



Russian aggression against Ukraine: Survey of current Czech attitudes

English summary of main findings

April 25th, 2022

RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE: SURVEY OF CURRENT CZECH ATTITUDES

This analysis of the STEM Institute for Empirical Research focuses on key impacts of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and its perception in the Czech society. The war in Ukraine has engendered profound shifts in Czech public opinion regarding Ukraine, Russia and international cooperation. Equally pressing is the issue of nearly 300,000 Ukrainian refugees who fled to the Czech Republic. Further, the war has significant ripple effects on world energy supply chains and prices; it also exacerbates chronic systemic problems of the Czech Republic, such as rising prices or societal concerns about the quality of living. Finally, the war in Ukraine has induced a substantial transformation of the Czech disinformation scene.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine also brought an unprecedented sense of insecurity to the Czech Republic – only 9% of Czechs think there is no threat of armed conflict in the Central European region. Full three-quarters of Czech society believe that Russia is the unambiguous culprit of the conflict in Ukraine, which is reflected in the record-low ranking of Russia as a whole. Conversely, the share of Czech citizens viewing Russia in favorable light who would like the Czech Republic to belong to the East is relatively low at 4%.

The war in Ukraine has driven home the importance of NATO as well – full 78% of Czechs approve of their country’s membership in the alliance, which is the highest share since 1994. There is also a widespread agreement that the EU should strengthen its defense cooperation, jointly purchase weapon systems, and coordinate its gas and oil purchases centrally.

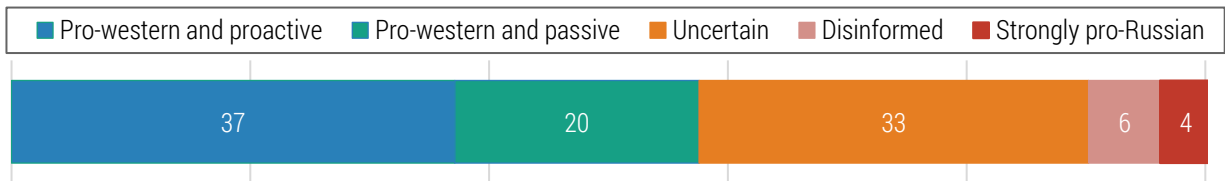
The Czech society is strongly supportive of Ukraine even two months into the war. Some two thirds (64%) of Czech society support accepting refugees from Ukraine who are seeking shelter in the country. However, Czech citizens are also worried about the impact of refugee arrivals – some 70% of Czechs express concerns about social welfare guarantees and 52% believe that accepting refugees will result in higher unemployment rates in the country.

This report is based on a STEM survey of a representative sample of the adult population (18+ years of age) of the Czech Republic. Data collection took place between March 24th and April 6th, 2022. Quota sampling was used for respondent selection. The sample size was 1171, and the interviews were conducted online or face to face (CAWI+CAPI).

Full text of this report in Czech can be accessed here: <https://www.stem.cz/ruska-agrese-proti-ukrajine-analyza-nalad-ceske-verejnosti/>

1. Three typologies of Czech society's views of the war in Ukraine

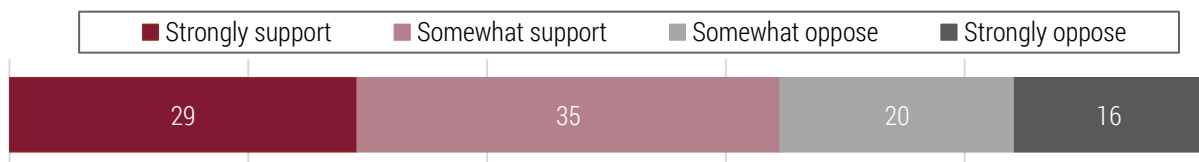
Typology 1: Attitudes towards Russia and the war



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

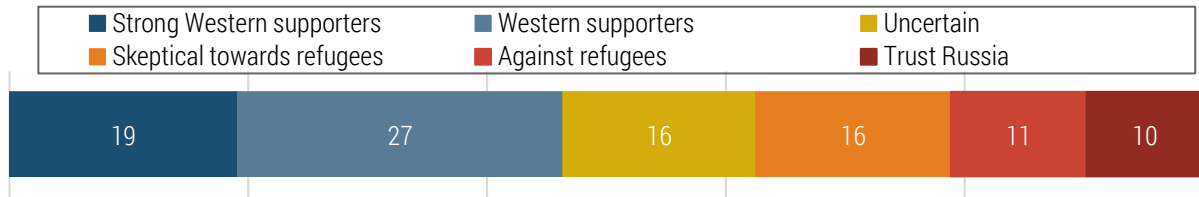
- 1) **Pro-western and proactive** – they want the Czech Republic to belong to the West, do not believe in Russia's narratives and support at least sending more NATO troops to the alliance's Eastern flank.
- 2) **Pro-western and passive** – mostly would like the Czech Republic to belong to the West, largely distrust Russian narratives but do not support further steps by NATO or even oppose those.
- 3) **Uncertain** – they want the Czech Republic to occupy a centrist position between the West and East and don't hold an unequivocal position regarding Russian narratives.
- 4) **Disinformed** – they also want the Czech Republic to occupy a centrist position between the West and East, but they at the same time mostly trust Russian narratives.
- 5) **Strongly pro-Russian** – they are firm in their belief that the Czech Republic should belong to the East and embrace Russian narratives of the war.

Typology 2: Attitudes towards assisting Ukrainian refugees



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

Typology 3: Combined attitudes towards the war, Russia and refugees



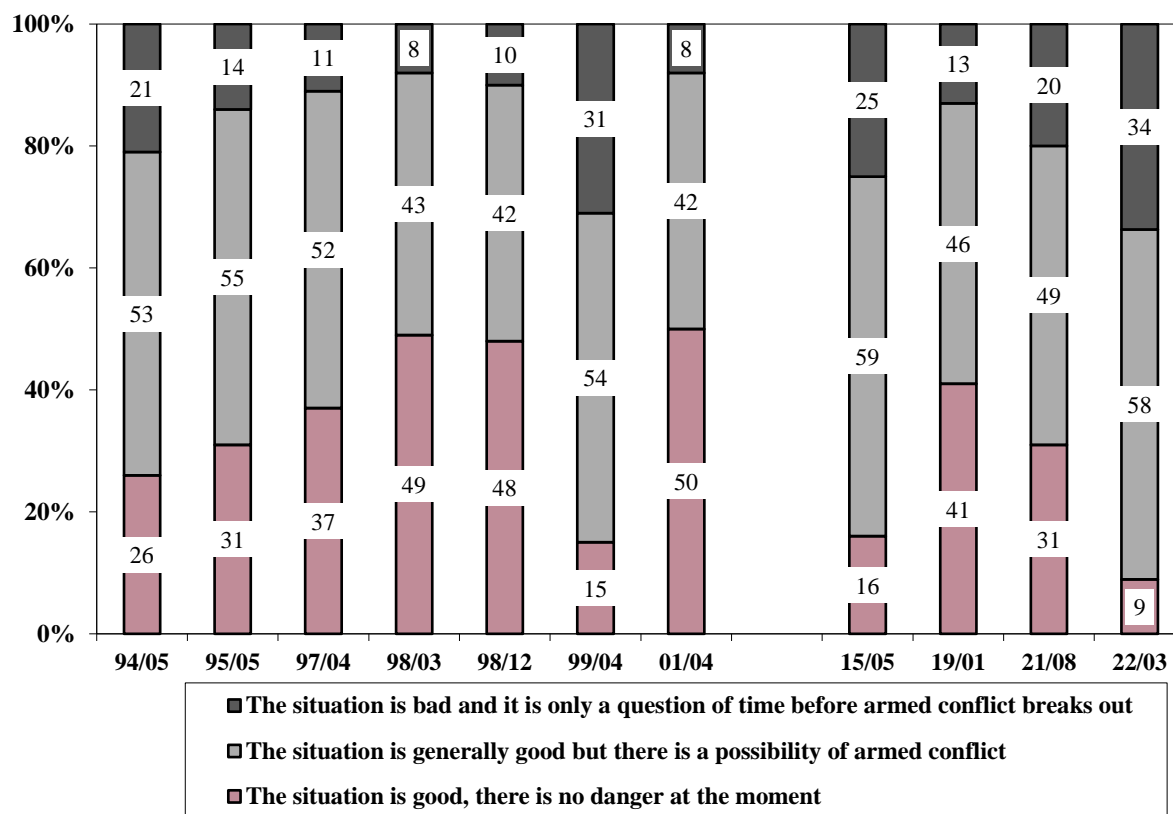
Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

In this final combined typology, we identify three major segments of Czech society, each of which has two subtypes, based on positions on the war and Ukrainian refugees:

1. **Strong Western supporters** – they express strong solidarity with Ukrainian refugees, are clearly pro-Western and want NATO to take active steps in response to the war in Ukraine, at least by beefing up its presence on the NATO-Russia border.
2. **Western supporters** – have a clear pro-Western orientation but harbor reservations about helping refugees and/or a more active role for NATO.
3. **Uncertain** – they mostly support helping refugees but would like the Czech Republic to remain in a centrist and neutral position; they are also fairly divided in their (dis)trust in Russian narratives.
4. **Skeptical towards refugees** – hold neutral or pro-Western alignment but are not keen on assisting Ukrainian refugees.
5. **Against refugees** – have neutral or pro-Western orientation but decidedly against helping Ukrainian refugees.
6. **Trust Russia** – they are either pro-Eastern in their geopolitical outlooks or view the conflict in accordance with the Russian narrative and mostly refuse helping refugees.

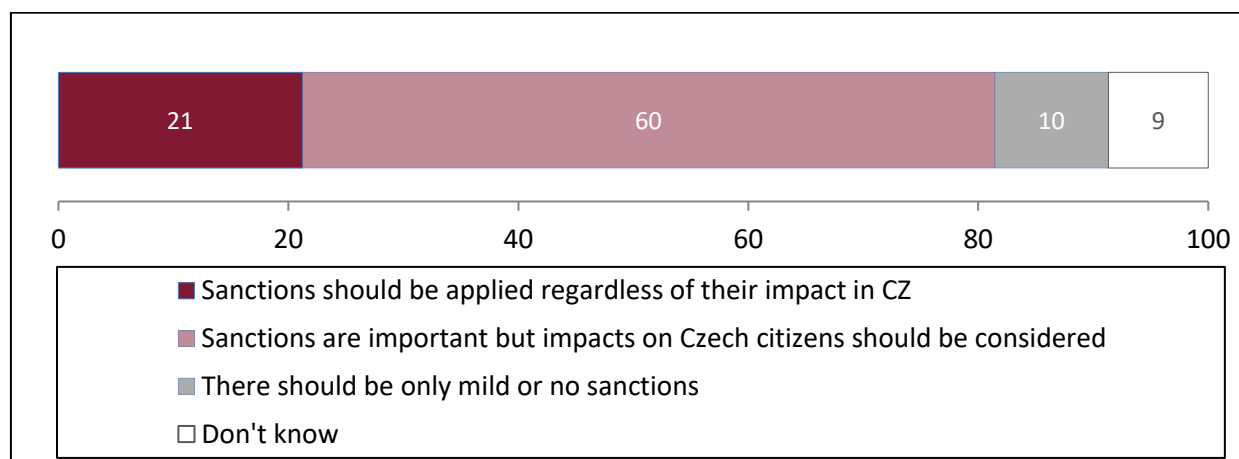
2. Threat perception in the Central European region and view towards select foreign countries

„How do you assess the current situation in Central Europe from the standpoint of international security? Which of the following assessments do you align with the most?“



Pramen: STEM, Trendy 1994–2022

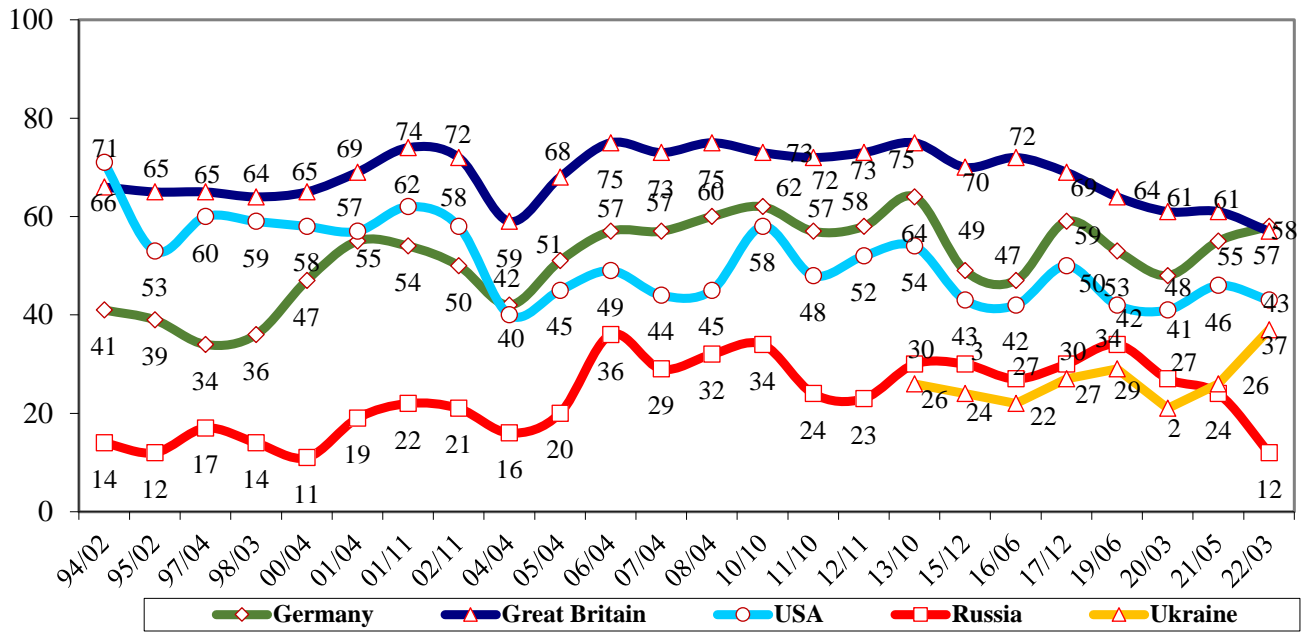
“The economic sanctions applied against Russia due to the war in Ukraine will least to a rise in prices in the Czech Republic. What do you think about this?”



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

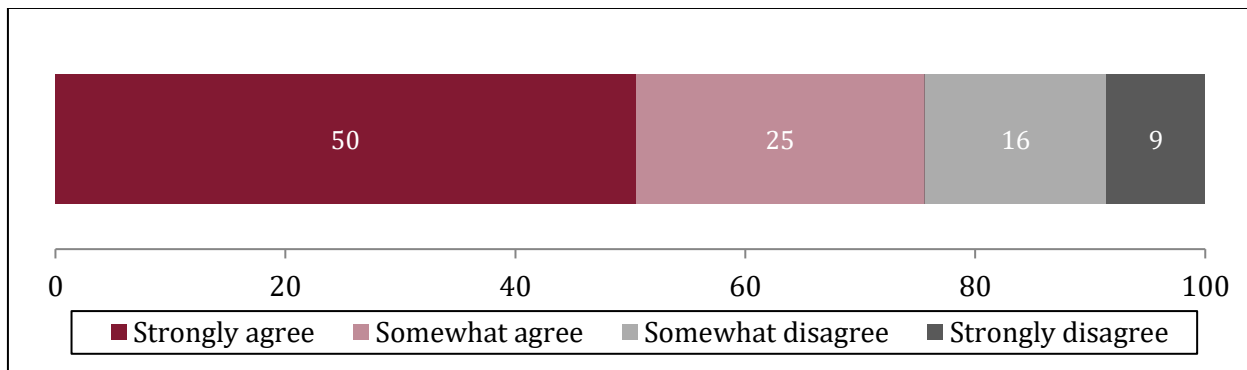
Changes in ranking of selected foreign countries (1994-2022)

(Share of favorable marks 1 + 2 in %)



Source: STEM, Trendy 1994-2022

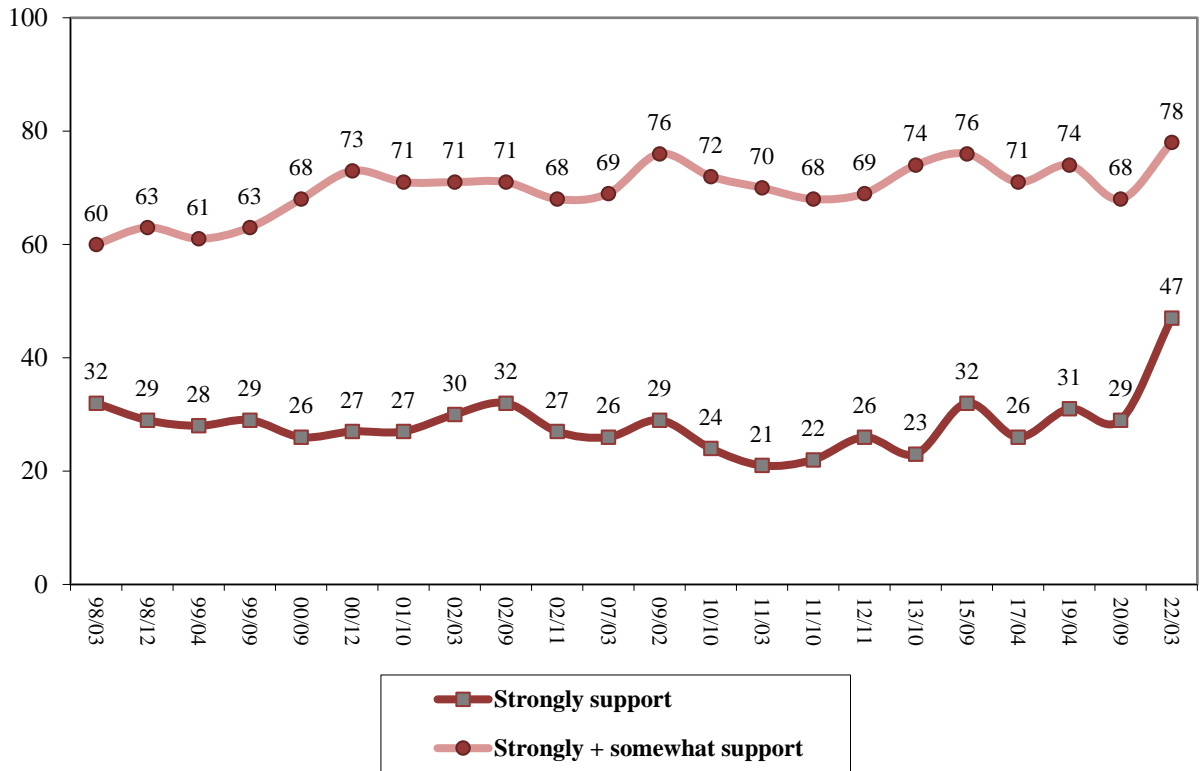
“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the war in Ukraine: Russia is the unambiguous culprit of the war.”



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

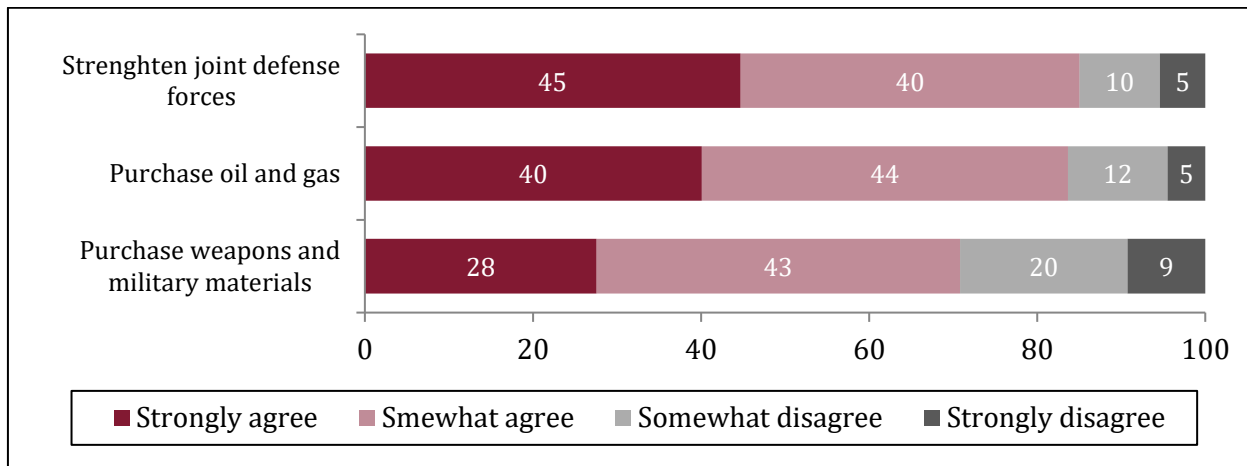
3. The perception of NATO and the EU in the Czech Republic

„Do you support Czech NATO membership?“



Source: STEM, Trendy 1998–2022

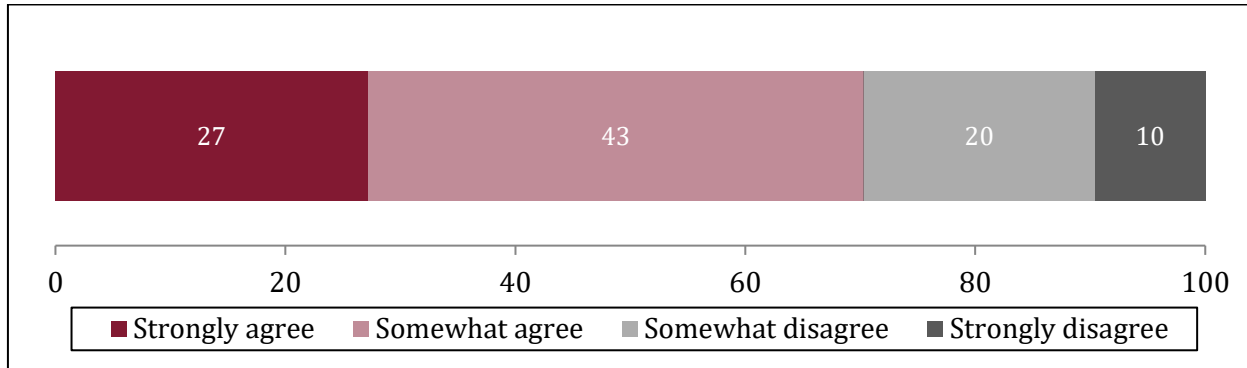
„Should the EU member states proceed jointly in the following areas?“



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

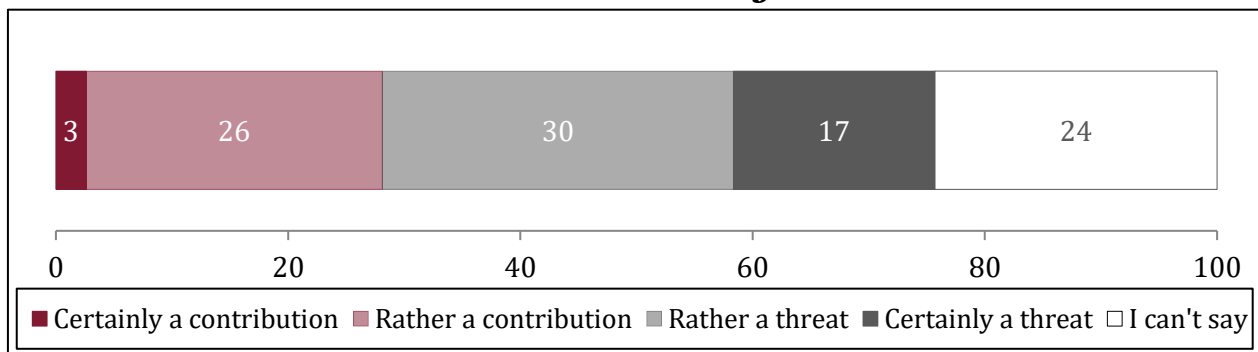
4. Czech attitudes towards refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine

“More than 200 000 refugees from Ukraine fled to the Czech Republic. Do you think that it is right that the Czech Republic is accepting these refugees?”



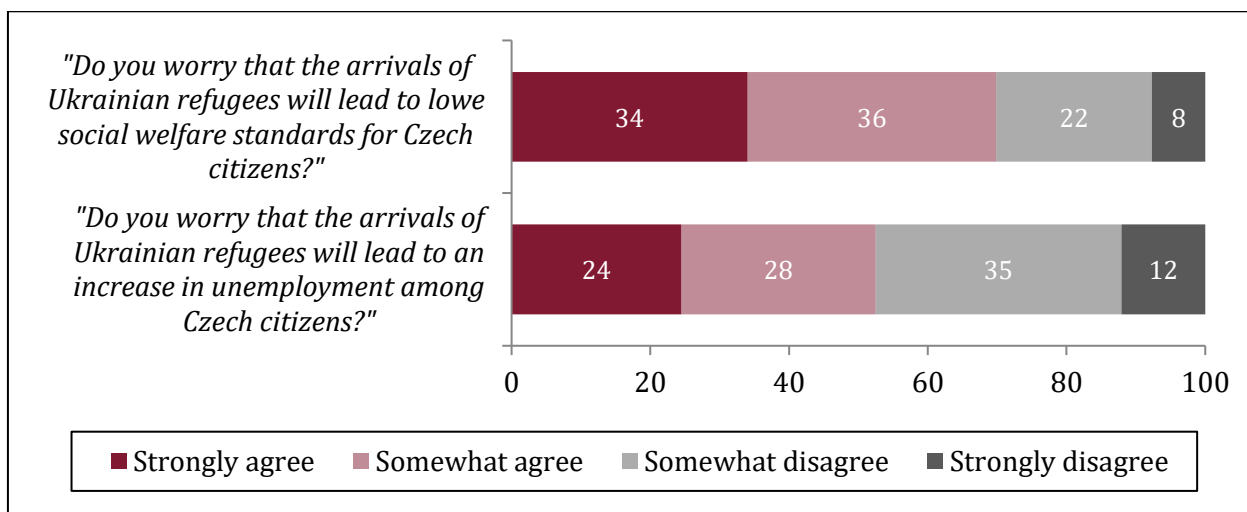
Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

“Do you think that Ukrainian refugees present a contribution or a threat to the Czech society?”



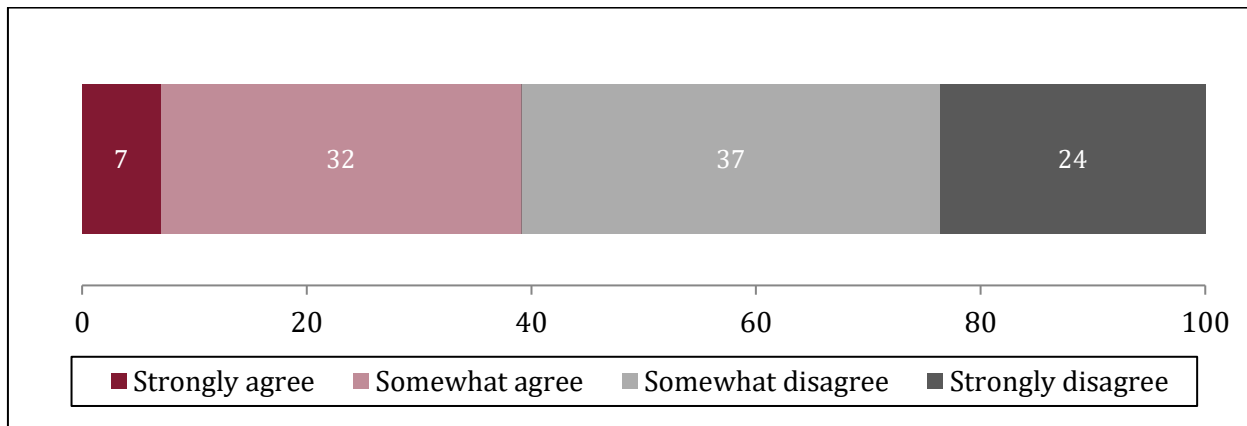
Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

Societal concerns associated with Ukrainian refugee arrivals



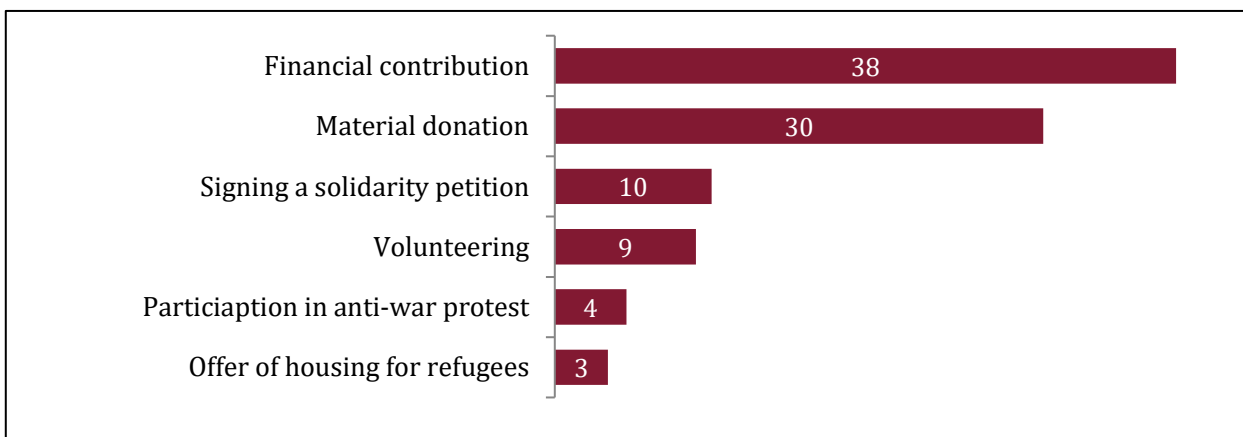
Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

„Do you think that we will manage to take care of the app. 250 000 refugees in the long run?“



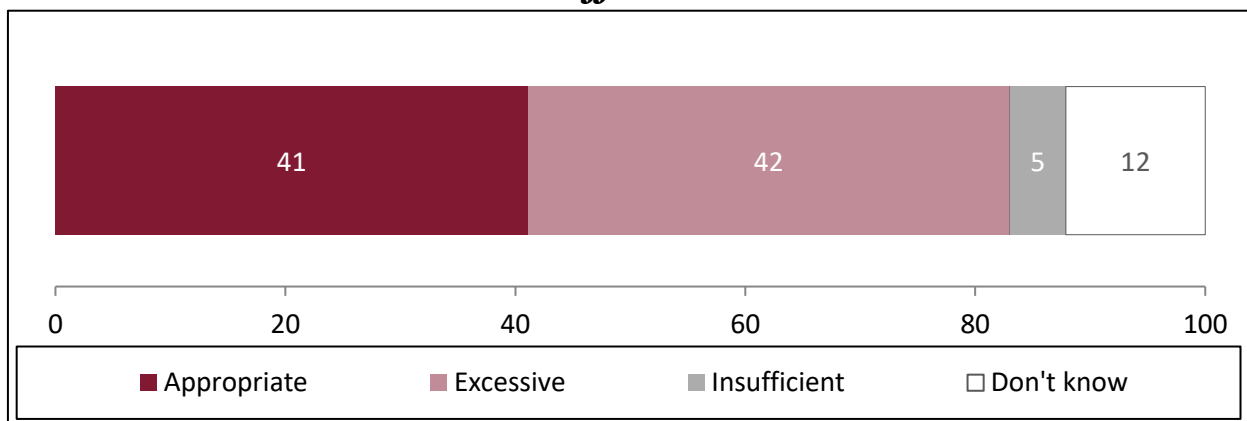
Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

„Did you join the efforts to help the people affected by the war in Ukraine? Select all that applies:“



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3

“Do you view the current policies of the Czech government towards Ukrainian refugees in the country as appropriate, excessive or insufficient?”



Source: STEM, Trendy 2022/3



This analysis was carried out and financed by the STEM Institute for Empirical Research

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