

PUBLIC OPINION

on Russia's war against Ukraine



19 December 2023

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 5 October and 17 December 2023. Key findings are based on eight multi-country surveys as well as on surveys conducted in Belgium, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain. Polls from Russia, Ukraine and the US are also presented.

Key findings:

Ukraine as a candidate for EU membership: Around six out of ten Europeans (61%, -3 pp compared to spring 2023) are favourable to granting Ukraine EU candidate status, according to the EC's latest Standard Eurobarometer survey published on 13 December, see [source](#). Agreement is highest in Portugal and Sweden (82% both) and lowest in Czechia (37%) and Hungary (45%). The EP's latest Parlemeter 2023 survey results show that 53% of Europeans agree that the EU should speed up its efforts to let new countries join the EU in view of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At national level, agreement with this statement varies from 72% in Lithuania to 37% in Czechia. Agreement with this statement has evolved importantly in several Member States between April/May 2022 and September/October 2023. The largest decreases in agreement are observed in Malta (-16 pp) and Poland (-12 pp), while largest increases are found in Bulgaria (+5 pp) and Greece (+5 pp), see [source](#). Almost half of respondents in a survey carried out in six EU Member States (45%) think that Ukraine's entry into the EU will have a negative impact on the EU's security, see [source](#). 72% of Hungarians oppose Ukraine's accession to the European Union as soon as possible, while only 24% support it, see [source](#). On the other hand, a total of 78% of Ukrainians are ready to vote to join the European Union, and 77% would vote for NATO membership if a referendum was held see [source](#). Ukrainians would like Ukraine to become a member of the EU for two main reasons: ensuring long-term security (59% of respondents count it among the top 3 motives) and for economic prospects (57%). However, other motives were also chosen by quite a few respondents: the future of Ukrainian democracy (44%), ensuring the rule of law (45%), and international recognition of Ukraine's place in Europe (41%), see [source](#).

EU support for Ukraine: Backing of different support measures for Ukraine continue to be high but some indicators have slightly dropped compared to spring 2023. Almost nine in ten (89%, +1 pp) of EU citizens agree on providing humanitarian support to the people affected by the war in Ukraine. More than seven in ten (72%, -3 pp) agree on providing financial support to Ukraine. The support to the imposition of economic sanctions on Russian government, companies and individuals is also at 72% (no change). 66% (no change) agree

on banning Russian state-owned media, like Sputnik and Russia Today, from EU broadcasts. Similarly, support to the financing of the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine is at 60% (-4 pp), see [source](#). According to another survey spanning the entire EU, more than half of Europeans (56%) think that Ukraine should receive financial support to “rebuild the country” even though 59% of respondents also consider the eventual reconstruction of Ukraine an economic burden for EU, see [source](#). The same survey found only 23% of Europeans believe sanctions on Russia are effective. The level of confidence in the effectiveness of sanctions varies, ranging from 14% in France to 30% in the Netherlands. Surveys in Belgium (see [source](#)) and Czechia (see [source](#)) also found rather low or declining support for military assistance/sending of weapons to Ukraine.

Ukrainian refugees: Overall, 84% (-2 pp compared to spring 2023) of EU citizens support welcoming into the EU people fleeing from the war in Ukraine, see [source](#). However, three in five Irish respondents think Ireland has taken in too many refugees, see [source](#). 63% believe Ireland was too generous in terms of social welfare for refugees, see [source](#). Support for accepting refugees from Ukraine is also declining among Poles, see [source](#). Overall, 83% of Polish say that relations between Poles and Ukrainians have deteriorated as a result of two recent disputes (over grain imports and transport across the border), see [source](#). In Lithuania, 85% are open to Ukrainian refugees staying in the country after the war, unconditionally (36%) or if they have learnt the language and found a job (49%), see [source](#). A survey in the Netherlands found stable support for the special status Ukrainian refugees have, allowing them to enter the Dutch labour market more quickly compared to other refugees. Six out of ten Dutch want that status to be extended. About half (49%) think it makes sense for refugees from Ukraine to have a different status than refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from other countries, see [source](#).

US support for Ukraine: 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 US is providing the right amount of support and 18% say the US is not providing enough. The share of Americans who say the US is giving too much support to Ukraine has grown steadily over the course of the war, especially among Republicans, see [source](#). More than half of young US respondents (56%) between 18 and 39 years old believe that the problems of Ukraine are none of their business and the United States should not interfere. This view is supported by less than half of respondents aged 40 or older (39%). The respondents' positions on sending financial aid and weapons to Ukraine is without any significant variation between age groups: 31% are in favour, 40% are against, see [source](#).

Future of the conflict: Most people in non-Western countries want Russia's war on Ukraine to end as soon as possible, even if it means Kyiv ceding territory, according to a multi-country survey carried out in 21 states worldwide, see [source](#). People in many non-Western countries also do not put the blame on Russia for perpetuating the war. Indeed, Europe, the US, and South Korea are the only places where a clear majority of respondents say that Russia constitutes the biggest obstacle to peace between Russia and Ukraine. The West (Ukraine, the EU, or the US) is seen as a bigger problem not just by people in Russia and China, but also by those in India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Majorities in Russia, China, India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey believe it is likely that Russia will win the war in Ukraine within the next five years. Only in the US does a view clearly prevail that Ukraine will win this war. In Europe, 30% of respondents expressed a view that Russia is likely to win the war within five years, while 38% say that Ukraine is likely to win, see [source](#). In Romania, 34.5% think that Ukraine will win the war, 32.6% believe Russia will prevail. Regarding the solutions to end the war in Ukraine, a little less than two thirds of Romanian respondents (64.7%) think that Russia should withdraw and return the occupied

territories. Around one fourth argue (24.5%) that Ukraine should make certain concessions to Russia, see [source](#). In total, 67% of Ukrainian citizens consider the possibility of refusing to join the North Atlantic Alliance or declaring Ukraine's neutrality in exchange for "peace" with Russia as categorically unacceptable (57%) or extremely undesirable (10%). Only 12% of respondents called this option acceptable. The vast majority of Ukrainians believe that only Ukraine can conduct potential negotiations with Russia (71.7%), see [source](#) and [source](#).

Military conflicts – a major concern: The results of a 30-country survey find that the vast majority (84%) says the world became a more dangerous over the past year. In 2022 the figure was 85%, in 2018 it was 74%, see [source](#). The proportion saying the threat of a nuclear/biological/chemical attack happening somewhere in the world is real dropped four points to 71%, on average globally, in 2023 after surging nine percentage points in 2022 on the heels of the invasion of Ukraine, see [source](#). 61% of respondents to a survey carried out in 30 countries think that the war in Ukraine poses a significant threat to their own country. This view is supported by more than eight out of ten Polish citizens (81%), six out of ten of US citizens (61%), and half of Canadians (50%), see [source](#). Considering the conflicts in Israel, Ukraine, Africa, Azerbaijan, 50% of Italians think that we are facing a 'third world war in pieces', see [source](#). In Spain, inflation is seen as the most dangerous global threat (91%) followed by military conflicts/wars (85%), see [source](#).

How Russia is perceived: Nearly seven-in-ten Americans (68%) view Russia as a major military threat, while about a quarter consider Russia a minor threat. Only 5% say Russia constitutes no threat at all to American security. In contrast, 36% of Germans say that Russia represents a major military threat to German security. Four-in-ten Germans say that Russia represents a minor threat, while about two-in-ten (21%) do not view Russia as a threat to Germany security at all, see [source](#). Russia is considered the second least likely country to have an overall positive influence on world affairs (30%). This share dropped dramatically in 2022 after the invasion of Ukraine (-16%), see [source](#). More than 90% of Finnish respondents said they consider Russia to be unstable and unpredictable, with nearly as many seeing it as an expansionist superpower (89%) and a significant military threat (85%), see [source](#). 86% of Germans don't trust Russia's government under Vladimir Putin, see [source](#). Russia enjoys positive sentiments only from 18.3% of Romanians, this figure was halved since 2013 (36.8%), see [source](#). Russia is considered a danger by 56.4% of Romanians, see [source](#). The number of Russians who fully support the invasion has also almost halved since February 2023: it fell from 22% in February 2023 to 12% in October, see [source](#). Also support for President Putin in Russia seems dwindling, see [source](#) and [source](#). More than 70% of Ukrainians have a negative view of Russian citizens, while just 3% view them positively. Another 22% said that their attitude towards Russians was neutral, while 2% refused to answer, 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