

# Slovakia: Population Distrust US, Opposition to “Western” Intervention

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*GLOBSEC is probably one of the most well-known and influential political think-tanks in not only Slovakia, but also Central Europe. It aims to support a pro-Atlantic direction for Slovakia. Despite being founded in only 2005, it organizes annual events that are often attended by up to a thousand people from dozens of different countries. Although it receives millions of euros from the Slovak government, it is also [funded](#) by the US, and has hosted prominent liberal and pro-Atlanticist speakers such as former British Prime Minister David Cameron, former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, long time US Senator John McCain, and well known former US diplomat and political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski.*

It is clear that this institution is trying to influence public opinion in Slovakia. However, its own research shows that its efforts are not as successful as they would hope it to be. A [recently published GLOBSEC report](#) titled “Voices of Central and Eastern Europe: Perceptions of democracy & governance in 10 EU countries,” found that 50% of respondents believe that their values are threatened by the “West,” and 53% found that the US specifically was a threat to their “identity and values.” This is in stark contrast to neighboring Poland where only 12% of respondents thought the US was a threat. In fact, no other country surveyed, such as Bulgaria (43%), Czechia (33%), Hungary (21%) and Lithuania (19%), had a majority that thought the US was a threat to their “identity and values.”

The way Slovak politicians communicate Western values is the main reason for this unprecedented result in Central and Eastern Europe. Slovakia, as a traditionally conservative society, has been inundated with Western liberalism that has resulted in draconian political correctness and identity politics. The idea that these values will be forcibly implemented in Slovak society is receiving major backlash.

Washington’s unilateral policies have had a negative global consequence that has not solved geopolitical problems, but in fact worsened them. Intervention against the former Yugoslavia to support the establishment of a narco-state like Kosovo, is one such example. In fact, Slovakia is only one of five countries in the European Union that has not yet recognized Pristina’s independence from Belgrade. Western intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria is also negatively perceived in Slovakia.

According to the GLOBSEC report, people who are more prone to what the think-tank describes as conspiracy theories, without mentioning specific examples, and the fact that anti-American sentiment in Slovakia is significantly higher than anti-Russian sentiment,

would certainly be very frustrating for the researchers. Despite a strong message from the mainstream media and the organization of extravagant events by GLOBSEC, only 26% of Slovaks perceived Russia as a threat to their country, the think-tank said in its 2019 Trends report. This is because “Slovaks have been known for having stronger anti-US sentiments than their neighbours,” as well as “stronger pro-Russian sentiments based on a historical and cultural context.” Slovakia is also the least Russophobic nation in Central Europe because Russia is perceived as a non-aggressive partner that provides a regular and safe supply of raw materials, like gas and oil.

Although 79% of Slovaks believe that their media is “rather or completely free” of influence, only 46% of Slovaks trusted the “standard” of mainstream media. This shows that Slovaks are aware of the gradual monopoly control of their media. It is also this lack of trust in the media that has made Slovakia an anomaly out of the Central and Eastern European countries surveyed in how they trust the US.

The conclusions of this survey would be extremely frustrating for GLOBSEC. Their long-term and systematic effort in trying to influence Slovak opinion has thus far produced poor results. It is likely that we will see increased funding for the think-tank, which will mean more extravagant events, more talks, and more penetration into the mainstream media by GLOBSEC to force Atlanticism onto Slovaks. Whether this will be successful or not still remains to be seen.

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