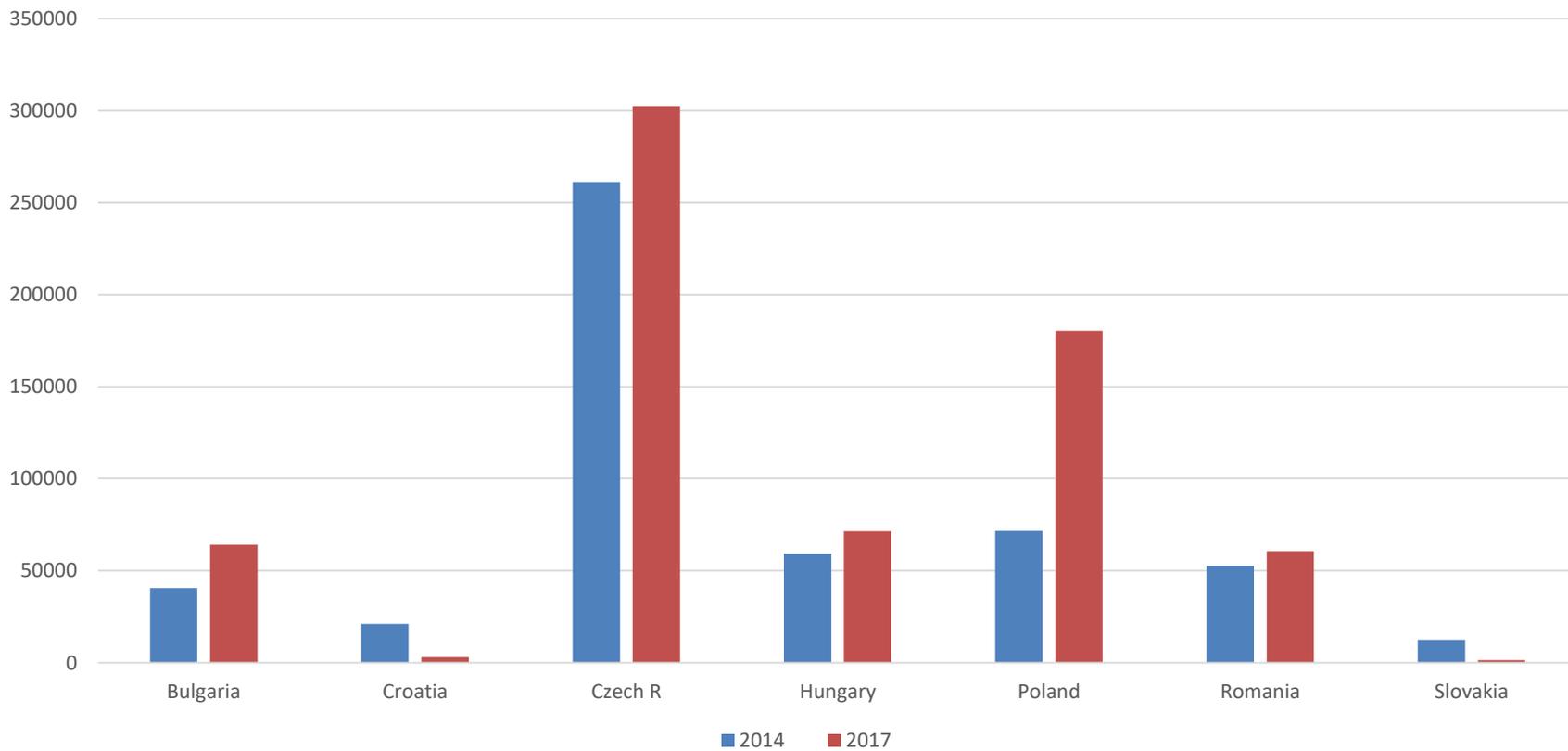


# **UNITED IN ANXIETY: Impact of 2015 Crisis on Attitudes to Admisssion of Refugees and Migrants in CEE7**

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# Non-EU foreign residents in CEE7 1 Jan 2014 – 1 Jan 2017

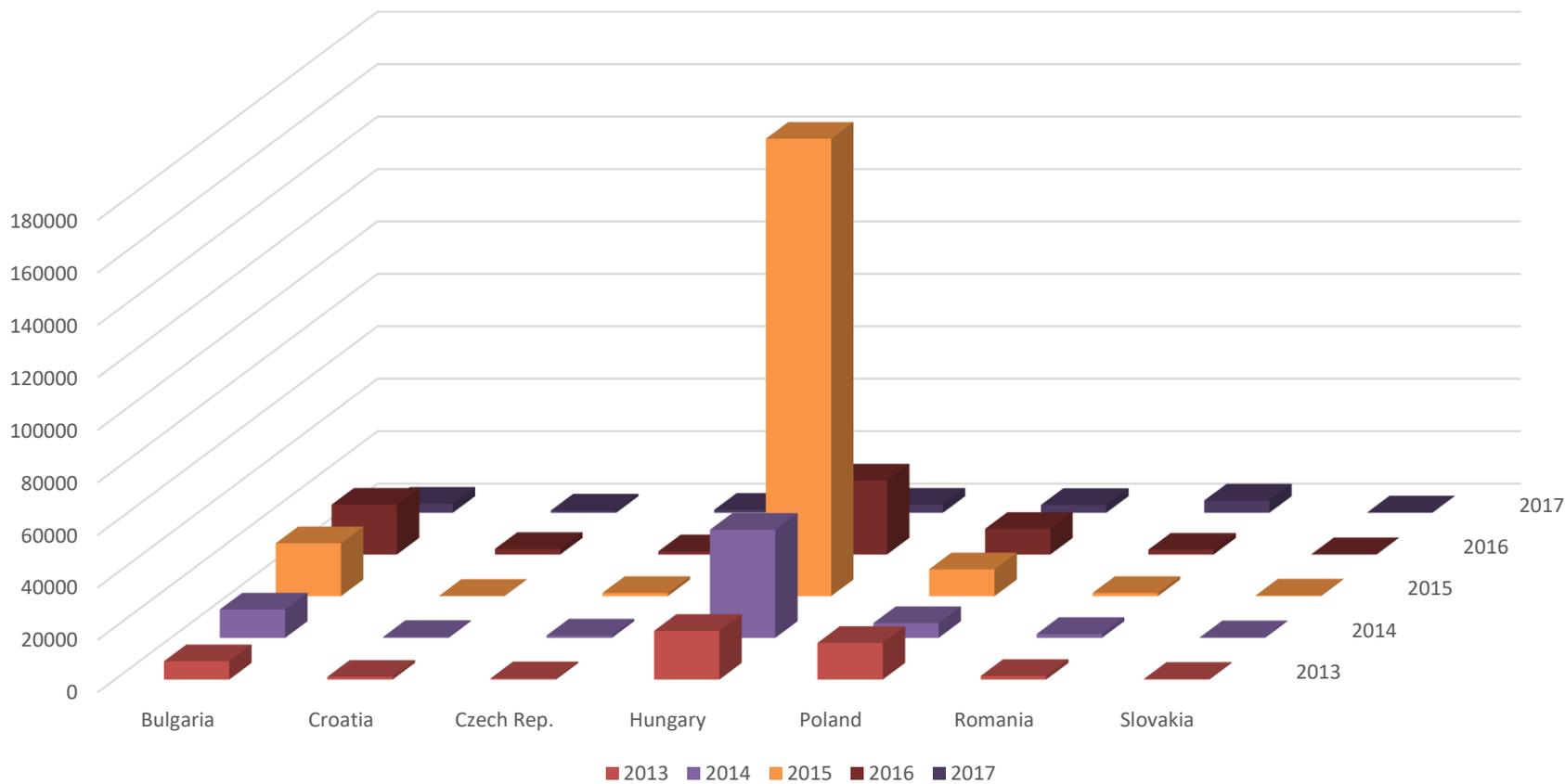
Share of foreigners remains low, but fast rising since 2014, esp in BG, PL, CRO



Source: Eurostat 2017

# Asylum applications in CEE7 2013-2017

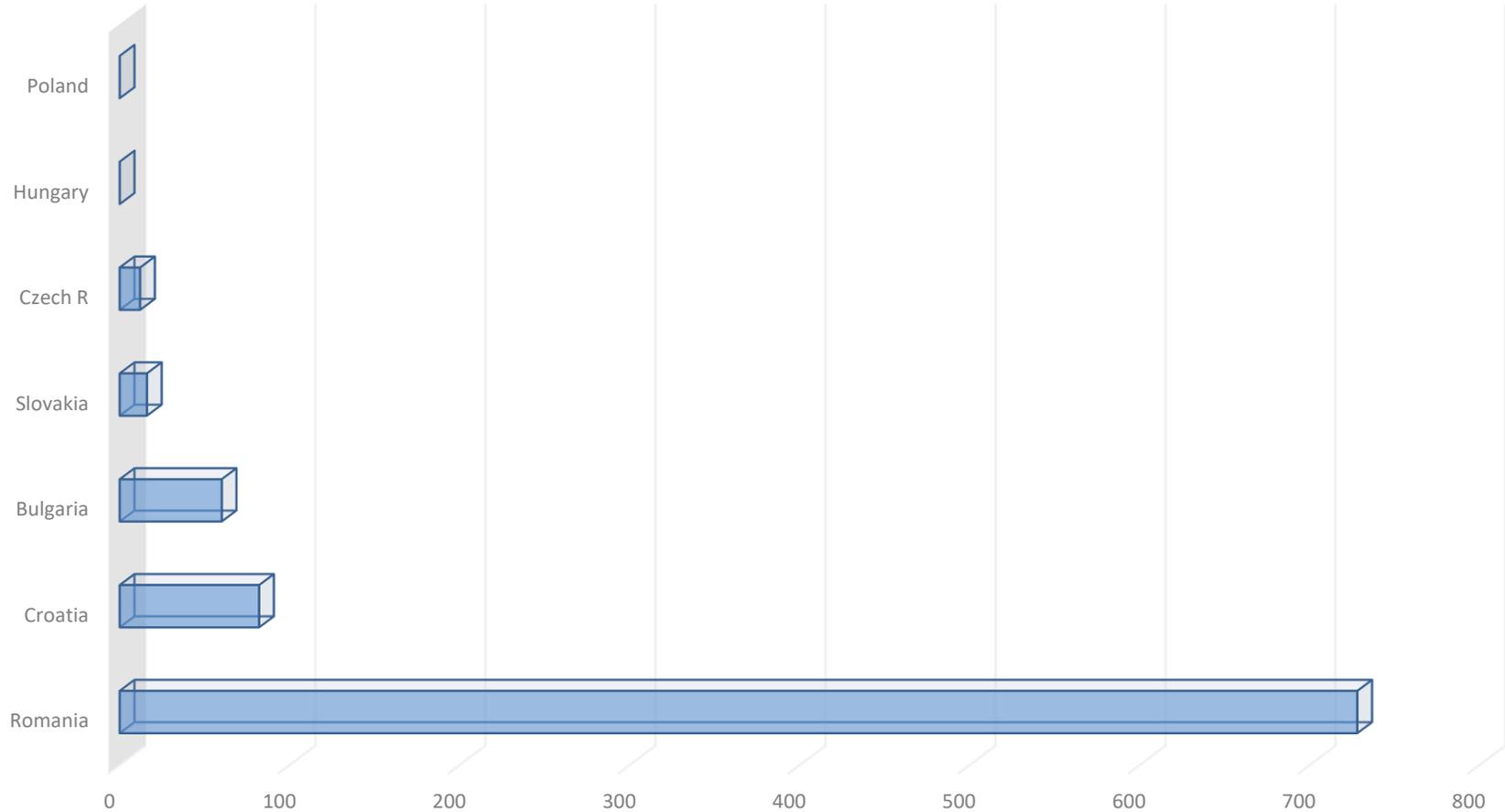
390,000 applications placed over 5 years, 45% of them placed in 2015 in HU



Source, Eurostat 2018

# Relocation program in CEE7

898 persons relocated to 5 countries (out of 21,999 EU total), none to HU, PL



Source, Eurostat 2018

# Public opinion trends

## 2015 a turning point

- Opposition to admission of refugees rising b/n 2015, 2017: CZ- 50>61, PL 21>55
- Migration policy discussed for the first time in some places
- Polarization of the issue: *security* („clash of civilizations”) vs *solidarity* (moral obligation)

## Deep concerns

- HU: 81% did not believe Muslims could be integrated
- SK: 85% did not want a Muslim Iraqi as a neighbor
- Sense of loss of control and limited trust in gov't capacity

# Paradoxes

- CEE region at crossroads of migration flows: from East (PL, CZ), South (CRO, RO, BG) yet anxiety about influx from South also in PL, CZ
- No correlation between the actual scale of asylum claims and willingness to relocate; however, PL, SK undertaking own measures
- HU, PL: Openness to immigration from neighbouring countries, anxiety over immigrants from more distant places

# Sources of information

## Traditional media

- TV (also radio) dominant in CZ, RO, HU (outside Bp)
- Viewers critical of main TV channels' objectivity, professionalism
- Declining role of the press

## Electronic media

- Recourse to a variety of media to overcome bias—consulting websites with various slant
- Online media 1st point of reference to young or those opting out of traditional

# Personal contact reducing anxiety?

## Most have never met a refugee

- „*In small towns and villages no one has seen a live refugee*” (CZ)
- Near admission centers, residents positive toward individuals, still anxious about group
- Past experience (BG, CRO) of integration success helping reduce concerns

## Group perceptions winning

- Fundamental divide: „us” vs “them”: status of foreigners hard to tell apart
- Anxiety over admission as high in capitals as outside
- Condemning acts of violence, but feeling justified in being critical of refugees’ conduct

# Resistance to admission arguments

Pro-refugee arguments	Responses
<b>Ethical obligation to help those in need</b>	Some identifying with refugees and their plight Others questioning assistance needs Denying responsibility for the conflict Raising requirements for admission
<b>Enrichment of national cultures</b>	National cultures understood as non-inclusive in V4 countries SEE: challenges of integration not viewed as high
<b>Economic contribution</b>	Doubting ability to handle or expecting negative impact on current local problems In high-outflow countries, newcomers could fill the gap

# Concerns over admission

Concerns	Underlying anxiety
<b>Security</b>	„Fear of the unknown” in face of „mass” influx – impact of reports of terrorist acts Loss of control – can’t tell identity of extremists, fuelling backlash
<b>Incompatibility of cultures</b>	„ <i>Different is automatically wrong</i> ” (SK) Islam vs home traditions (e.g. religion) Specific concerns (e.g. status of women)
<b>Questioning refugee status</b>	Willing to accept only genuine refugees Relocation scheme violating sovereignty
<b>Burden on public finance</b>	Competition over welfare Support for aid in countries of origin

# Key conclusions

Crucial impact  
of 2015 crisis

Politicization  
of the issue

Shift to non-  
admission

Resistance to  
calls in favor