

PUBLIC OPINION

on Russia's war against Ukraine



23 February 2024

DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit has assembled a range of recent surveys and polls from across the EU and beyond giving insight into how citizens see Russia's war against Ukraine as well as its ripple effects. These polls were published between 08 December 2023 and 21 February 2024. Key findings are based on eight multi-country surveys as well as on surveys conducted in Austria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Sweden. Polls from Russia, Ukraine and the U.S. are also presented.

Key findings:

EU support for Ukraine two years into the war: Across Europe, there continues to be broad support for the EU's response to the Russian invasion: humanitarian aid (supported by 89% of EU citizens), welcoming refugees (84%), sanctions on Russia (72%), and financial support for Ukraine (72%). However, over the last two years, backing for EU actions related to the war has decreased as compared to spring 2022, just after inception of hostilities. Humanitarian aid maintains the highest approval, dropping by only 3 pp. Support for financial and military aid have decreased by 9 pp and 8 pp, respectively, according to a trend analysis of Standard Eurobarometer surveys, see [source](#). On a country level, in Germany there is increased scepticism about financial aid, with 41% considering it excessive, and 80% doubting the EU's ability to compensate for any reduction in American aid to Ukraine, see [source](#). Half of Czechs (51%) want the U.S. and other countries to support Ukraine in 2024 at least with the same intensity as before, see [source](#). The majority of Hungarians oppose further financial support for Ukraine, with 69% against more EU contributions until Hungary accesses blocked EU funds, see [source](#). While only 9% of Italians support Russia and 40% stand with Ukraine, a majority (51%) remain neutral amidst the conflict's complexities, see [source](#).

Military support and aid: 55% of EU citizens agree with providing weapons to Ukraine, even though data indicate a downward trend in support for this measure over time. 60% of Italians disagree with the idea of the EU offering weapons to Ukraine, see [source](#). This result is echoed by another survey which finds Italian respondents were divided on the proposal to send military aid to Ukraine, with 57% in favour and 42% against, see [source](#). Opinions in the U.S. are also split, with 22% favouring an increase of military aid, 28% favouring a decrease, and 27% advocating for the current level, see [source](#). Another survey in the U.S. comes to similar results, about three-in-ten Americans (31%) say the United States is providing too much assistance to Ukraine in its fight against Russia, while 29% say that the U.S. is providing the right amount of support and 18% say the U.S. is not providing enough. The share of Americans who say the U.S. is giving too much support to Ukraine has grown steadily over the course of the war, especially among Republicans, see [source](#). In France, 20% of respondents support France increasing its military and strategic support for Ukraine, with 39% preferring a reduction or an end to this assistance and 26% think support should be

continued at current levels, see [source](#). In Estonia, 61% support military help, see [source](#). In Hungary 74% oppose the idea of EU Member States providing an additional funding for military equipment to Ukraine, while only 22% find it acceptable, see [source](#). In Italy, 47% of respondents supported Hungary's decision within the European Union to block the approval of new military aid for Ukraine, while 33% opposed it, see [source](#).

EU defence policy/NATO/neutrality: A clear and overwhelming majority of EU citizens express support for the establishment of a common EU defence policy, with 87% favouring this proposition, see [source](#). In Sweden, public opinion in favour of Swedish membership in NATO remains at a clear majority with 65%, see [source](#). In Austria, 78% favour maintaining neutrality. However, 51% say the countries neutrality has been undermined, see [source](#) and [source](#).

Ukrainian refugees: Support for Ukrainian refugees remains strong and stands at 71% on EU average. Support is at its lowest in Poland, at 60% and reaches its highest level in Spain, with 85% among the countries analysed, see [source](#). These findings are corroborated by another multi-country survey carried out in 12 Member States: people's solidarity appears to be wavering in some of Ukraine's neighbouring countries with regard to refugees: the largest proportions of people seeing Ukrainian migrants as a threat were found in Poland (40%), Hungary (37%), and Romania (35%), see [source](#). In Estonia, public support for accepting Ukrainian refugees has remained steady in recent months (60-63%), see [source](#). In Latvia, only 20% support keeping Ukrainian refugees long-term to address demographic and labour challenges, despite overall widespread support for the refugees, see [source](#).

Impact of military conflict on citizens' lives: For 28% of EU citizens, the war in Ukraine is one of the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment – the other is immigration, see [source](#). The war in Ukraine is considered the most transformative event by Estonians (40%), Poles (31%), and Danes (29%) among five significant issues of the past decade, see [source](#). In 2023, 57,3% of Poles viewed wars as the most significant events, highlighting the ongoing conflict in Ukraine (27.1%), see [source](#). Italians' perspectives on the Ukrainian conflict vary widely, with concerns ranging from economic repercussions (32%) to fear of conflict expansion (30%), see [source](#). 82% of Spaniards express concern over the war in Ukraine, with 23% feeling very worried, 9pp lower than the concern for the war in Gaza, see [source](#). 15.3% of Italians foresee increased hostilities in Ukraine and the Middle East involving Italy and the West in the future. 22.7% anticipate relative calm in Ukraine but continued turmoil in the Middle East and 26.2% believe conflicts will maintain current intensity levels, see [source](#). Almost three-quarters of women and half of male report a deterioration of their mental health in Ukraine, see [source](#). 33% of Ukrainians are optimistic about overcoming current challenges in the next few years, 42% believe it will take a longer term, while 9% express doubt that Ukraine can overcome these problems at all, see [source](#). 54.3% of Polish respondents support farmers' protests against opening the EU market to Ukrainian products, see [source](#).

End of the hostilities: Compared to a year ago, Europeans are now more likely to think that Russia has the advantage in the conflict. In most countries there has been a 9-14 point increase in this belief, except in Italy where it has grown by a slower rate of four points, see [source](#). Based on a multi-country survey, 31% of respondents anticipate the war in Ukraine ending in 2024, marking a 9pp decrease from the previous year. Meanwhile, 47% of respondents believe the war is unlikely to conclude by 2024, see [source](#). Europeans are generally pessimistic about the outcome of the war in Ukraine, with only 10% believing Ukraine will win, compared to twice as many expecting a Russian victory, but the majority (37%) believe that the war will end in a settlement, see [source](#). 55% of Austrians believe the

Russian attack is unjustifiable, while nearly a quarter blame NATO's eastward expansion see [source](#) and [source](#). Only 11% of Austrians expect peace to return to Ukraine in 2024, see [source](#). 72% of Czechs respondents do not think that a peace deal between Ukraine and Russia will be negotiated in 2024, see [source](#). In Finland, 20% percent of respondents believe the West should persuade Ukraine to settle the conflict, even if it means surrendering Ukrainian territories, 43% disagree, see [source](#). Opinion of French citizens on the war's outcome varies, with 34% anticipating a Russian victory, 32% foreseeing no clear winner, and 20% believing Ukraine will triumph. In terms of desired outcomes, 53% of French citizens support a Ukrainian victory, see [source](#). A majority of 64% of German citizens do not believe that Ukraine can still win, only 28% believe that Ukraine will win, see [source](#). In another survey, 42% of Germans support Ukraine relinquishing territories occupied by Russia to end the war, while 43% believe Ukraine should continue fighting for their liberation, see [source](#). According to another survey, only 9% of German respondents believe that the war in Ukraine will end this year, see [source](#). Half of Germans find Germany's diplomatic efforts insufficient, see [source](#).

Concerns about the conflict's duration in Sweden have risen, with 43% now believing it will persist, see [source](#). 92% of Ukrainians demand a full withdrawal of Russian troops, including Crimea to stop the war. Only 12% find the annexation of Crimea acceptable, see [source](#). 43% of Ukrainians believe that war will go on for an additional 12 months, at least, see [source](#).

In Russia, 77% support the actions of Russian troops in Ukraine, but 52% support peace talks, higher than those in favour of continuing hostilities (40%). Many Russians (45%) believe the conflict will last over a year, with 77% foreseeing a Russian victory. 64% don't see Russia's military operation in Ukraine as a mistake, see [source](#). 35% of US citizens believe neither side is winning, with 19% seeing Ukraine more likely to win and 16% Russia, the majority of Americans (68%) still supports a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, see [source](#).

Russia seen as threat for the EU: While Russia was still the top risk for five G7 countries last year, only UK and Japanese citizens still consider it so this year, see [source](#). According to another [survey](#), Russia represents the sixth, seventh and twelfth most concerning threat respectively for France, Germany and Italy. More than half of Czechs respondents (55%) consider Russia as a threat, see [source](#). In Finland, approximately 80% of respondents express concern over the escalation of the Ukraine war, in particular concern regarding a potential Russian attack on Finland has increased by 5 percentage points to 68%, see [source](#). According to another [survey](#), over half of respondents (53%) believe a partial takeover of Ukrainian territories by Russia could precede an attack on NATO member countries soon. Additionally, half of Finnish citizens feel their country should prepare for a potential escalation of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, which could spill over into Finland in the coming years. In Germany, a possible Russian attack worries 46% of respondents, see [source](#). Poles are sceptical about Putin's claim that Russian troops would enter Poland only if attacked, with 47.8% not finding it reassuring and 28.7% strongly disagreeing, see [source](#). Moreover, a majority of 69.3% support initiating talks with NATO and Ukraine to extend air defence to Ukraine's border for intercepting Russian missiles or drones heading towards Poland, see [source](#). 70% of Romanians believe that NATO will assist Romania in the event of a foreign attack, see [source](#). In Russia however, a survey finds that 78% of Russians would like to see Vladimir Putin re-elected as president at the end of his current term, see [source](#).

Ukraine as a candidate for EU membership: 60% of EU respondents support Ukraine's EU membership, see [source](#). In Germany, approval for Ukraine's long-term EU membership has slightly decreased from 58% to 53% compared to last year. Similarly, support for Ukraine's long-term NATO membership has also declined to less than half, standing at 44% currently, see [source](#). The Irish public mostly supports Ukraine joining the EU but not through fast-tracking, while 72% favour Ukraine's EU membership, only 33% support it with fast-tracking,

with 36% not in favour of fast-tracking, see [source](#). Spaniards largely support the European Union's expansion, with 69.7% expressing positive views on enlarging the bloc, including Ukraine and the Western Balkans, see [source](#). 53% of Poles favour delaying Ukraine's EU membership talks until after the war, while 40% oppose the delay, see [source](#). Over two-thirds of Ukrainians advocate for swift Ukrainian accession to the EU and NATO, see [source](#).

Ukraine's reconstruction: Across Europe, 59% of respondents believe that the EU will face an economic burden as a result of Ukraine's reconstruction, while 41% believe it will present an economic opportunity, see [source](#). In Estonia, 60% endorse Estonia's contribution to Ukraine's post-war reconstruction, see [source](#).

DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit informs about relevant public opinion insights and analysis focussing on multi-country surveys as well as on surveys conducted in individual Member States.

**If you want to know more about what the POMU does,
please contact: dgcomm-pom@europarl.europa.eu**