

# The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on higher education and research institutions in the European borderland

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## Introduction

This paper presents the results of a study on the impact of the 2022 Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine (the first invasion began in 2014) on the universities and other research institutions in 9 European countries bordering Ukraine, Russia, or Belarus.

## Research Questions

- What is the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the functioning of research and higher education institutions in countries bordering Ukraine, Belarus, or Russia?
- Did the negative consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine have a more substantial impact on institutions with a relatively worse financial situation?

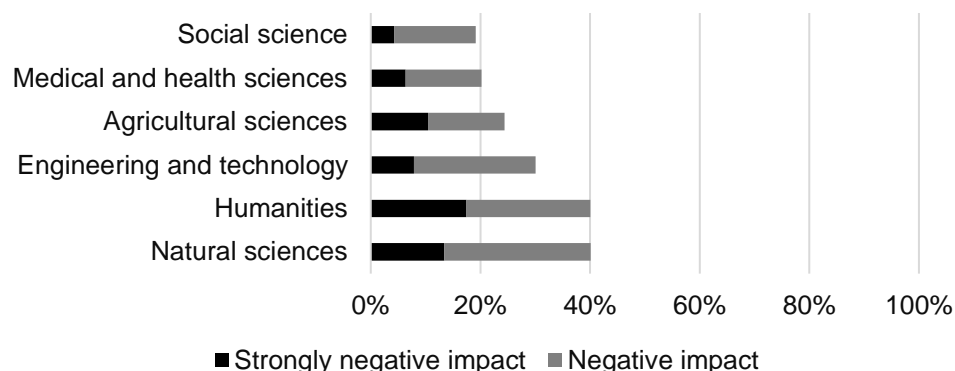
## Methods & data

A survey of scholars working in higher education and research institutions in Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. The survey questions were developed based on 11 individual interviews with scholars from the abovementioned countries.

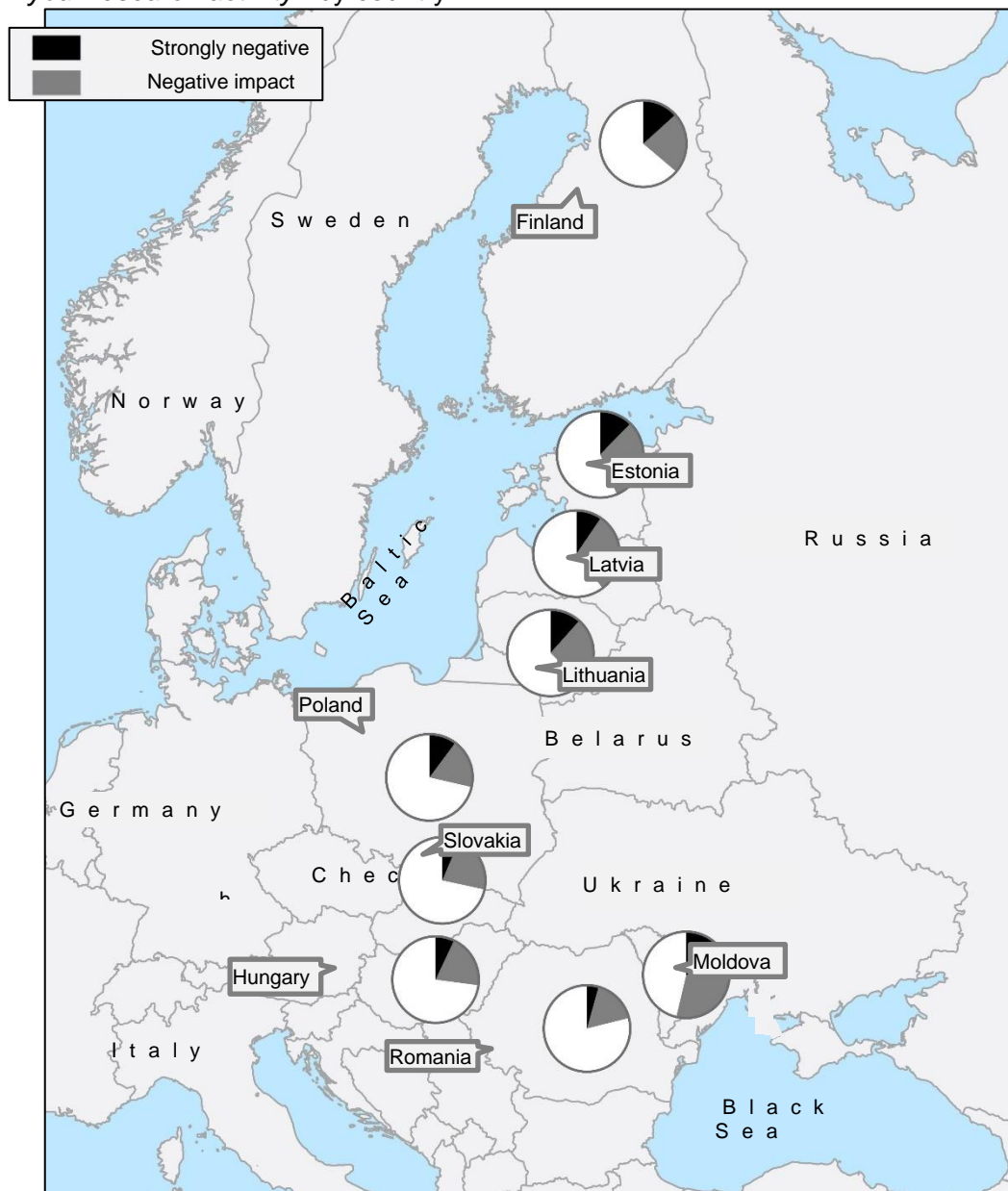
Respondents were invited from a random sample of corresponding authors of publications indexed on the Web of Science database. The survey was conducted online (February- March 2024). It was available in English and 8 other languages used in the 9 countries covered by the study (Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak). We collected 3,743 fully completed surveys (response rate of 10%), with adequate representation of all surveyed countries (Estonia 334, Finland 407, Hungary 413, Latvia 486, Lithuania 527, Moldova 123, Poland 548, Romania 465, Slovakia 440).

## Results

Fig 1. Answers to the question: *Please assess the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on your research activity?* by field of science



Map1. Answers to the question: *Please assess the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on your research activity?* by country



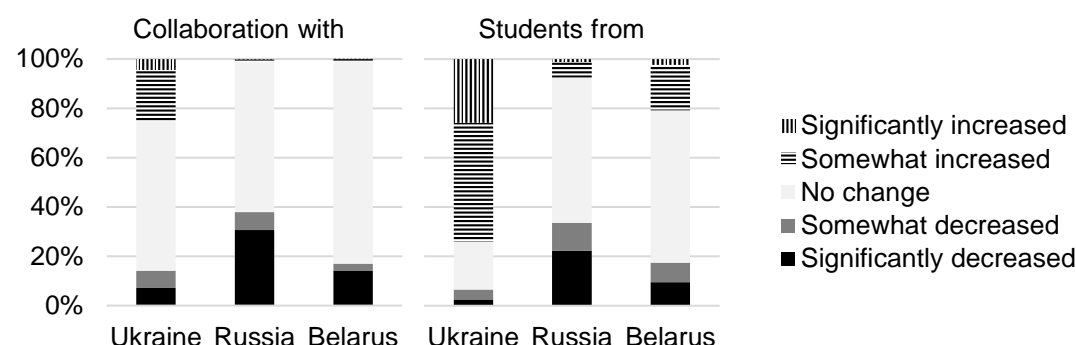
Tab 1. Answers to the question: *Do you agree with the following statements?*

Items sorted from most to least frequent	Agree + strongly agree
The Russian invasion of Ukraine has contributed to a change in the development strategy of the scientific institution I work for.	21.3%
The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to the cancellation of scientific events important to me.	18.2%
As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, new opportunities for scientific collaboration with foreign research institutions have arisen.	17.4%
The Russian invasion of Ukraine has resulted in the revision of my research plans.	13.3%
The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to a shift in my research interests.	12.8%
As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, new opportunities for scientific collaboration with other domestic research institutions have emerged.	12.7%
As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I changed the content of my teaching.	10.6%

The Russian invasion of Ukraine hampered my field research.	10.4%
The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to the suspension of my scientific projects.	9.0%
The Russian invasion of Ukraine has hindered my access to research infrastructure important for my research.	8.9%
The Russian invasion of Ukraine made it difficult for me to access archives.	7.1%

Fig 2. Answers to the question: *Please assess changes after 24 Feb, 2022 in the:*

- *intensity of your academic interactions with people working in institutions located in the following countries*
- *number of students from the following countries at your institution*



Tab 2. Features related to negative impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on respondent's research activity. Results of logistic regression.

Dependent variable coding: 1 – negative and strongly negative impact;  
0 – no impact, positive impact, undecided

Independent variables	Odds ratios	Errors (robust, clustered by countries)
Financial position of the institution	0.81***	0.03
Prestige of the institution	1.11	0.12
Student application volume	0.96	0.07
Research quality	1.06	0.09
Teaching quality	0.85*	0.07
National rankings	1.14**	0.06
International rankings	0.96	0.03
Collaborated with scholars in Ukraine	1.86***	0.15
Current collaboration with scholars in Ukraine	1.33*	0.20
Collaborated with scholars in Russia	1.97***	0.26
Collaborated with scholars in Belarus	1.14	0.13
International collaboration intensity	1.30***	0.08
Control variables:		
Gender		✓
Year of birth		✓
Personal wealth		✓
Country (dummy)		✓
Pseudo R2		0.12
Observations		3,743

Significance levels: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

## Conclusions

- Almost every forth respondent (22.5%) reported a negative or very negative impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on their research.
- The observed impact is predominantly negative, but for some, there have also been positive effects, e.g., an increase in the number of students from Ukraine or new collaboration and research funding opportunities.

- Scholars who are more involved in international collaboration are more likely to experience the adverse effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Institutions in worse financial condition are more exposed to the negative impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a result, this external shock may deepen the inequalities in the research and higher education sector, which in most of the analyzed countries was already struggling with underfunding, brain drain, and decreasing student admissions.