors who viewed the import of Russian gas positively. When arguing for the affordability of Russian gas, transit fees were cited as a reason; however, the cost-effectiveness of Russian gas was most often presented without further justification.

The most common narrative against Russian gas was the emphasis on the Slovak Republic's energy dependence on Russia and the narrative that purchasing Russian gas undermines the Slovak Republic's credibility with its allies. Another relatively frequent narrative was the portrayal of Russian gas as cost inefficient. Actors dismissed "cheap Russian gas" as a myth and argued that energy prices are lower in countries that have diversified their gas sources.

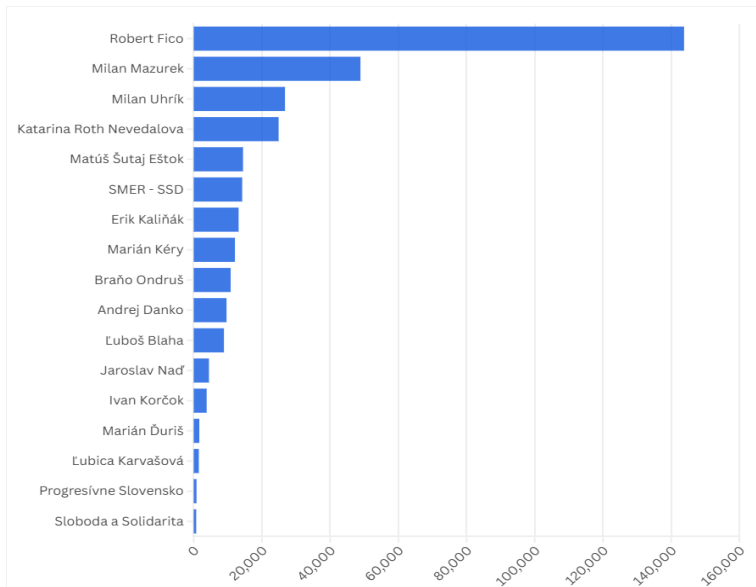


Figure 3. Number of interactions generated by the monitored actors

Source: Authors' own work.

Figure 3 illustrates the number of interactions, i.e. reactions, comments and shares on the posts of the monitored actors. Among the monitored actors, Robert Fico dominates with the highest number of interactions (143,000 interactions), significantly exceeding all other actors. However, this also stems from the fact that Robert Fico published the most posts on the monitored topic and communicated on the topic most intensively. In second and third place are representatives of the Republika movement, Milan Mazurek (48,000 interactions) and Milan Uhrík (26,000 interactions). Their ranking is somewhat surprising, given that they are part of a non-parliamentary party and also given that they surpassed figures who published a greater number of posts on the topic in question in terms of interactions. This suggests a higher degree of effectiveness in their communication on social media.

The highest number of interactions among actors who presented Russian gas imports negatively was achieved by Jaroslav Naď (4,478 interactions) and Ivan Korčok (3,801 interactions). However, these figures are significantly lower compared to the number of interactions from actors presenting Russian gas imports in a positive light. Overall, we can conclude that the highest level of interactions is achieved by actors who have long been voicing criticism of anti-

Russian sanctions, framing energy issues through narratives of national interest, low energy prices and the 'dictates of the European Union', and who use confrontational and highly emotional language in their communications. The topic of Russian gas imports in the online space primarily mobilises audiences who resonate with pro-Russian and populist narratives, whilst audiences targeted by liberal and pro-Western actors respond significantly less.

IV. Discussion

The results presented reflect several trends that our analysis has identified in political communication regarding Russian gas imports in Slovakia. We situate these within the broader framework of existing research on political communication on social media and the energy security discourse in Central Europe.

The significant preponderance of coalition actors in the dataset and their dominance in terms of the number of interactions suggests the existence of a communication asymmetry, whereby the pro-Russian section of the political spectrum is able to use the energy issue to mobilise support more effectively than opposition actors. This pattern corresponds with the findings of Hameleers et al. (2021), who demonstrated, using the examples of Austria and the Netherlands, that right-wing populist politicians achieve a higher rate of interaction on social media than mainstream actors, with the key factor being not the populist content itself, but the communication style – emotionality, first-person references and polarising rhetoric. In the Slovak context, this mechanism was particularly evident in the case of Milan Mazurek and Milan Uhrík from the *Republika* movement, who, despite a marginal number of posts (2 and 3 respectively), achieved 48,000 and 26,000 interactions respectively, thereby outperforming actors with a substantially higher volume of published content.

The dominance of the narrative of the affordability of Russian gas, which appeared in the posts of every actor monitored who viewed imports positively, whilst most often presented without deeper argumentation, suggests that this is a framing tool in the sense of Entman's concept. Entman (1993: 52) defined framing as the process of selecting and emphasising certain aspects of perceived reality, whereby frames define problems, diagnose causes and

propose solutions. The ‘cheap Russian gas’ narrative fulfils precisely these functions: it defines the problem (high energy prices), identifies the cause (sanctions and diversification) and proposes a solution (a return to Russian supplies). The absence of empirical argumentation in this narrative does not, however, preclude its communicative effectiveness. On the contrary, it is precisely simplification and emotional anchoring that are among the attributes of successful framing in political communication.

The finding that actors criticising Russian gas imports achieved significantly lower levels of engagement resonates with existing research on engagement asymmetry. A systematic review of the relationship between populist content and user engagement on social media confirms a positive association between a populist communication style and content visibility, although variations arise depending on platform characteristics, user attitudes and contextual elements, including the degree of polarisation.¹¹ Slovakia, which according to the V-DEM index is the second most polarised country in Europe (Kosnáč, Gloss & Cigánková 2025), creates an environment in which polarising content gains natural amplification through the algorithmic mechanisms of social media.

The fluctuation in Fico’s positions between more moderate and harsher statements, as identified by our analysis, can be interpreted from the perspective of strategic political communication. Alternating between moderate and radical tones allows him to appeal to different segments of the audience – from pragmatic voters sensitive to economic arguments to a more radical-leaning audience that resonates with anti-Western narratives. Our findings extend these insights to the energy sector, where the mechanisms of affective polarisation manifest themselves with equal intensity.

The clear dividing line between coalition and opposition actors on the issue of Russian gas imports reflects a broader pattern observable in Central European political communication regarding EU climate and energy policies. Our data suggest the presence of a similar pattern in Slovak energy discourse: attitudes towards Russian gas imports largely overlap with the existing foreign policy orientations of the actors and fit into long-standing positions regarding the Russian Federation and the European Union.

¹¹ For further details, see: Bozdağ – Veloso da Silva 2025.

The fact that narratives about Russian gas imports significantly transcend the energy issue itself and become part of a broader political and values-based conflict corresponds to the concept of securitisation as defined by Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998:23–26). Energy issues are transformed into security threats in Slovak discourse through a discursive act, whether by actors warning against dependence on Russia or by those presenting the EU's sanctions policy as a threat to national interests. Both sides of the conflict thus operate within the logic of securitisation, albeit with different reference points for security.

The methodological limitations of this study lie primarily in its restriction to a single platform. Although Facebook remains the dominant social network for political communication in Slovakia, the growing importance of platforms such as TikTok and Telegram, where some political actors are building alternative communication channels, presents a prospect for future research. Another limitation is the threshold of 500 interactions, which, whilst ensuring the dataset remains analytically manageable, simultaneously excludes posts with lower reach that may be relevant in terms of content. The exclusion of Igor Matovič's posts due to his private Facebook profile represents a further limitation, although the topic was primarily addressed by other politicians from the SLOVENSKO movement.

V. Conclusion

This study analysed political communication regarding Russian gas imports to Slovakia in 2025, focusing on the dominant actors and narratives present in the Slovak online space. Based on an analysis of posts on Facebook, we can conclude that the discourse regarding Russian gas imports was polarised during the period under review and clearly reflected the dividing line between coalition and opposition political actors.

During the period under review, online discourse was dominated by those advocating the continuation of Russian gas imports, not only in terms of the number of posts published but also in terms of the number of interactions. By far the most prominent figure was Prime Minister Robert Fico, who communicated on the topic most intensively. In his communications, Robert

Fico also utilised a wide range of narratives supporting Russian gas imports, whilst his messaging was characterised by fluctuations between more moderate and more hardline stances. In terms of their ability to achieve the highest possible number of interactions, Milan Mazurek and Milan Uhrík were the most effective in their communication on the topic under review, despite the fact that they essentially only touched on the topic marginally during the period under review. Conversely, posts by actors who presented Russian gas imports in a negative light generated far fewer interactions, and their communication proved less effective. In general, it emerged that posts by actors supporting Russian gas imports generated a significantly higher rate of interactions than the communication of actors who rejected such imports.

An analysis of the narratives showed that those supporting Russian gas imports dominated, with the most common arguments being affordability, ensuring energy stability and protecting national interests. Among the narratives rejecting Russian gas imports, the most common were concerns about strategic dependence on the Russian Federation, the unfavourable pricing of Russian gas, and the narrative that purchasing Russian gas undermines Slovakia's credibility with its allies. Other narratives were represented less frequently in the collected dataset.

Among the actors monitored, attitudes towards Russian gas imports largely overlapped with their existing foreign policy orientations. Attitudes on this topic aligned with the long-standing positions of individual actors regarding the Russian Federation, the European Union, or Ukraine. It is therefore questionable to what extent the discussion on Russian gas imports in the Slovak information space was conducted as a technical debate on energy policy. This is because the discussion took the form of a broader political and values-based conflict, with its framing in the online space significantly extending beyond the issue of energy security itself.

The issue of Russian gas imports remains topical, as the Slovak Republic is still partially dependent on Russian supplies not only of gas, but also of oil and nuclear fuel, despite the European Union's ongoing plans to end these supplies by 2027.

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