

2022 security radar.

# NAVIGATING THE DISARRAY OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

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# Table of Contents

<b><i>Foreword</i></b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b><i>Executive Summary</i></b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>7</b>
Overview .....	8
Research Design .....	9
<b><i>Descriptive Analysis</i></b> .....	<b>13</b>
Disorder and Disarray .....	14
Moving Targets .....	28
Distant Hope .....	42
<b><i>Country Profiles</i></b> .....	<b>51</b>
Armenia .....	52
Austria .....	55
France .....	58
Germany .....	61
Italy .....	64
Latvia .....	67
Norway .....	70
Poland .....	73
Russia .....	76
Serbia .....	79
Turkey .....	82
Ukraine .....	85
United Kingdom .....	88
United States .....	91
<b><i>Navigating the Disarray of European Security</i></b> .....	<b>95</b>
The Precarious State of European Security .....	96
Stumbling Blocks .....	97
Recommendations .....	101
<b><i>General Information</i></b> .....	<b>107</b>



# Foreword

Difficult, in disarray and even dangerous – that is a fair description of the current situation in Europe. The precious gift of peace and security is in peril, not only because Europeans have been living in the shadow of a global pandemic, fearing for their health for the past two years. Alongside this, the threat of armed conflict in Europe has once again become a sad fact. The heightened tensions between East and West, and crisis summits between Washington and Moscow remind us of the days of the Cold War.

In these challenging times, the Security Radar of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung aims to give a voice to the concerns, priorities, fears and hopes of the citizens affected by politicians' words and actions. Our survey of 14 countries makes the task clear: European citizens believe that peace and cooperation are political priorities, they trust international organisations and prefer diplomatic to military means.

But the frameworks for maintaining peace are in danger. The finely woven network of international institutions and agreements that has secured the peace on our continent has become threadbare and is being called into question by some key actors. Instead of preparing for the fiftieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act with the development of the next step towards Europeans' indivisible security, we are faced with potential setbacks. Peaceful interaction and even cooperation in Europe, proud achievements of the OSCE and the European Union, face both old and new challenges at the same time.

When looking for answers to these challenges, we need a bold approach fitted to today's circumstances and societies, as well as the issues that dominate our agenda. The twenty-first century has different requirements of transparency and democratic inclusion, and different tests that need to be met: the climate crisis, international terrorism, as well as economic downturns have been added to the list of citizens' concerns and politicians' to-do lists.

Looking at the public's preferences in the various countries, a number of conclusions stand out. Security policy should take the different views and perceptions of European societies into account. National sensitivities, respect and dignity are important lens through which to understand the respective actors. A deeper understanding needs to form the basis for a foreign policy that is, on one hand, pragmatic and realistic in its goals and choice of instruments, and, on the other hand, responsible in its effort to preserve peace and cooperation in Europe. Multilateralism and international cooperation are still high on the agenda of the people of Europe and need to be revived. The Security Radar thus allows decision-makers to chart a course towards achieving this aim and to navigate the shallows of European security.

Germany is a focal point of this endeavour. The newly formed government, with its aim of "daring more progress for freedom, justice and sustainability", is in a key position to facilitate such a change of course in Europe. On the basis of the successful *Ostpolitik* of previous progressive governments, it is now tasked with developing a contemporary strategy to meet the high expectations that the Security Radar unveils.

I sincerely hope that this survey receives the attention it deserves and is heard loud and clear by both political leaders and the public.

By  
**Martin Schulz**

*President of  
the Friedrich-Ebert-  
Stiftung*

*Former President  
of the European  
Parliament*



# Executive summary

Security Radar 2022 is the second edition of an FES survey first conducted in 2019. It includes fourteen states from across the OSCE region: Armenia, Austria, *France*, *Germany*, Italy, *Latvia*, Norway, *Poland*, *Russia*, *Serbia*, Turkey, *Ukraine*, United Kingdom, and the United States (countries in *italics* were included in Security Radar 2019).

Security Radar 2022 combines a **representative public opinion poll** with **expert group discussions** conducted in each participating country. Based on public perceptions and expert opinions the concluding **analysis** reflects on major obstacles to achieving peace in Europe and distills political recommendations on how to overcome them.

The dire state of European security urgently calls for a serious debate across ideological divisions, leading to a political process towards renewing European security. Security Radar 2022 reveals three key points that serve as guidelines in pursuit of cooperative security in Europe:

- Overwhelming majorities of people in the 14 polled countries want peace and cooperation to be a political priority. Political decision-makers need to provide ideas and initiatives for a more stable international framework. The situation in Europe is grave and complex, but that should not entail inaction, complacency or fatalism. There are major stumbling blocks in the way of progress and it would seem to be a Herculean task to overcome them, but the poll makes clear that citizens do understand the various difficulties and dilemmas.
- Pragmatism is the way forward to break the current deadlock. A pragmatic approach could build on a diverse set of instruments, avoiding TINA (there is no alternative) thinking. Our poll shows that the public does not perceive a contradiction between interest-based and value-based foreign policy. Concerning the instruments of choice, military, economic and diplomatic means are accepted, with a clear preference for diplomacy over the use of force or sanctions. According to the survey, the respondents do not perceive ideology or values as an impediment to dialogue and negotiation. A broad majority are in favour of cooperating with other countries, even if they do not share the same values. This public pragmatism gives governments room and impetus to shape bold policies aimed at cooperative security.
- A renewed debate on European security needs to take place on the basis of the existing frameworks. The Security Radar 2022 offers several indications of public support for serious negotiations aimed at renewing European security through multilateral institutions. Respondents are willing to cooperate, realising a sense of belonging to Europe and the mutual dependence of their respective countries. Multilateral institutions are viewed positively and still broadly garner high levels of trust, especially the United Nations and the OSCE. The challenges identified also require a cooperative approach and could thus serve as islands of cooperation. Starting from these islands, a sense of successful and effective cooperation in Europe can be revived.



# INTRODUCTION

Overview

Research Design

# Overview

Security Radar 2022 is the second edition of a survey first conducted in 2019 in seven European countries. This time it has been extended and includes fourteen states from across the OSCE region: Armenia, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The report appears at a time of alarming instability on the European continent. Russia has amassed an unprecedented number of troops and military equipment in the proximity of the Ukrainian border and threatens escalation. While a series of high-level talks was held in January 2022, the hope for a diplomatic solution is dwindling. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) assesses the risk of a war in Europe higher than at any time over the past 30 years. These developments are unfolding against the backdrop of skyrocketing coronavirus cases. For more than two years, the pandemic has held the world tight in its grip, straining health care systems and entire economies, upending daily routines, supply chains and even opportunities for in-person diplomacy.

## Why is Security Radar important?

Amidst growing tensions and increasing uncertainty Security Radar helps to illuminate how people on all sides perceive words and deeds. Becoming aware of how one's neighbours (or adversaries) think may help people to better understand the policies that respective governments choose. This knowledge may help decision-makers to manage expectations in their own societies and make pragmatic and face-saving solutions for all parties more tangible, making a resolution more likely.

The perspective of citizens is central. Ordinary people deserve a say in the running of their countries and politicians need input from public opinion, as well as from the expert community to make informed decisions. Results from Security Radar 2022 indicate that decision-makers across all polled countries can build upon broad public support for a pragmatic policy geared towards de-escalation and prioritisation of peace and security in Europe.

Security Radar 2022 builds first and foremost on a **representative public opinion poll** conducted in 14 countries. The poll takes stock of mutual threat perceptions and attitudes to domestic and multilateral institutions, and foreign policy priorities, as well as to a range of instruments, such as diplomacy, military and economic sanctions. It highlights core issues for European security, such as the ongoing Ukraine conflict, which is in danger of escalation, relations with Russia and issues of EU strategic autonomy.

As a second pillar, the report builds on opinions expressed by leading experts and policy advisors in the course of **expert group discussions** conducted in each participating country. Experts shared their views on current challenges to European security and reflected on potential steps towards stabilising and improving the situation.

Besides the descriptive examination of the data Security Radar provides a **separate analysis** of the results. Based on public perceptions and expert opinions it reflects on major obstacles to achieving peace in Europe and distils political recommendations on how to overcome them. It concludes that at times of high tension we need a pragmatic political process that involves interest-based negotiations with all actors, even those that do not share the same values. This applies both to prevention or resolution of conflicts and to tackling planetary challenges affecting us all, such as climate change or pandemics.

Security Radar is divided into four parts. The Introduction provides an overview of the survey and explains the methodology. The Descriptive Analysis reveals the results of the population poll in a comparative cross-country manner, highlighting the status quo ("Disorder and Disarray"), the main topics and challenges ("Moving Targets"), as well as possible approaches ("Distant Hope"). The following section contains individual country profiles for each of the 14 participating states. Each country profile follows a similar structure and combines the most relevant data both from the public opinion poll and the respective expert group discussion. The analysis section entitled "Navigating the Disarray of European Security" reflects on the results from the cross-country analysis and country profiles and on this basis formulates political recommendations.

A disclaimer on terminology seems in order. For the sake of brevity, the survey questionnaire and the report use the Red Cross term "Ukraine conflict" when referring to the eight-year ongoing armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

We hope that the findings from Security Radar 2022 will inform political debate and sensitise actors involved in foreign policy decision-making to the attitudes and perceptions of their own societies and neighbouring states. In these difficult times, citizens' clear preference for diplomacy and peaceful conflict resolution will hopefully encourage politicians to work towards cooperative security.

# Research Design

The aim of the Security Radar is to shed light on two main factors that have a substantial impact on political decision-makers when faced with security or foreign affairs issues: public opinion and the perspective of political consulting experts. Accordingly, the study consists of two main steps of data collection and analysis: a representative public opinion poll and expert group discussions.

The representative public opinion poll was conducted among the resident population in 14 states:

- Armenia
- Austria
- France
- Germany
- Italy
- Latvia
- Norway
- Poland
- Russia
- Serbia
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- United States

The aim was to systematically investigate people's attitudes, opinions and values in relation to the current security and foreign policy situation in Europe. The pollster Ipsos Public Affairs in Berlin was assigned to carry out the fieldwork.

Additionally, an expert group discussion in each of the 14 countries provided access to (i) country-specific expert knowledge and (ii) typical mind-sets and heuristics of regional consulting expert community. This step was aimed at understanding how regional expert communities define and evaluate the current security and foreign policy situation, as well as to investigate what useful lessons could be derived from their perspectives.

## Survey

The survey was based on the questionnaire of Security Radar 2019, adapted and extended in line with currently relevant political issues, such as the coronavirus pandemic, as well as country-specific questions concerning foreign and security policy. The overall aim of the survey is to explore public opinion on the current security and foreign policy situation in Europe, divided into seven aspects:

1. perception of the current threat situation;
2. trust and attitudes towards institutions;
3. attitudes towards foreign and security policy;
4. attitudes towards national identity;
5. prospects for the development of security policy in Europe;
6. implications of the coronavirus pandemic for foreign and security policy in Europe; and
7. country-specific attitudes and priorities towards foreign and security policy.

Additionally, descriptors were collected, including sociodemographic ones, interest in foreign policy and perceived overall priority of foreign and security policy for the respondents.

The survey uses Likert-scaled, binary, and open-ended questions. The objective of Likert-scaling is to measure the extent of agreement or disagreement with a question or statement. In most cases, the extent is measured on a four-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree", "somewhat agree", "somewhat disagree" to "strongly disagree". However, five-point and ten-point scales were also deemed necessary to ensure subject-appropriate differentiations. The respondents could also decline to agree or disagree with the question or statement. In this case, the answer was coded as "I don't know". If a respondent declined to answer at all, it was coded "no response".

Before the main fieldwork began, a pre-test was conducted

**Table 1: Sample overview**

Country	N	Method	Age Range Targeted Population
Armenia	1,500	CATI	18+
Austria	2,000	CAWI	18–75
France	2,000	CAWI	18–75
Germany	2,000	CAWI	18–75
Italy	2,000	CAWI	18–75
Latvia	2,000	CAWI	18–75
Norway	2,000	CAWI	18–75
Poland	2,000	CAWI	18–65
Russia	2,000	CAWI	18–65
Serbia	2,000	CAWI	18–65
Turkey	2,001	CAWI	18–65
Ukraine	2,000	CAWI	18–65
UK	2,000	CAWI	18–75
USA	2,000	CAWI	18–75
Total	27,501	n. a.	n. a.

Note: Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft® Excel® and IBM® SPSS® Statistics Version 26.

in the United Kingdom (n = 65) to estimate the clarity of the questions, answer options, the questionnaire's length, as well as people's willingness to participate. The pre-test took place in June 2021. The results were used to inform the final design of the questionnaire.

The main data collection was conducted among the resident population via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing in Armenia (CATI Dual Frame: 72% mobile and 28% landline, Sampling: Random Last Two Digits Approach) and via Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI, Ipsos Online Access Panels, Sampling: Quota Selection) in the remaining countries. Due to the different levels of accessibility of telecommunications for different age groups in particular countries, the age range of the targeted population varied (see Table 1 on the previous page). During data collection, quotas for gender, age and region were applied. Respondents who took less than half the median duration to answer the questionnaire were excluded from the data set to ensure data quality.

The structure of the resulting raw sample was adjusted to official data by weighting. The iterative "Rim Weight" (also known as "Iterative Proportional Fitting") procedure supplied by Quantum Software® was applied. The variables gender, age and region were used to calculate the weighting factors to guarantee that the resulting data sets of the respective countries were representative concerning gender, age and region. Weighting targets were derived from Eurostat and the official statistics of the different countries.

## Expert group discussions

Expert group discussions were conducted in each of the survey countries with the help of a semi-structured discussion guide. Trained moderators from the FES Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe in Vienna carried out the data collection. The target group were active political consulting experts and analysts.

The criteria for including experts in the sample were that they had (a) proven expert knowledge, which is acknowledged within the country-specific expert discourse, or (b) influence on political discourse within the country. It was strictly avoided that several representatives of one and the same organisation or institution participated in the discussion. Wherever possible, diversity in terms of gender, age and political orientation was considered when recruiting participants to ensure a wide variety of perspectives on the topic discussed.

Expert group discussions were conducted in each country between March and June 2021 and consisted of at least six to a

maximum of 12 participants each. The duration of the discussion varied between 120 and 140 minutes. Because of the restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic, the discussions were conducted via Zoom Meetings®. Chatham House Rule was applied to protect the participants from possible repercussions.

The central theme of the discussion was the current foreign and security situation in Europe. The participants were instructed that the notion of "Europe" should go beyond the European Union and should be understood as "Greater Europe". The semi-structured discussion consisted of three phases:

1. An open discussion about the current security and foreign policy situation in Europe. Guiding questions were:
  - What concrete challenges have shaped the foreign policy landscape of European countries, as well the security situation in Europe in recent years?
  - Can you broadly describe the current security situation in Europe?
  - How did the current situation emerge?
2. A summary of the discussion and identification of corresponding key categories was compiled together with the participants. Subsequently, a focused reflection on how every category was to be understood was conducted. The content was limited to the aspects introduced by the participants. The moderators provided no additional external information or subject matters.

The main goal of the first two phases was to gain access to country-specific expert knowledge and relevance structures.

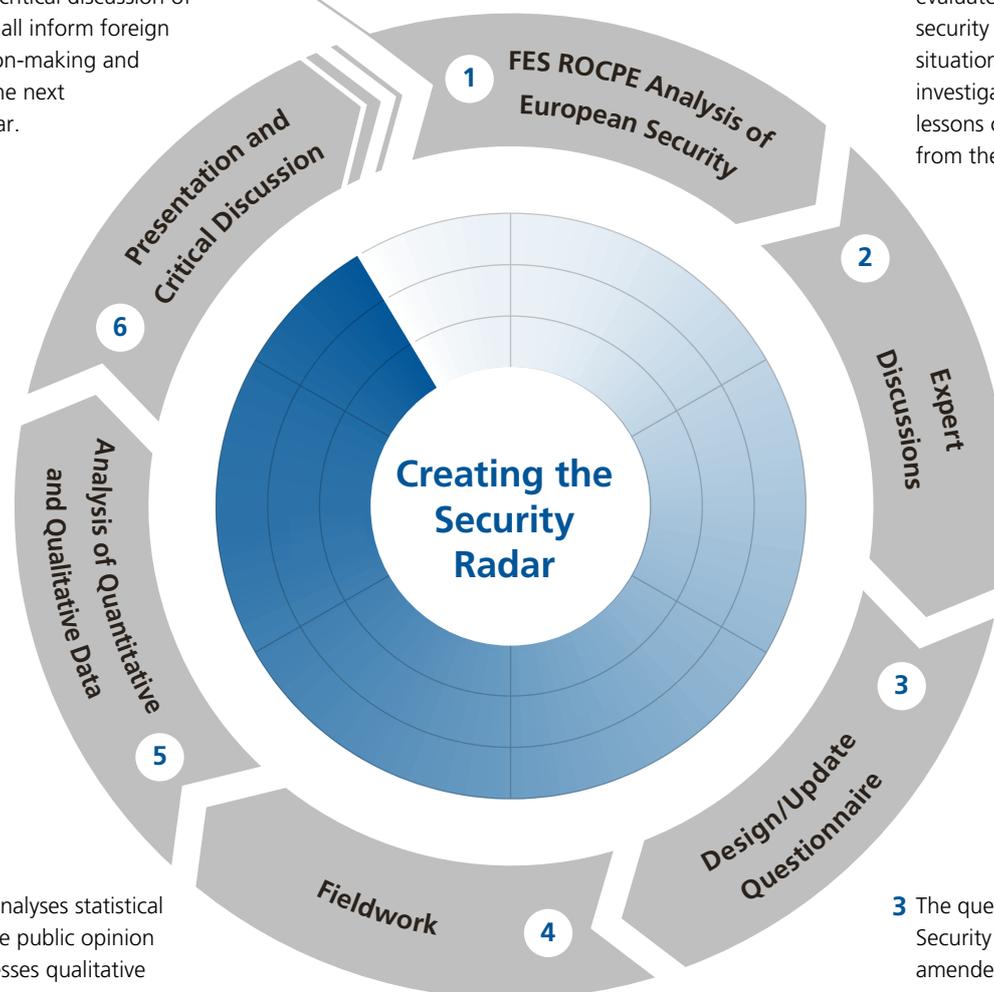
3. A subsequent guided discussion focused on necessary political steps to address the identified challenges or improve the status quo. In this phase, the experts were put in the virtual role of policy advisors. To provide comparability, the aspects discussed were the same as in the survey.

The goal of this final phase was to gain access to shared underlying perspectives and heuristics with which the experts participate in the current political discourse.

After each discussion, the moderators compiled a post-script/minutes from memory. Additionally, the discussion was recorded and transcribed for in-depth content and interpretative analyses. After completion of the analysis, the results for each country were triangulated with the results of the public opinion poll survey.

# The Method behind Security Radar 2022

- 1 FES ROCPE comes together with its co-authors to analyse challenges to European security and come up with relevant topics for Security Radar 2022. Fourteen participating countries are selected: Armenia, Austria, *France*, *Germany*, Italy, *Latvia*, Norway, *Poland*, *Russia*, *Serbia*, Turkey, *Ukraine*, United Kingdom, and the United States.  
*(note: countries in italics were included in Security Radar 2019)*
- 2 FES ROCPE guides semi-structured discussions with a small group of active political consulting experts in each country. The aim is to understand how regional experts evaluate the current security and foreign policy situation, as well as to investigate what useful lessons can be derived from their perspectives.
- 3 The questionnaire from Security Radar 2019 is amended based on currently relevant political developments and the security situation in each country. A block of questions on the coronavirus pandemic is added.
- 4 Commissioned by FES ROCPE, Ipsos Public Affairs Berlin conducts the data collection for the representative public opinion poll in 14 countries.
- 5 FES ROCPE analyses statistical data from the public opinion poll and assesses qualitative data from expert group discussions. Consequently, the results are merged and evaluated, producing the final report "Security Radar 2022: Navigating the Disarray of European Security".
- 6 Security Radar 2022 is launched in February 2022 at the Munich Security Conference, followed by presentations in participating countries. A critical discussion of the report shall inform foreign policy decision-making and encourage the next Security Radar.



What?	Who?	When?	How?
<p><b>2022</b> Representative public opinion poll in 14 countries</p> <p>Expert group discussions in 14 countries</p>	<p><b>27,500</b> respondents surveyed in 14 countries</p> <p>Representative samples in each country</p>	<p><b>March–June 2021</b> Expert group discussions</p> <p><b>September–October 2021</b> Public opinion poll</p>	<p>Expert discussions under Chatham House Rule via online conferencing</p> <p><b>CATI</b> (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) in Armenia</p> <p><b>CAWI</b> (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) in 13 other countries</p>





## DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Disorder and Disarray

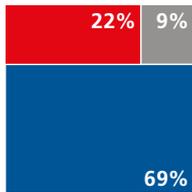
Moving Targets

Distant Hope

# Disorder and disarray

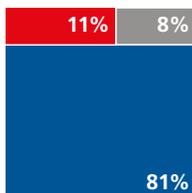
The state of play as regards European security has changed in a number of ways in recent years. The coronavirus pandemic, conflicts, but also rising awareness of geopolitical changes have had an impact on the perception of security and the awareness of threats and dangers. The chapter maps these threat perceptions and views on current and future developments. It allows an understanding of how respondents see the status of their country in the world, their affiliation or closeness to Europe, as well as trust in institutions at home.

**The coronavirus pandemic represents a challenge to global peace and security.**



14 countries total average

**Pandemics can only be successfully tackled by the international cooperation of as many countries as possible.**



Legend: Agree (Blue), Disagree (Red), No answer & don't know (Grey)

14 countries total average

## Perspectives on the coronavirus pandemic

Public health is more than ever an international concern that requires international cooperation, as well as a renewed role for the state to an extent not seen thus far in the twenty-first century. After decades of increasing globalisation and corresponding dependency on supply chains national self-interest began to re-assert itself. The coronavirus pandemic has influenced many aspects of daily life. A clear majority of our respondents feel that the pandemic is a threat to global peace and security. Especially in the participating countries in the East and South the respondents agree with the perception of coronavirus as a challenge to global peace and security, with the highest approval rating in Ukraine (84%) and Armenia (78%). In the context of ongoing political tensions, even including armed conflicts, the coronavirus pandemic seems to be one more aspect of the political landscape to worry about, one with the potential to further destabilise the fragile political and societal order. Even in the West of Europe there is a general perception of coronavirus as a threat to stability, peace, and security among states, with Italy (53%) and Germany (61%) expressing the lowest approval for this assessment.

Because the coronavirus pandemic is an inter- and transnational event with a huge negative impact on society and politics, the conclusion seems to be that this event can be successfully tackled only with broad international cooperation. The vast majority of all respondents back this statement, with the lowest approval ratings in Latvia (74%), Poland (75%) and the United States (75%).

Although respondents regard the coronavi-

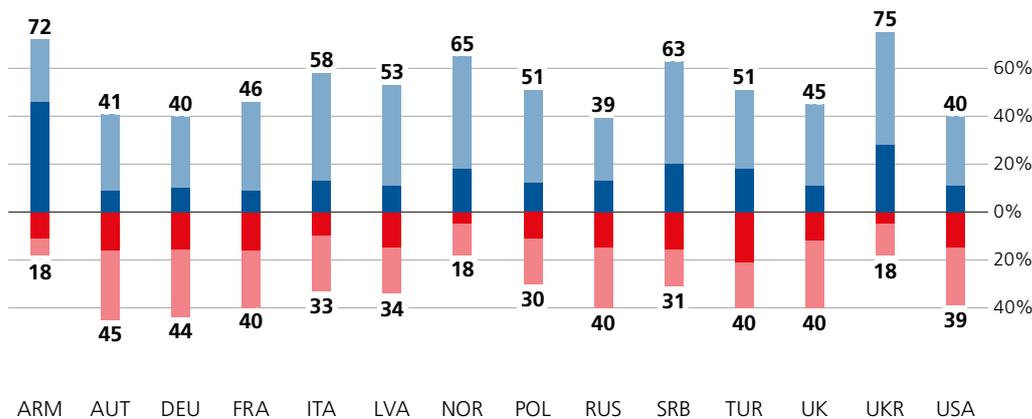
rus pandemic as a threat to global peace and security, which should be tackled by international cooperation, they are fairly disappointed by the actual extent of cooperation. Only in Ukraine and Armenia is there clear support for the statement that the coronavirus pandemic has shown that their country can rely on the solidarity and help of other countries, with 75% and 72% of respondents agreeing, respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, in countries as diverse as Russia (39%), the United States (40%) and Germany (40%) a majority agree that they stood alone to face the crisis. The data shows that the faster and more effective their country's response was to contain the pandemic until summer 2021, the weaker the perception that their country can rely on other countries.

When asked whether countries should follow the path of international solidarity in dealing with the pandemic, however, respondents exhibited no discernible trend. There is no clear pattern concerning whether governments should first secure enough vaccines for their own populations, even if that puts other countries at a disadvantage. A slight majority for this statement can be found overall, although the results vary considerably between countries. While in Turkey (77%) and Russia (72%) the vast majority of respondents favour such a policy, only 41% of Austrian and 44% of German respondents agree.

The picture of how countries have coped with the pandemic becomes clearer when taking into consideration respondents' views on whether rich countries should make vaccines available for the rest of the world. All polled countries exhibit a very high approval rating, with the

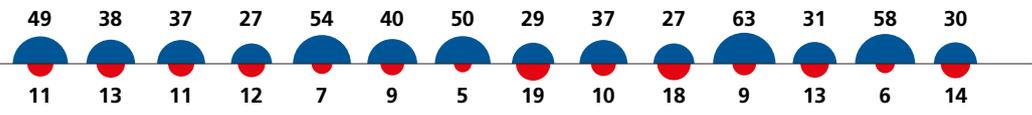
The pandemic has shown that my country can rely on the solidarity and help of other countries.

■ Somewhat agree  
■ Strongly agree  
■ Strongly disagree  
■ Somewhat disagree



Do you expect the countries of the world to also cooperate more closely on other international political issues?

...I expect to see **more** international cooperation.  
 ...I expect to see **less** international cooperation.



Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %

highest agreement in Norway (87%) and Italy (87%) and the lowest in Latvia (69%) and the United States (69%). Most importantly, one cannot identify a correlation between national wealth and support for the distribution of vaccines by rich countries to the rest of the world. In conclusion one could argue that the pandemic in general promotes national self-interest in acquiring the means to fight it, but at the same time, there is general expectation of international cooperation.

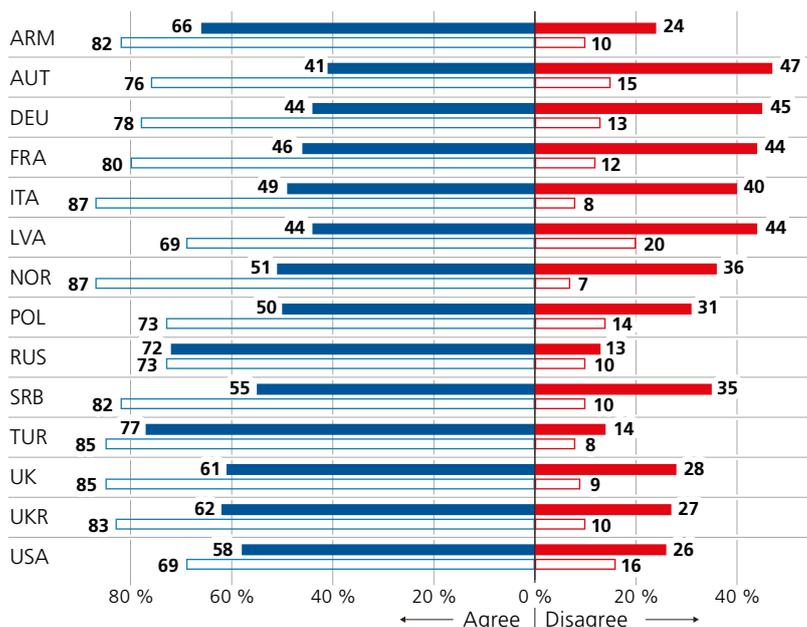
Overall, the coronavirus pandemic is seen as a global threat to security and peace and the respondents are torn between fostering of international cooperation to fight it and the pursuit of national self-interest.

A similarly mixed picture is presented by respondents' views on whether international cooperation in dealing with the pandemic will increase.

Although faced with the grim horizon of an ongoing pandemic, overall our respondents do not believe that the necessary international cooperation will increase. Only in Turkey (63%), Ukraine (58%) and Italy (54%) did a slight majority of respondents expect that there will be more international cooperation. On the other hand, this holds true only for a minority in Poland (29%), France and Serbia (27% each).

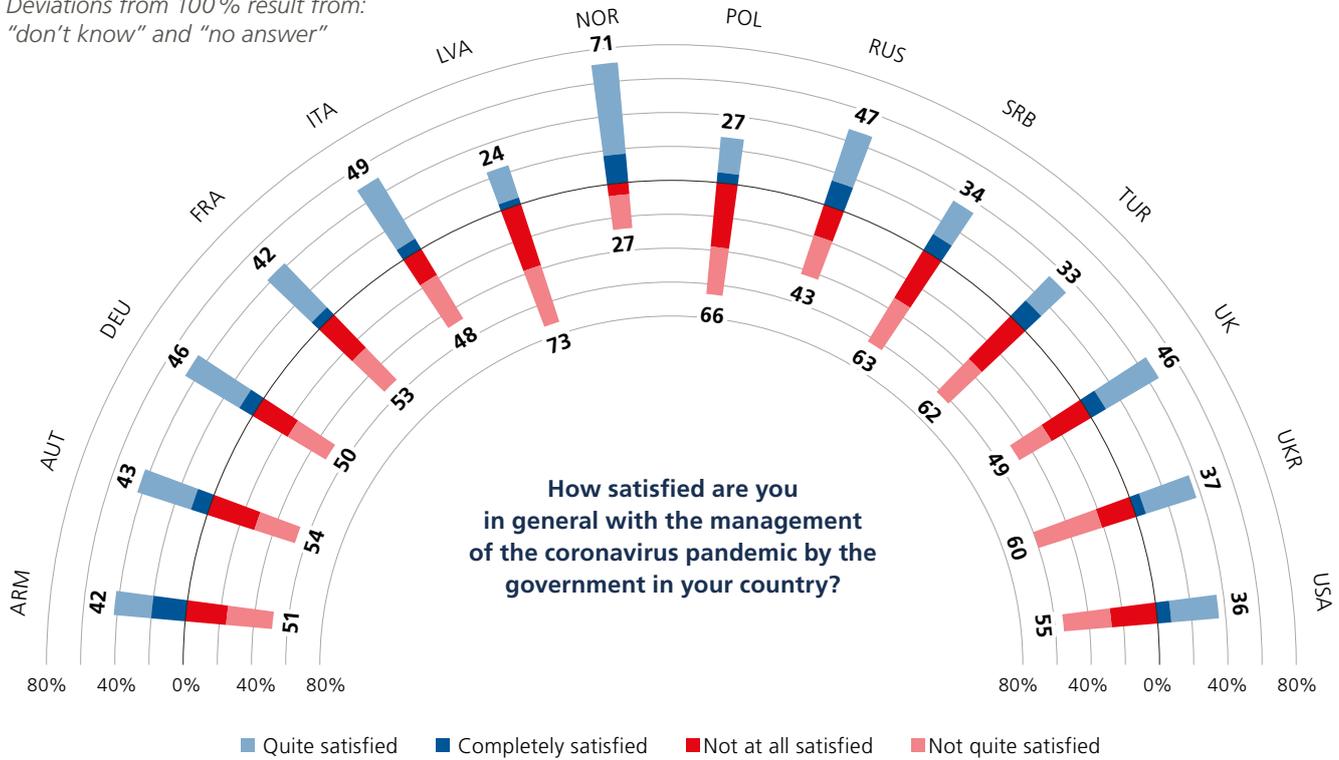
**39%** of the polled EU citizens are satisfied with the management of the pandemic by the EU;  
**51%** are not satisfied

■ The government should first secure enough vaccine for my country, even if that puts other countries at a disadvantage.  
■ Rich countries should make vaccines available for the rest of the world.



Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"



## Management of the coronavirus pandemic

Most respondents are dissatisfied with how the international community of states has dealt with the pandemic. This is especially marked in Turkey, with 65% disapproval, Serbia, with 64% disapproval, and Italy, with 60% disapproval. On the other hand, in Ukraine (59% satisfaction, 33% dissatisfaction) and Armenia (40% satisfaction, 45% dissatisfaction) relatively high rates of satisfaction and comparatively low rates of dissatisfaction are found. These results perhaps reflect the fact that these countries received the highest support and help from other countries.

Focusing further on satisfaction with EU management of the coronavirus pandemic, member state respondents are also rather unhappy. A majority or a relative majority of them are dissatisfied with EU crisis management.

Looking at crisis management on the national level, there is a slightly brighter but still rather diverse picture. In Norway, the vast majority (71%) of respondents are satisfied with their country's crisis management. But Norway is clearly the exception. In all other countries the majority or relative majority of respondents are dissatisfied, with the lowest satisfaction found in Latvia (24%) and Poland (27%).

Similar mixed trends emerge from the question about trust in the health care system's ability to successfully tackle the coronavirus pandemic. Not surprisingly, there seems to be a trend in line with the tradition of welfare states and the financial resources provided for national health care systems. Norway (84%) and Germany (72%) show the highest, and Poland (40%) and Latvia (45%) the lowest levels of trust in their respective health care systems. Noteworthy is the case of the United States, where only 54% of respondents are strongly or somewhat convinced of the capabilities of the health care system, despite having one of the most advanced in the world. This may reflect the sharp distinction between the notoriously underfunded public system and overpriced private health care sector in the United States.

The results suggest that respondents clearly perceive coronavirus as a threat to global security and peace, which should be addressed in a concerted manner by the community of states. However, their expectations have not been met by either the international community or the EU. There seems to be a trend towards national solutions in times of crisis.

# Threat perceptions

The perception of threats is part of the canonical inventory of security policy surveys. In view of the virulent conflicts with their concrete protagonists, respondents were asked about their assessments of fear of war, threatening state actors and the outlook in terms of war or peace for the next five years. The result is a picture that gives cause for great concern. Above all, the uneven distribution of threat perceptions across the participating states raises questions and has implications in relation to the search for united policy approaches.

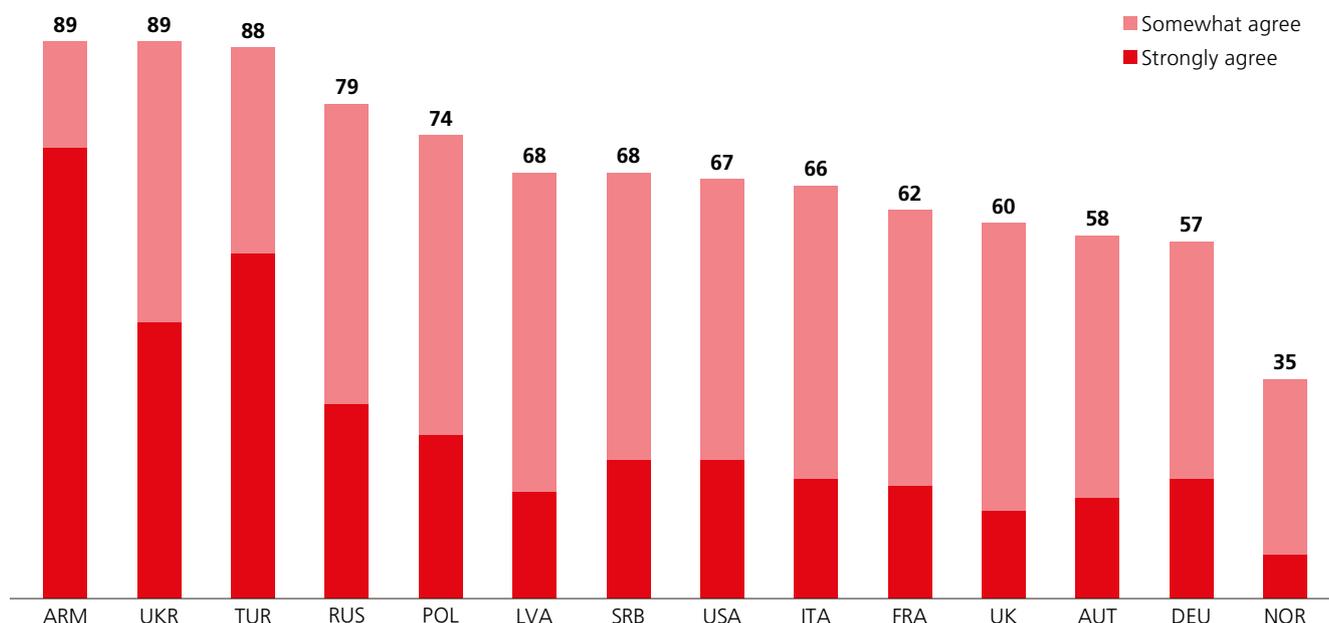
## Concerns about personal future and the economic situation

Levels of concern about people's personal future as a result of political and societal developments are rather high throughout all the polled countries. Especially respondents in Armenia and Turkey are troubled: 72% and 55%, respectively, are very concerned about political and societal instability. In Western Europe and the United States, perceptions are less acute. For instance, respondents in Norway are fairly relaxed, with only a small minority of 7% having strong concerns about their personal future. However, in all of these countries – with the exception of Norway – a clear majority of respondents are either concerned or very concerned about their personal future because of current developments.

In contrast, respondents' fears that their economic situation or that of their family will deteriorate in the future are less pronounced. Only in Turkey is there a clear majority of 75% who are afraid of future economic hardship. This can be explained by the troubled economy and generally rather volatile situation in Turkey. Unlike the question about personal future, there are no major differences concerning general outlook between the polled countries. Again, Norway is the exception, with only 30% worried about economic problems in the future.

### If I think of the various developments in my country and in the world, I am concerned about my personal future.

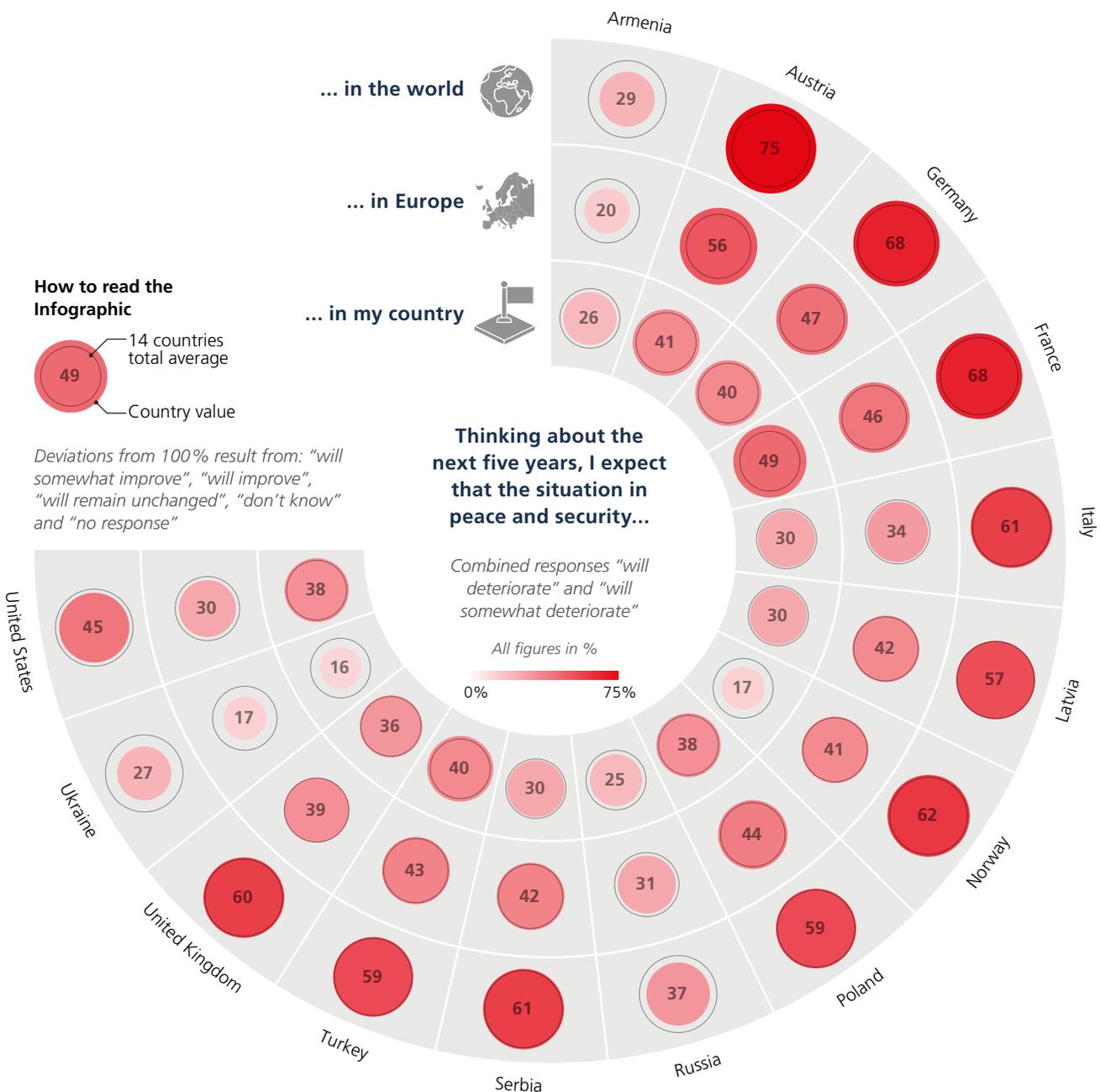
Countries ranked in descending order. All figures in %



## Development of peace and security in the next five years

Having experienced wars and conflicts, a slight majority in Armenia and Ukraine take the view that peace and security in their countries will improve within the next five years. Respondents in Western Europe and the United States, on the other hand, are less optimistic. That seems understandable given that these regions enjoy a decent level of peace and security compared with the other countries in this study, a situation that might worsen in the future.

The same pattern holds true for the question about peace and security in Europe and in the world. The more secure and peaceful the country, the more the respective respondents are concerned about it. This follows a pattern in the poll. On the European and the global levels the majority of respondents do not expect improvements any time soon. Additionally, the higher the level (national–regional–world) the grimmer the outlook for the future.



## Threat perception regarding current events

When asked about the extent to which the respondents worry about potential current events, such as war and conflict, social decline or cyber attacks, it becomes obvious that the perceived threat level is in general rather high. Norway is again an exception: the threat perception of Norwegians is comparatively low, albeit still at a high level. For instance, 55% are worried about wars and conflicts, and even the decline of social cohesion worries 49% of polled Norwegians. At the other end of the spectrum are Ukraine, Turkey and Armenia, with the highest levels of threat perception.

Overall, the phenomenon our respondents are most worried about are economic crises. Although there is a small correlation between a country's economic development and fear of crises, the concern is generally high in all investigated countries. Again, Turkey and Ukraine are at the top, with about 90% of respondents very or somewhat worried about economic crises.

Fears of climate change, international terrorism, and wars and conflicts are almost at the same level as concerns about upcoming economic crises. Italians and Turks lead with regard to fears of climate change. In both countries 90% of respondents worry about this. Least impressed by the dangers of climate change are US Americans, although even there 65% perceive climate change as something to worry about. This is on a par with responses in Norway and Latvia. Concerning the fear of wars and conflicts, not surprisingly Ukrainian (95%) and Armenian (93%) respondents are the most afraid. The highest threat perception concerning international terrorism can be found in Turkey (84%), Ukraine (83%), France (82%) and Russia (81%).

While Turkey, France and Russia have experienced terrorist attacks in the past, the high value in Ukraine is rather surprising and might be explained by the use of the term 'international terrorism' in relation to the fighting in the Donbas.

The decline of social cohesion is feared mainly in Armenia (83%), Italy (77%) and Ukraine (77%).

Surprisingly, the coronavirus pandemic is feared less when compared with other issues. However, there is a high variance between the countries. Especially in countries with limited access to vaccines and dissatisfying crisis management, the fears are higher. Fears about coronavirus are highest in Ukraine and Turkey, at 81%.

Concerns about the coronavirus pandemic are comparable with the threat perception concerning cyber attacks and uncontrolled migration. Turks are most concerned about both: 74% worry about cyber attacks and 85% about uncontrolled migration.

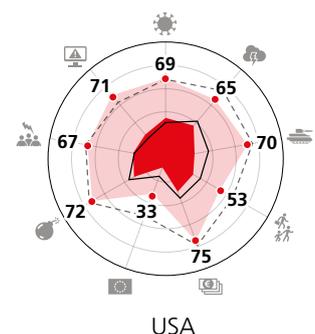
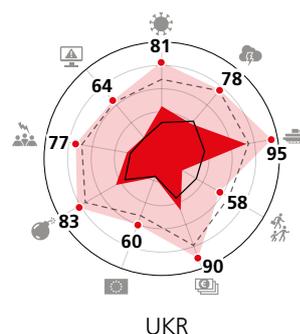
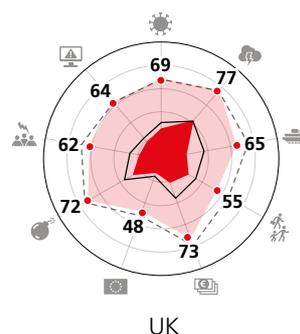
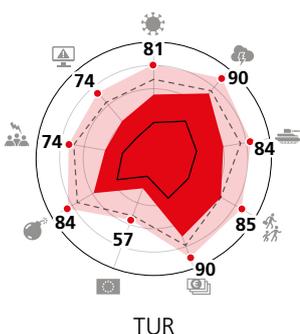
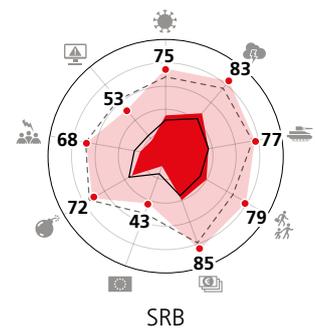
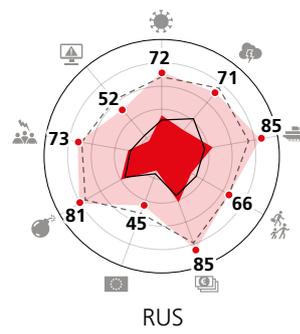
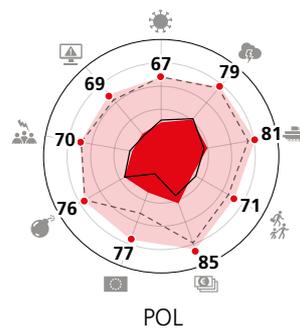
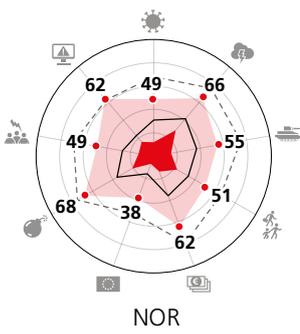
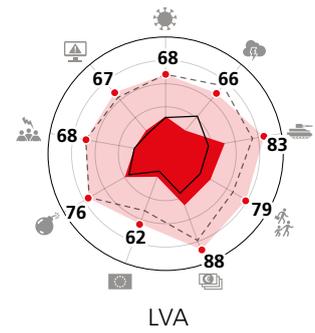
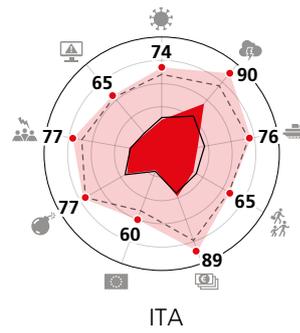
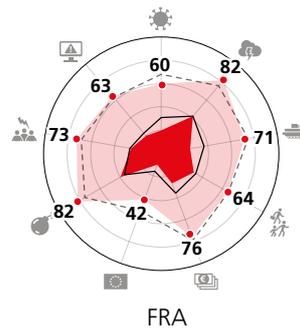
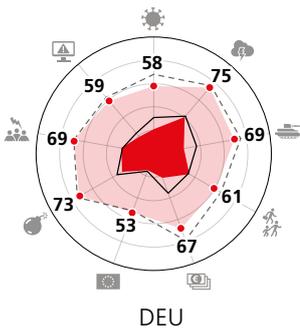
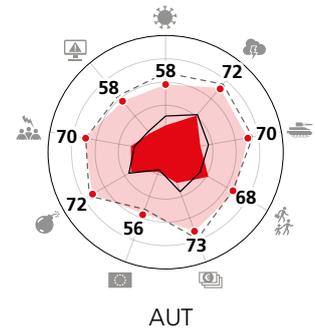
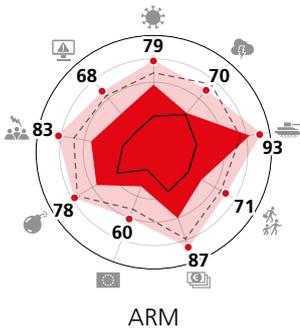
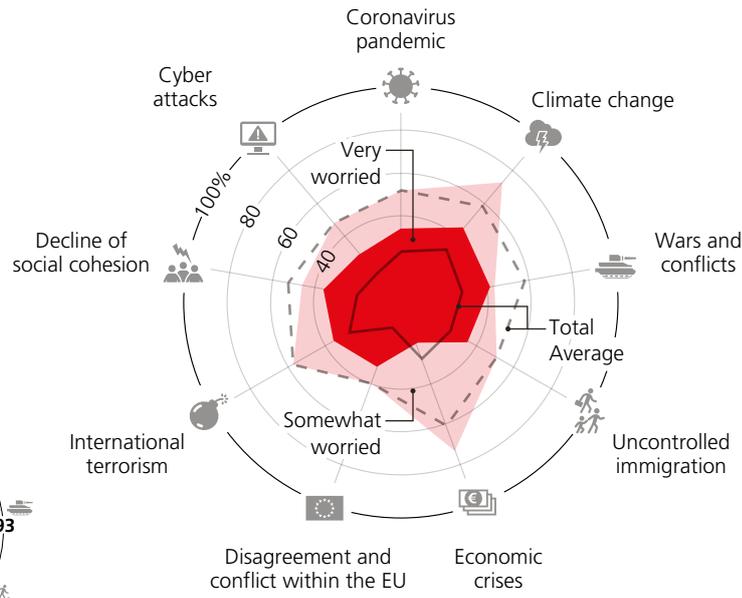
At the low end of threatening events are disagreements and conflicts within the European Union. Against the background of political conflicts due to judicial reforms, it is understandable that Poles feel the most threatened (77%) because for them disagreements with the EU are a reality, not just a possible scenario.

# 90%

*of Italians and Turks are personally concerned about climate change*

### To what extent are you personally concerned about the following current events?

All figures in %



## Threat of war

A clear majority of respondents believe that wars and conflicts will affect their country in the future. However, considerable variance is found between countries: 89% of Armenians, 84% of Turks and 82% of Ukrainians somewhat or strongly agree with this statement. In contrast, only 36% of Austrians and 47% of Germans share this view.

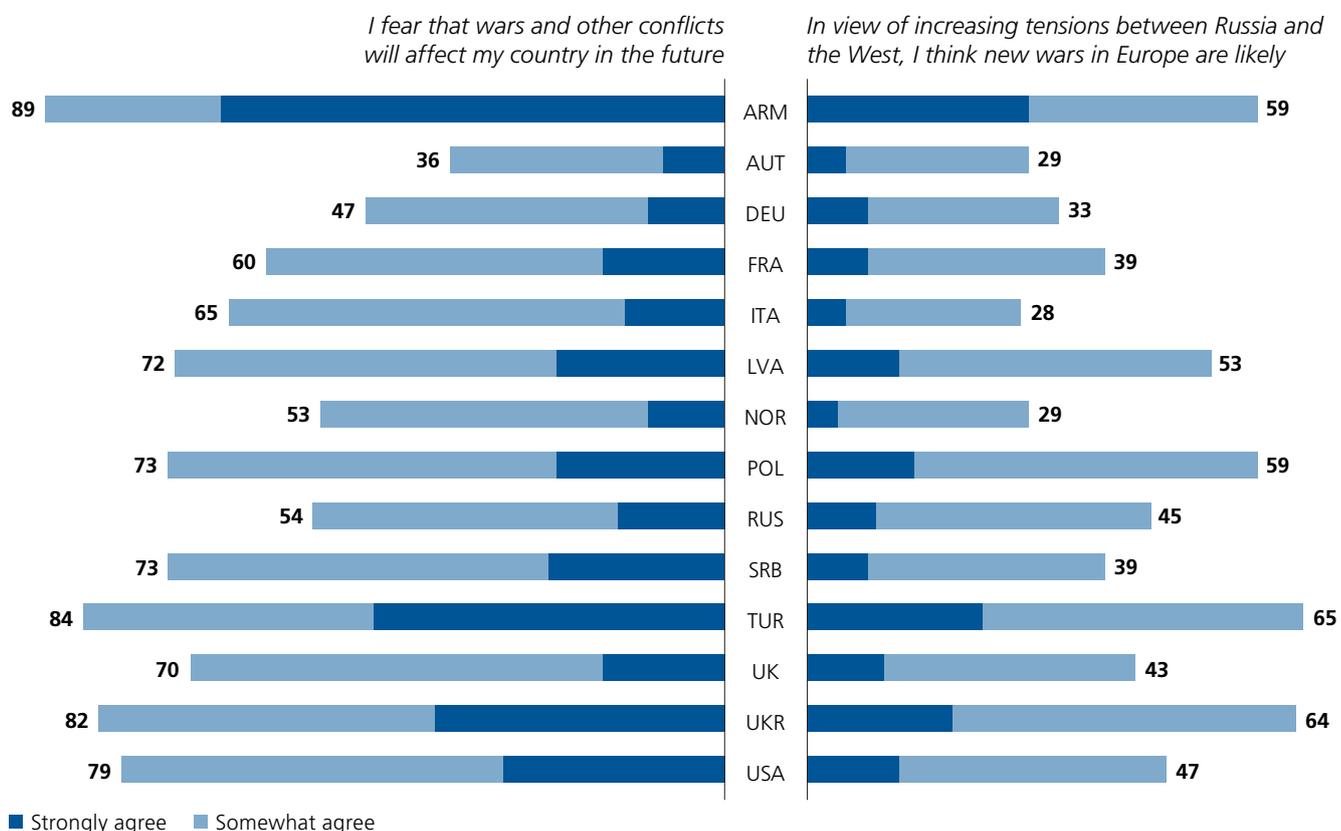
However, when asked directly about new wars in Europe due to increasing tensions between Russia and the West, the prospects seem less grim. Western countries in general do not perceive an imminent threat of war: 61% of Austrians, 55% of Italians and 54% of Germans even somewhat or strongly disagree with this statement. On the other hand, it may be observed that countries that, because of their geographical or political position, are most likely to be affected by warfare due to increasing tensions between Russia and the West, have a correspondingly higher threat perception. Subsequently, 65% of

Turks, 64% of Ukrainians and 59% of Poles think that wars are becoming more likely.

A wide range of views are expressed concerning whether NATO enlargement towards the Russian border poses a threat to security in Europe. In Serbia (70%), Armenia (58%) and Russia (56%) there is strong support for this statement. In Western societies the picture is less clear, but there is awareness of this issue in Austria, Germany, Latvia and Norway, where more agree than disagree. Only in the United States, Italy and – obviously – Ukraine, which aspires to join NATO, is there a clear rejection of this statement.

### To what extent do you agree with the following statements about security and foreign policy?

All figures in %



## China, Russia or the United States – fears of major powers

Russia is perceived as a greater threat to peace and security in Europe than China or the United States, with the lowest rate of agreement naturally in Russia itself (12%). Apart from in Russia, the lowest threat perception concerning Russia is found in Serbia (21%) and Italy (36%). The highest threat perception is among Poles, with 75%, and Ukrainians, with 71%.

China is perceived as the second greatest threat to peace and security in Europe. The highest figures can be observed in the United Kingdom (59%) and the United States (56%). Russia (20%) and Serbia (21%) are the least concerned.

As for the perceived threat posed by the United States, Serbian (66%) and Russian (57%) respondents are the most con-

cerned. Polish (19%) and French (18%) respondents worry least. Taking into account that naturally only a small minority of US respondents (15%) agree with this statement, and therefore excluding these respondents from the equation, it appears that the perceived threat posed by the United States over the sampled countries is comparable to the threat posed by China. However, the distribution of threat perceptions follows a clear pattern. Whereas NATO allies and European countries perceive China as threatening, Russia, Serbia and – to some extent – Turkey regard the United States as a substantial danger to security in Europe.

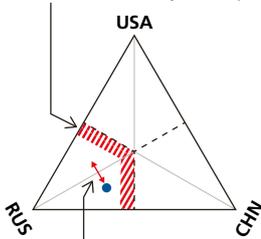
### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?

#### How to read the Infographic

The closer the countries are located in the corner, the higher the relative threat perception

##### Primary Threat

The sector in which the country dot is located shows the country most perceived as a threat.

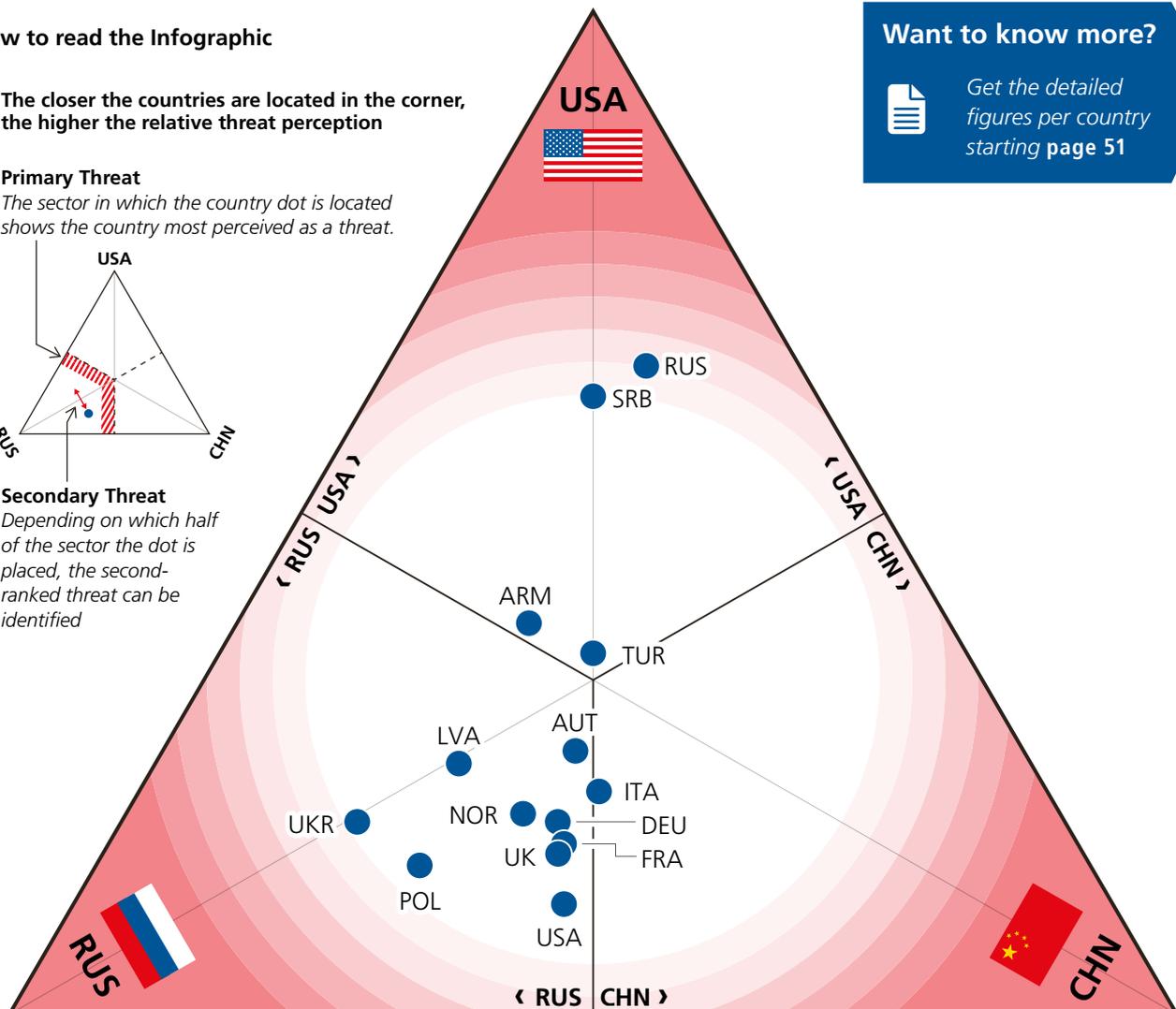


##### Secondary Threat

Depending on which half of the sector the dot is placed, the second-ranked threat can be identified

**Want to know more?**

Get the detailed figures per country starting page 51



## Concept of the enemy

A majority of our respondents do not believe that another state actor is meddling in their country's affairs.

However, three countries stand out, with majorities expressing support for the notion, namely Armenia (66%), Ukraine (53%) and Serbia (59%). Among the Armenians who answered 'yes' to this question 70% regard Russia and 13% France as heavily involved in their country. In Ukraine the picture is, interestingly, more diverse: of those who believe that another country is heavily involved in Ukrainian political affairs, 50% believe it to be the United States and 46% Russia. Finally, in Serbia 39% of respondents who answered 'yes' identified the United States as heavily involved, 25% Germany and 21% Russia.

Overall, according to respondents the top three interfering countries appear to be Russia, the United States and Germany. The perception of Russia's involvement is especially prominent in Armenia, but also in the United States, Latvia, Norway, the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland.

US interference is especially strongly felt in Russia, and to a lesser degree in Turkey and Ukraine, closely followed by Italy and Latvia. Germany's involvement is especially felt in Austria, as well as, to a much lesser extent, in France and Poland.

When asked directly whether there is a state that constitutes a threat to their country, clear majorities identify an enemy only in Armenia (90%) and Ukraine (68%). In the United States (55%), Turkey (50%), Poland (49%) and Latvia (46%) majorities or relative majorities identify such a threatening actor. At the other end of the spectrum, in Germany (24%), Italy (18%) and Austria (14%) only a minority believed their country had an enemy. Notably, in all countries bar Armenia many respondents did not know whether there was a threatening actor.

In Armenia the recent conflict over Na-

gorno-Karabakh seems to have left its mark: 46% of Armenian respondents naming a threatening state identified Azerbaijan and 45% Turkey as the main danger to their country. In Ukraine, 89% of the respondents identifying a threatening country named Russia and 10% the United States.

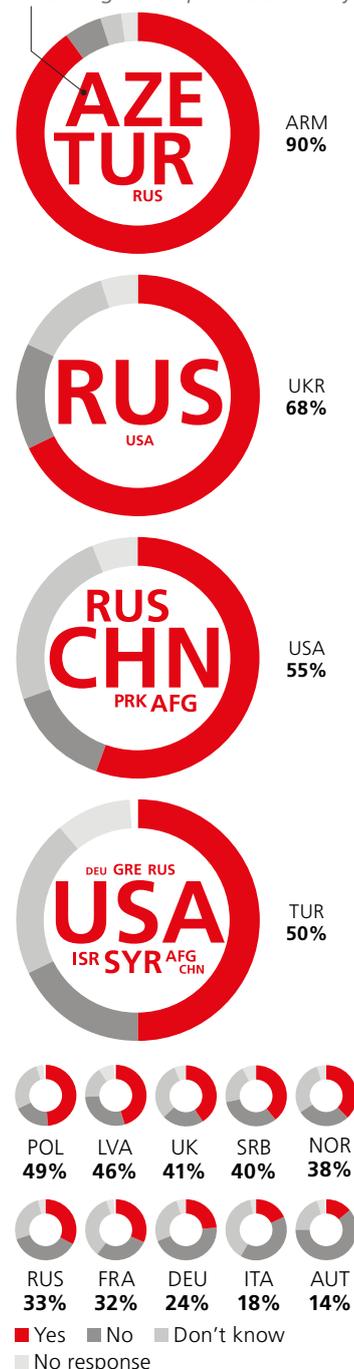
In the United States, however, the perception is different. Respondents identifying a threat named China (48%), Russia (26%) and Afghanistan (11%). In Turkey, 42% of those identifying an enemy named the United States as the main threat, followed by Syria (14%).

In Poland, Russia is clearly identified as the main threat by 82% of those who identified an enemy, followed by Belarus (6%). A very similar pattern can be observed in Latvia. Here, 78% of agreeing respondents identified Russia as the main threat and 6% Belarus. However, 10% of these respondents focus on the United States as a threat towards Latvia.

The top three countries identified as enemies most often across all countries are Russia, the United States and China. Russia as the main threat is especially prominent in its immediate neighbourhood, among Ukrainians (89%), Poles (82%) and Latvians (76%). Comparatively high levels of attribution can be found in the more marginal proximity of Russia, among Norwegians (73%). Additionally, in the United Kingdom (40%) and Germany (38%), Russia is named as the main threat by a comparatively high number of respondents. The identification of the United States as a threat is only relatively high, among Russian (71%), Turkish (43%) and Serbian (32%) respondents who could name a country threatening their nation. China is named as the main threat, when respondents identified a specific country, in the United States (48%), Italy (26%) and the United Kingdom (25%).

## Is there a country that constitutes a threat to your country?

The size of the script indicates the perceived magnitude of the threat emanating from a particular country



Country abbreviations: AFG (Afghanistan), ARM (Armenia), AZE (Azerbaijan), CHN (China), GRE (Greece), ISR (Israel), PRK (North Korea), RUS (Russia), SYR (Syria), TUR (Turkey), UKR (Ukraine), USA (United States of America)

# Trust in institutions

**Institutions regulate our life and make effective governance possible. The responses confirm the general declining trend in trust in institutions of the democratic decision-making process and the trend towards more trust in executive institutions such as the military, intelligence services and police.**

Trust in institutions is generally low across the polled countries. Political parties, the media and the government suffer most from a very high degree of distrust.

In all countries a clear majority of respondents distrust political parties, most of all in Italy (90%) and Latvia (88%). The same applies to the media, with the highest distrust in Serbia (84%) and Turkey (78%). When asked about the media's objectivity in reporting, the picture becomes somewhat brighter. In Norway there is even a slight majority of respondents (52%) who believe in the objectivity of media reporting, closely followed by Germany (48%). At the lower end of the spectrum it is found that 79% of Turks and 77% of Serbians perceive media reporting as not objective.

Trust in the government can be found only in Norway (73%) and Turkey (54%), a surprising pair. In all other cases distrust outweighs trust. Especially in Poland (77%) and Ukraine (75%) a high degree of distrust in the government is observed.

Looking at security institutions, trust in the military, the secret service and the police is fairly high, especially compared with institutions considered core elements of democracy, such as political parties, courts and the media. Some 83% of Armenians, 82% of Norwegians and 80% of French respondents rather or completely trust their military. Similarly, a high degree of trust in the police can be found in Norway (80%), France (72%) and Italy (70%). The secret service is most trusted in Norway (58%) and Turkey (58%).

In contrast, Germans (58%) and Austrians (56%) distrust the secret service.

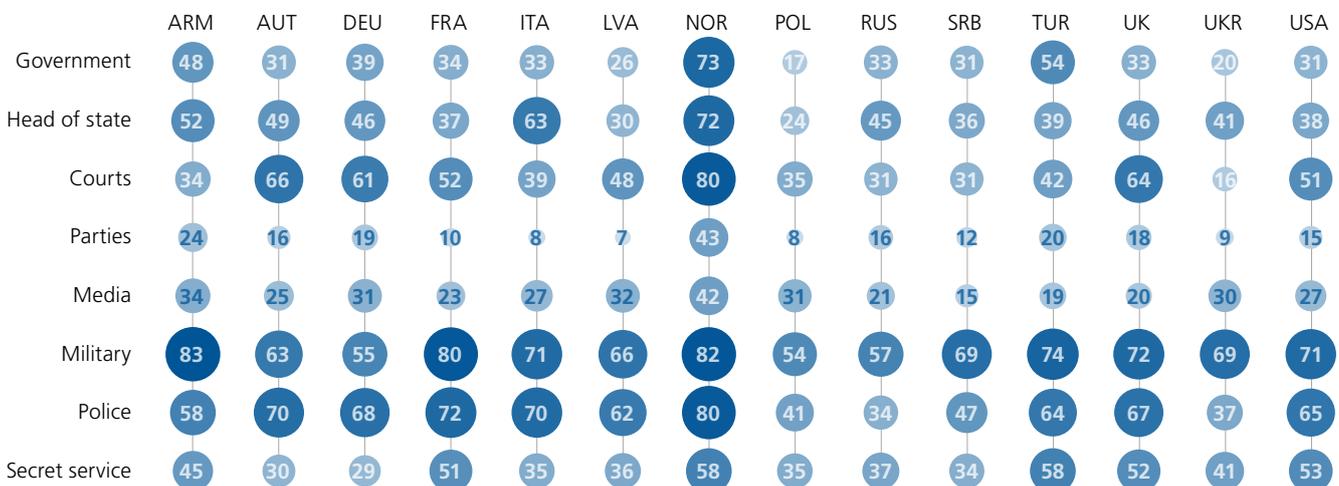
Trust in courts and heads of state produces a mixed picture. The courts are perceived as trustworthy in polled Western countries such as Norway (80%), Austria (66%) and the United Kingdom (64%). More distrust in courts can be observed in Ukraine (79%), Serbia (67%) and – to a lesser degree – Italy (58%).

When it comes to the head of state, the trust to distrust ratio varies considerably. One part of an explanation could be the fact that heads of state play different roles in the various polled countries, ranging from mainly representative roles – such as the Queen in the United Kingdom or the president in Germany – to the central executive role, such as the presidents in Russia or the United States. However, no clear power pattern is discernible in our sample. The highest trust in the head of state is found in Norway (72%) and Italy (63%), distrust is high in Latvia (65%) and Poland (69%).

Looking at the general level of trust in the respective countries, the highest and unique level of trust in institutions is observed in Norway. Norwegians place less trust only in the media (42%) and political parties (43%). In contrast, the lowest levels of trust can be found in Ukraine, Serbia and Poland. In these countries only the military is trusted by a majority (69%, 69%, 54%).

## To what extent do you trust the following institutions?

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree". All figures in %



# Place in the world

World politics resembles a coordinate system that is subject to constant repositioning. The position of the respective state is determined not only by its level of ambition and the capabilities of the respective leadership or country, but also by other factors. Status perception and cultural affiliation provide important information about a country's position in this system of coordinates and conclusions about foreign policy action and possible contradictory aspirations of the state actors studied in the poll.

## Status in the world

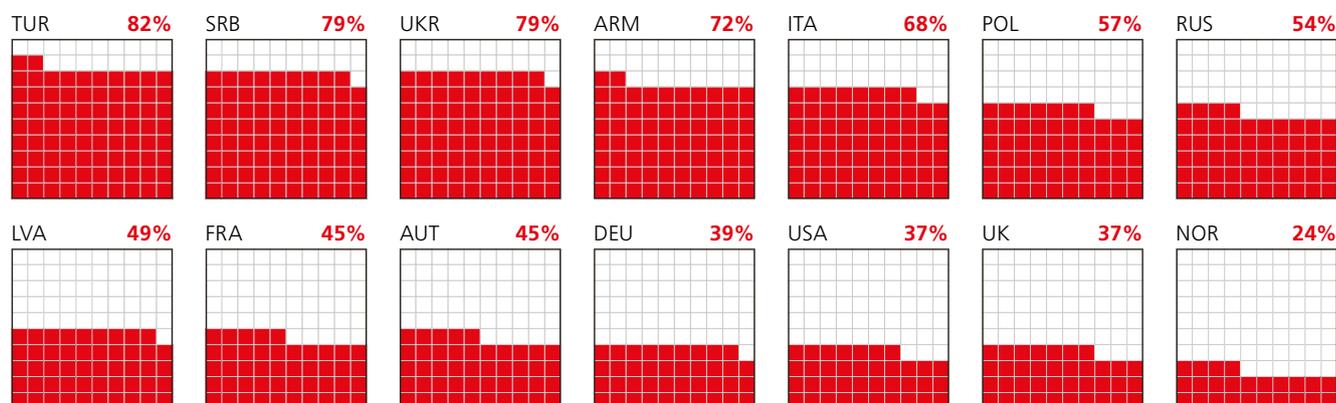
Answers to the question on the country's international standing in comparison with others produces a high degree of variance. Some 82% of Turks and 79% of Ukrainians and Serbians believe that their respective country does not have the status it deserves. In contrast, only 24% of Norwegians, 37% of British and 37% of US-Americans and 39% of Germans hold the same view. Although one might expect that respondents in more prosperous and influential countries are less likely to perceive the relative status of their country as inadequate, this is not the case overall. The perceived lack of status is probably dependent on other country-specific or domestic factors. However, there seems to be a strong disparity between East and West: respondents in Western states seem to be more content with their countries' international standing.

## Normalisation of border changes due to war

Border changes in Europe have often been accompanied by war and conflict in the past, and there is a general acceptance that this will continue to be the case in the future. That is the case in all polled countries with the interesting exceptions of Russia (42%) and France (46%), where there is no majority for this view. The highest agreement on the likelihood of future border changes due to war can be observed among Armenians (72%), which may be not surprising given their recent experience of war, but also among the British and Serbians (68% each), closely followed by the US-Americans (66%).

### In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries.

Countries ranked in descending order (Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree")



**87%**

*of Serbians believe that their country belongs to the European cultural sphere, whereas this number is only*

**57%**

*in the United Kingdom*

**42%**

*of the respondents in France believe that their country is regularly in conflict with the European Union, which is nearly the same share as in Poland*

## European identity

In all polled countries a clear majority of respondents agree with the statement that their respective country is part of the European cultural sphere. The United States is a notable exception, being the only surveyed country on the American continent (only 35% think their country is part of the European cultural sphere). The lowest degree of acceptance of this view is found at the rather prosperous Northern margin of Europe in the United Kingdom (57%) and Norway (62%), neither of which are members of the EU, closely followed by Russia (65%).

The highest identification with the European cultural sphere is found in Serbia (87%) and Ukraine (84%), closely followed by Italy (82%). It becomes clear that being member of the European Union helps to strengthen this sentiment, because all of the polled EU member states show a considerably high level of agreement with this question. However, the responses in non-EU members Ukraine, Serbia and, to a lesser extent, Armenia (74%) show that membership of the European Union is not a prerequisite for feeling part of the European cultural sphere. A noticeably wider definition of European culture can thus be observed, that includes – regarded from within – Russia or Serbia rather than the United Kingdom or Norway.

## Conflicts of interest with the European Union

When asked whether the policies of the European Union are regularly in conflict with the interests of their respective country, high levels of agreement are observed in non-EU members Turkey (69%), Armenia (65%) and Serbia (63%), closely followed by Russia (62%). In all four countries, there is a considerable margin between the respondents who agree that there is regular conflict with the EU and those who disagree. The most significant example is Turkey, with a gap of 50 percentage points. By contrast, among EU member states and closely associated countries this view is not the norm. Here, the

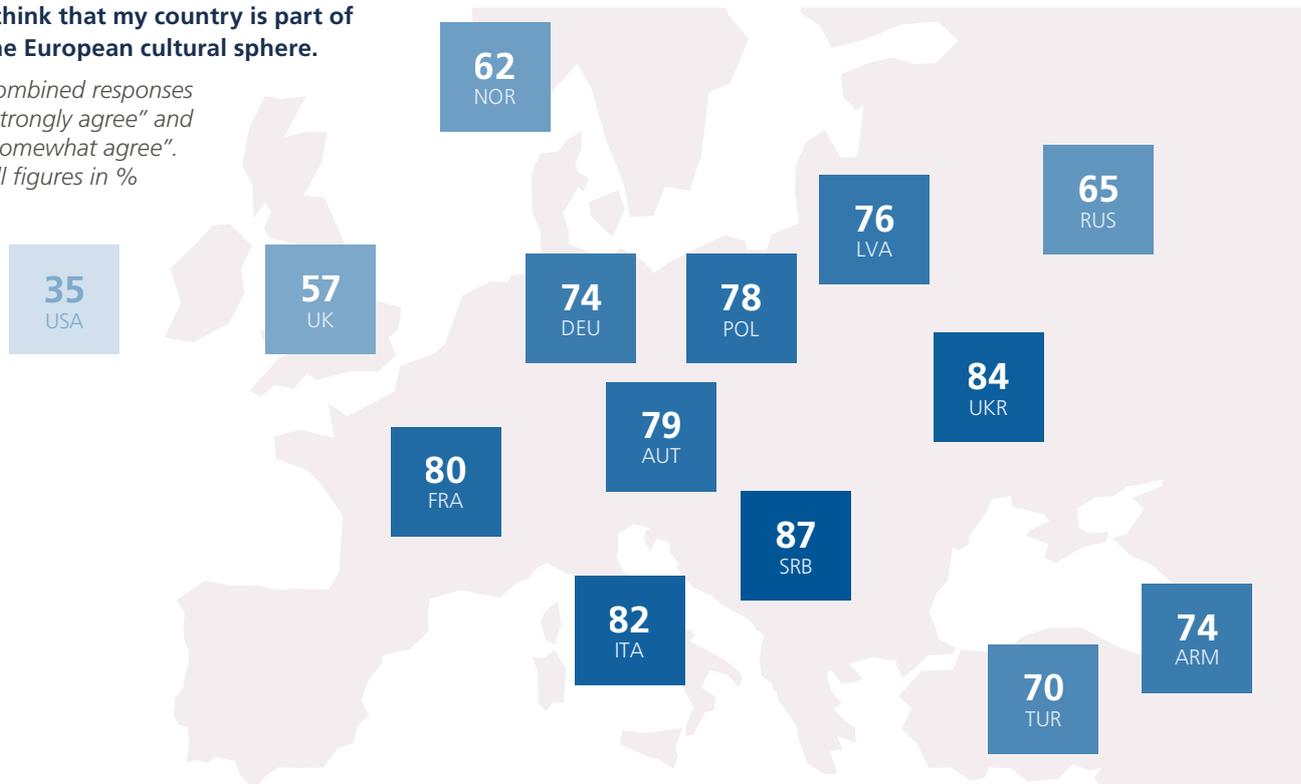
margins between the levels of agreement and disagreement are generally smaller and there are less strong views about conflicts with the EU. Nevertheless, in all of the polled countries, even the United States, a substantial minority believe that there is regular disagreement between their country and the EU.

An interesting case is the United Kingdom, where the Brexit vote seems to be mirrored in the 54% of British respondents who see a systematic conflict of interest between the European Union and the United Kingdom. The fact that US Americans have the lowest perception of regular conflicts of interest (25%) may be explained by the geographical distance and the fewer points of political contact with the EU, as well as the fact that, from the perspective of the average US American respondent, the EU's role is perceived as rather small, in comparison with citizens living in the vicinity of the Union. This hypothesis is supported by the large share of American respondents who do not have an opinion on this question (36%, far higher than in all other polled countries).

Another interesting case in the study is Poland. The rather intense and ongoing conflict between the European Commission and the Polish government on questions of rule of law and the judiciary has seemingly only a small impact on the perceptions of citizens. In fact, the Polish response is very close to the one in Austria or Italy.

**I think that my country is part of the European cultural sphere.**

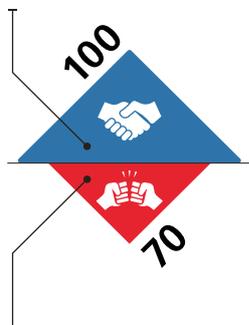
Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree".  
All figures in %



**Perceived conflict of interest versus desired future collaboration**

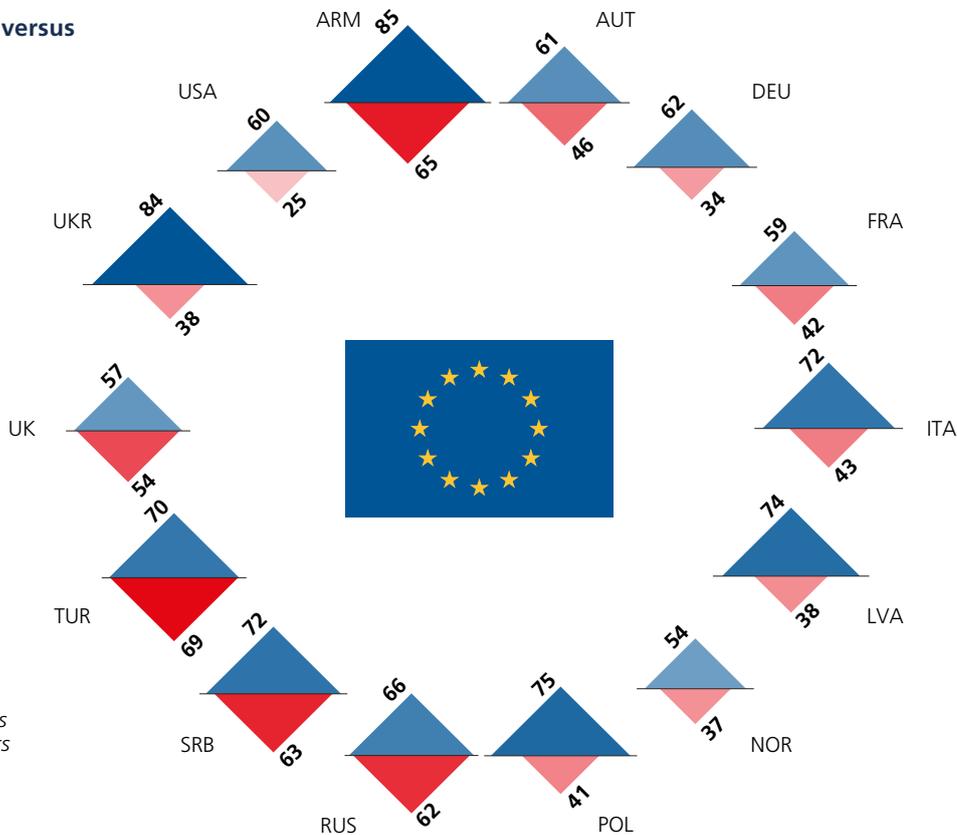
My country should collaborate more with the European Union than before.

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"



The politics of the European Union is regularly in conflict with the interests of my country.

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"



Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"

# Moving targets

The following pages deal with security challenges, the management of which will be decisive for the medium- to long-term security order in Europe. Here, a lot revolves around the European Union and its ‘actorness’. Will the EU become a player in security policy or a playing field? In addition, a picture of the mood in relation to ‘strategic autonomy’ is provided, which offers interesting insights for the European policy component, especially in view of the 2022 presidential elections in France. The other and related acute challenge is Russia’s increasing assertiveness and the Ukraine conflict, the political solution of which many respondents see as a precondition for possible détente between East and West.

## Role of the European Union

Looking at the future role of the EU, in all surveyed countries clear majorities support increased collaboration with the European Union. Again the non-EU members Norway and the United Kingdom demonstrate a certain distance from the EU, with the lowest support for increased collaboration (54% and 57%, respectively). Interestingly, despite all recent disagreements between Russia and the European Union, more respondents support increased cooperation with the EU in Russia (66%) than in the United States (60%). The highest endorsement is found in EU’s Eastern Partnership members Armenia (85%) and Ukraine (84%).

Asked about EU enlargement towards the East, in none of the surveyed countries do the respondents perceive this issue as a threat. In Ukraine, the country most open to all kinds of international cooperation, a clear majority rejects this statement (62%). Additionally, in Serbia, Poland and Italy decisively more respondents disagree with this view than agree.

Opinions in the United States, Norway, Latvia and Germany

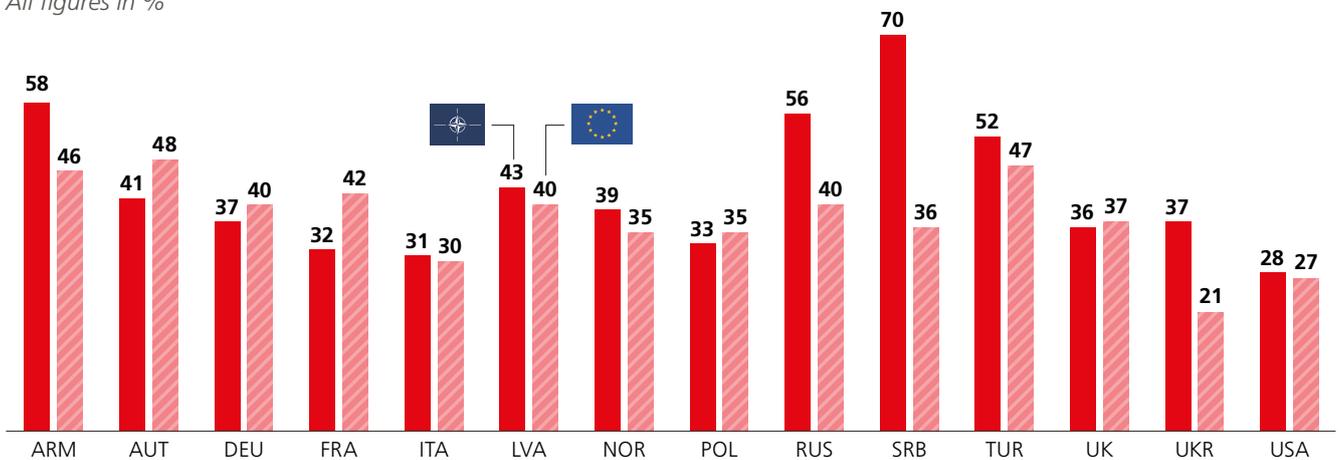
on the EU’s Eastern enlargement are rather split. Conversely, in Turkey, Russia, Austria, the United Kingdom, France and Armenia respondents are rather worried about Eastern enlargement. No pattern is discernible in the sample, because respondents seem to view the question in the context of domestic developments. One might assume that the scepticism towards enlargement in France and Austria has more to do with a general rejection of new EU members, whereas in Turkey or Russia EU enlargement towards the East is perceived as a threat to national security.

## EU-NATO relations

When asked whether the European Union should deepen its cooperation with NATO, respondents in Poland (41%) and Ukraine (39%) are particularly supportive, whereas the current level of cooperation is deemed sufficient in Norway (44%) and the United Kingdom (35%).

### Does the enlargement of NATO towards the East pose a threat to security in Europe? Does the enlargement of the EU towards the East pose a threat to security in Europe?

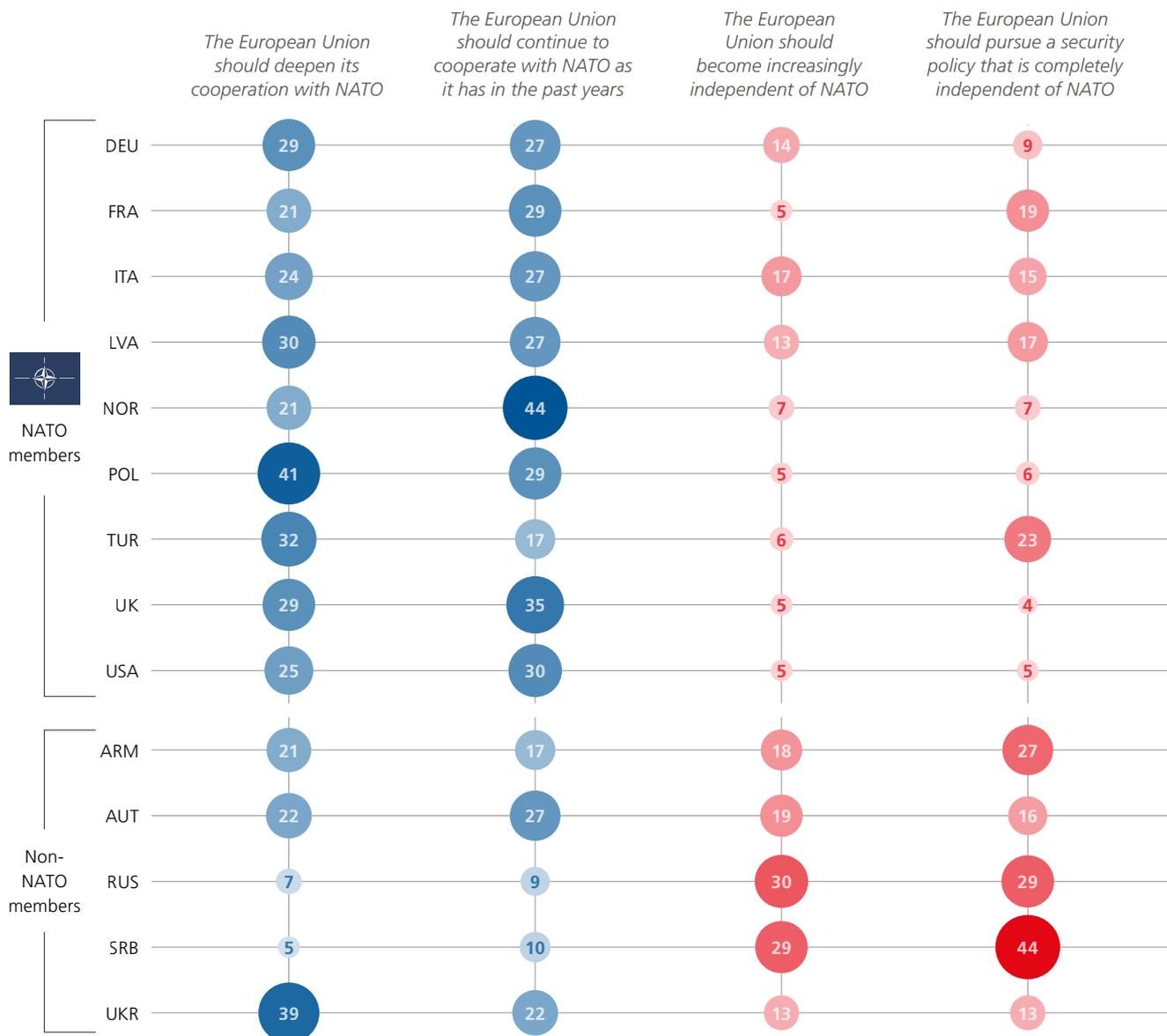
All figures in %



Combined responses “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree”. Deviations from 100% result from: “don’t know” and “no answer”.

### With which of these four statements do you agree most?

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %



On the other hand, strategic autonomy – the idea that the European Union should become increasingly or fully independent of NATO – is most popular in non-EU members. For instance, in Russia 30% support increasing independence and 29% complete independence of the EU from NATO. In Serbia, the corresponding shares are 29% and 44%.

Interestingly, Turkish respondents hold rather opposing views on the matter, despite the country's NATO membership: 32% of Turkish respondents are in favour of the European Union deepening its relationship with NATO, while 23% support the European Union becoming completely independent. The

same polarisation can be observed in Armenia, where 27% support full independence of the EU from NATO, while 21% opt for increased cooperation between them. In contrast, in Germany, France, Italy and Latvia, all members of both the EU and NATO, as well as in neutral EU member Austria, the scale rather tilts towards maintaining the status quo or deepening the relationship.

Overall, the idea of the European Union becoming more independent from NATO or even pursuing a completely independent policy has very little support in any polled EU member state. In the country that supports strategic autonomy most

strongly, Italy, the combined support is only 32% (17% for increasing independence and 15% for complete independence).

Respondents in the most influential NATO member state, the United States, take a more distant, yet similar view. Some 30% of US-Americans do not know how EU–NATO relations should be shaped. The remaining respondents, however, are in favour of either keeping the status quo (30%) or deepening the relationship (25%).

### A European army

The rather ambiguous patterns concerning EU strategic autonomy can also be observed in relation to a European army. The question whether the EU should build up its own powerful army to be on an equal footing with other great powers produces a rather high degree of variance between the countries. A closer look at EU member states reveals that in Germany, France, Latvia and Poland there is more approval than disapproval for this idea. By contrast, in Italy and Austria, respondents are rather undecided.

In non-member states of the EU, in particular in Russia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and Norway, the idea of a powerful European army is perceived with some suspicion. Respondents in Armenia, Ukraine, Serbia and the United States look rather favourably on it, but only in Armenia is there a clear majority (71%) in favour of a European Army.

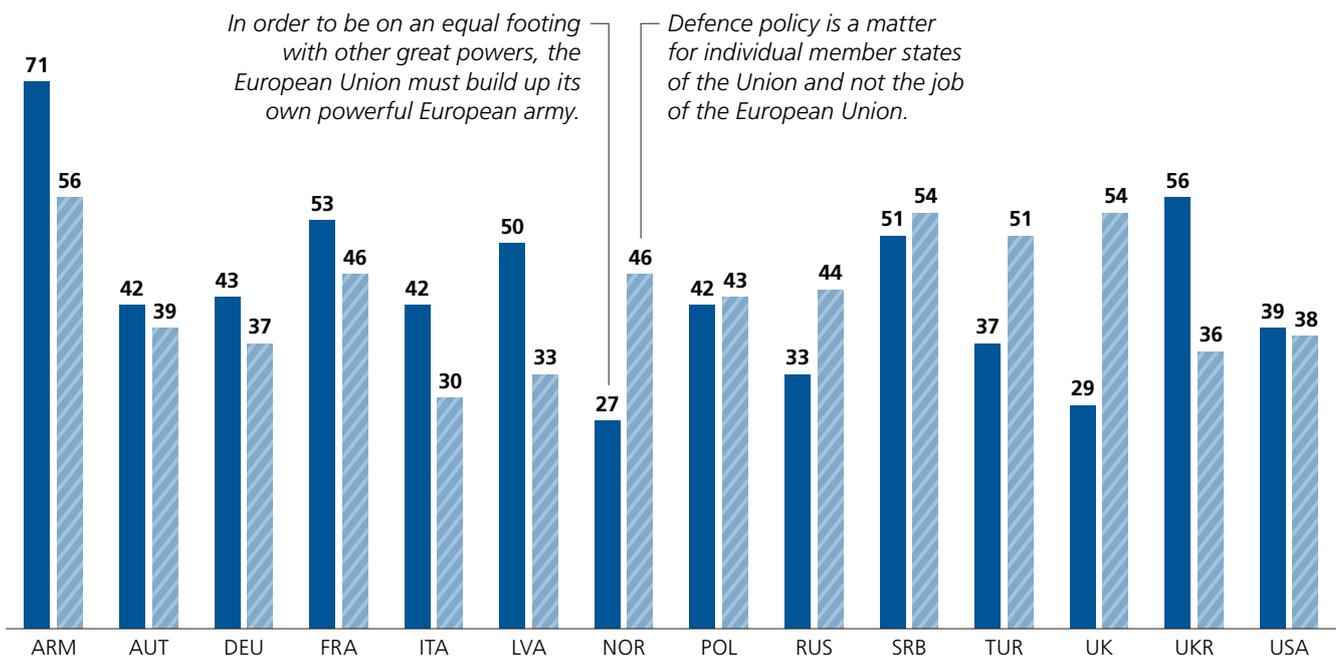
When presented with a differentiated option that instead of building up a European army, the European Union should focus on ensuring international peace through other means, such as diplomacy, a majority of respondents in all surveyed countries unambiguously agree, whether an EU member or not.

The related question of whether defence policy should rather be a matter of the individual member state and not an EU objective confirms the picture. Whereas respondents in EU members Germany, Italy, Latvia and Austria disagree with this statement, a majority in France and Poland tend to agree.

Similar opinions can also be found in all non-member states, except for Ukraine. Here a slight majority of 53% do not think that leaving defence policy to individual EU member states is a good idea.

### How do you think the European Union should position itself?

All figures in %



Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree". Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"

## Relations with Russia

Regarding the question of whether cooperation with Russia should be more intensive most respondents are rather cautious. Only in states that throughout the poll tend to be more friendly towards Russia, such as Armenia (76%), Serbia (75%) and, to lesser degree, Turkey (63%) does a clear majority support such a course of their respective country. Additionally, in Latvia (50%) a favourable tendency for future collaboration can be observed, which can be explained by the large Russian minority in Latvia. In all other countries respondents disagree with this proposal by a considerable margin, led by Ukraine, where 17% of respondents somewhat disagree and 45% strongly disagree. But remarkably, even in Ukraine 32% want to cooperate with Russia more than before.

This pessimistic perspective on cooperation with Russia is shaped by a variety of factors. For our respondents the main factors currently shaping relations between Russia and Europe are the Ukraine conflict and the resulting sanctions regime against Russia. This sentiment is especially strong in, obviously, Ukraine (79%) and Russia (71%), but also in neighbouring Latvia (71%), Poland (68%) and Armenia (67%).

Besides the current and active conflict, incompatible values and mindsets between Russia and many European states are perceived as the main factors affecting relations throughout the sample. This view is especially strong in Ukraine (65%), Latvia (64%) and Poland (61%). Interestingly, the lowest rates of agreement are found in Russia itself (45%), closely followed by Serbia (49%) and the United States (52%).

The perception that the United States influences relations between Russia and European states shows considerable variance in the sample. This view is widespread in Armenia (70%), Serbia (68%), Russia (64%) and Turkey (64%). In contrast, respondents in the United States proper (32%), as well as the United Kingdom (39%), France and Poland (both 41%) are far less convinced.

The same pattern applies to the question about the interference of European states in Russia's internal affairs. This factor is perceived as particularly influential in Serbia (61%), Armenia (60%) and Russia (57%), in contrast with the United States (26%), the United Kingdom (30%) and Ukraine (31%). The mirror assumption about Russian interference into the domestic affairs of European states it shared mainly in Ukraine (68%), Poland (60%) and again Armenia (60%), where there seems to be a perception of equal responsibility on both sides.

Domestic political developments in Russia are deemed an influential factor especially in Latvia (60%) and Armenia (59%). Eastern enlargement of the EU and NATO play a significant role from the point of view of respondents in Serbia (68%), Armenia (63%) and Ukraine (58%). When asked about the potential for Cold War repercussions to shape current relations there is generally little support, with the exception of Armenia (70%) and Turkey (62%).

Relations between Russia and many European states are perceived to be influenced by a wide range of factors. The Ukraine conflict and differing values stand out as being perceived as

### Factors influencing relations between Russia and other European states

**62%**

Ukraine conflict and the resulting sanctions for Russia

**54%**

incompatible values

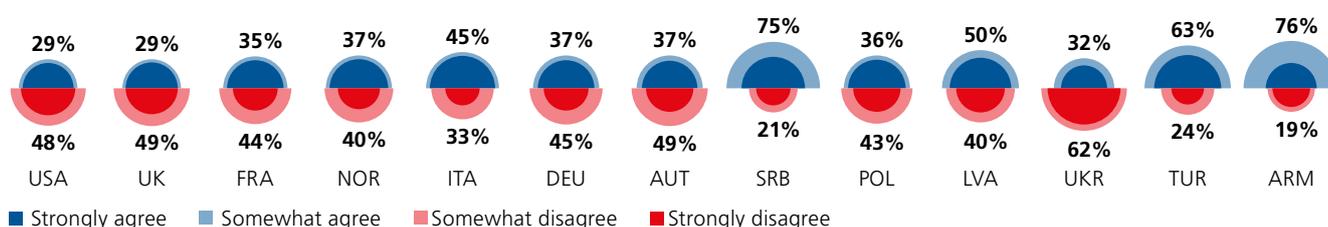
**51%**

domestic developments in Russia

14 countries total average

### My country should collaborate more with Russia than before.

Ranked from West to East. Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"



# Factors influencing relations with Russia

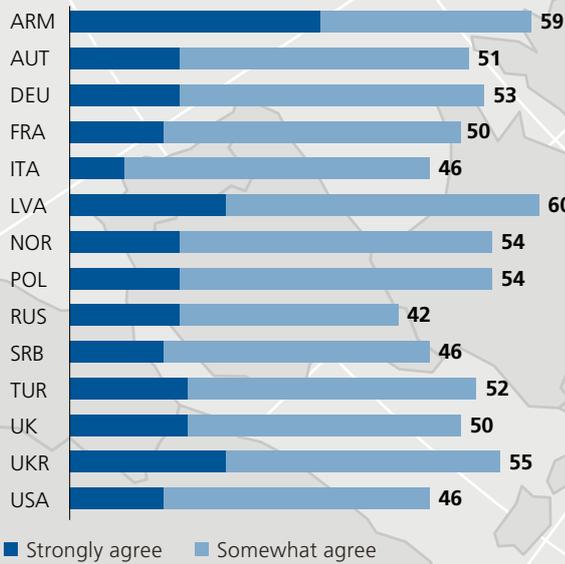
The graphs illustrate the answers to a series of questions regarding the relations between Russia and other European states.

**Relations between Russia and other European states are influenced by the Ukraine conflict and the resulting sanctions for Russia.**

All figures in %

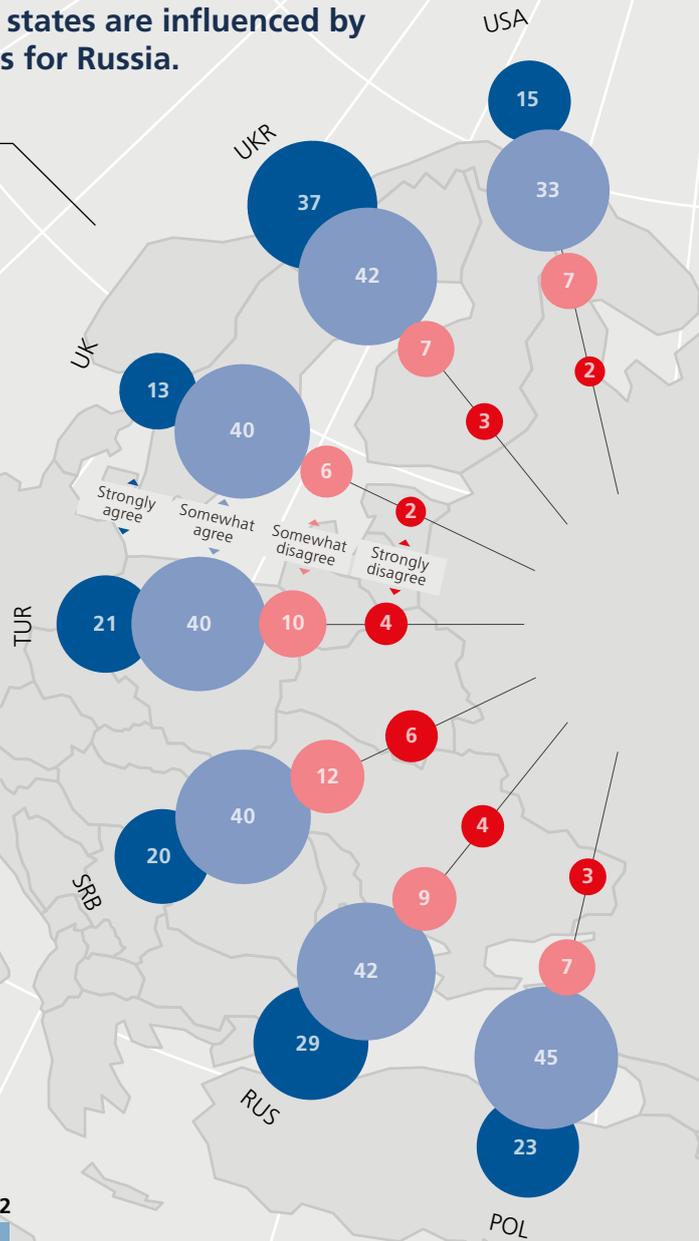
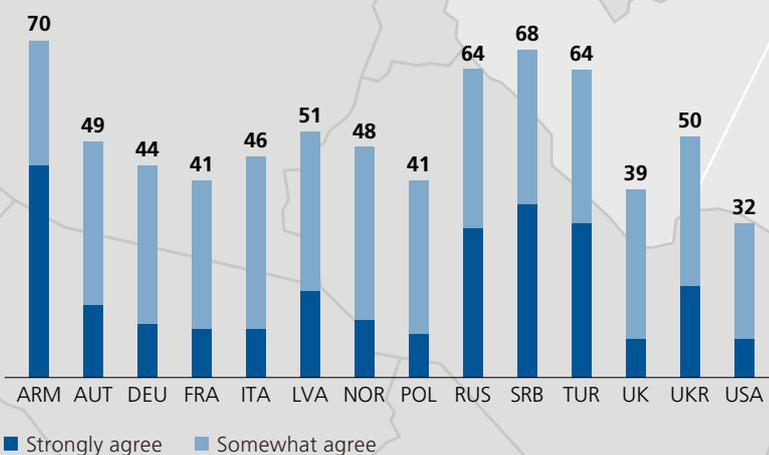
## Relations are influenced by domestic political developments in Russia.

All figures in %



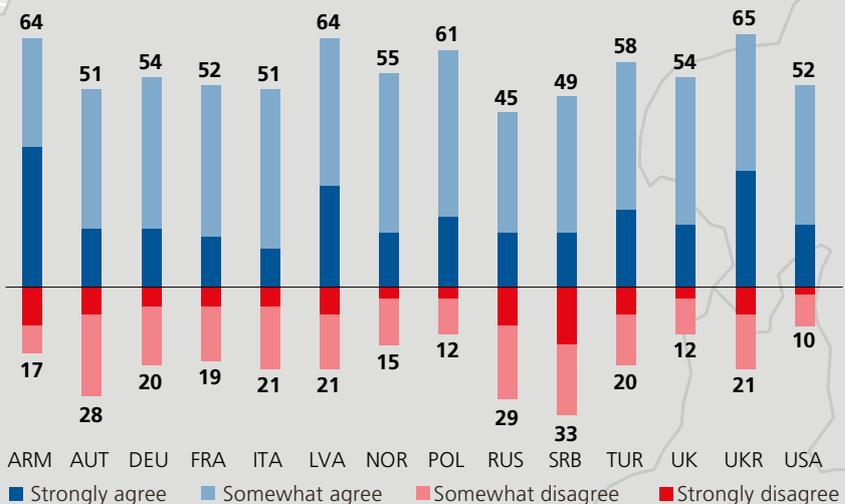
## Relations are influenced by the United States.

All figures in %



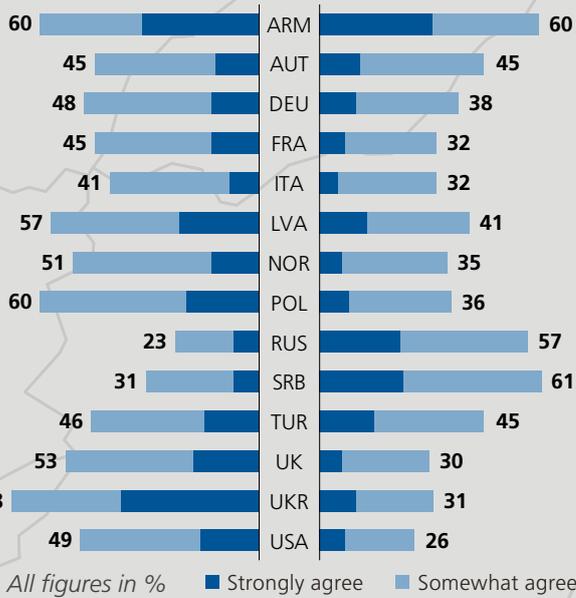
**Relations are influenced by incompatible values and mindsets between Russia and many European states.**

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %



**Relations between Russia and other European states are influenced by...**

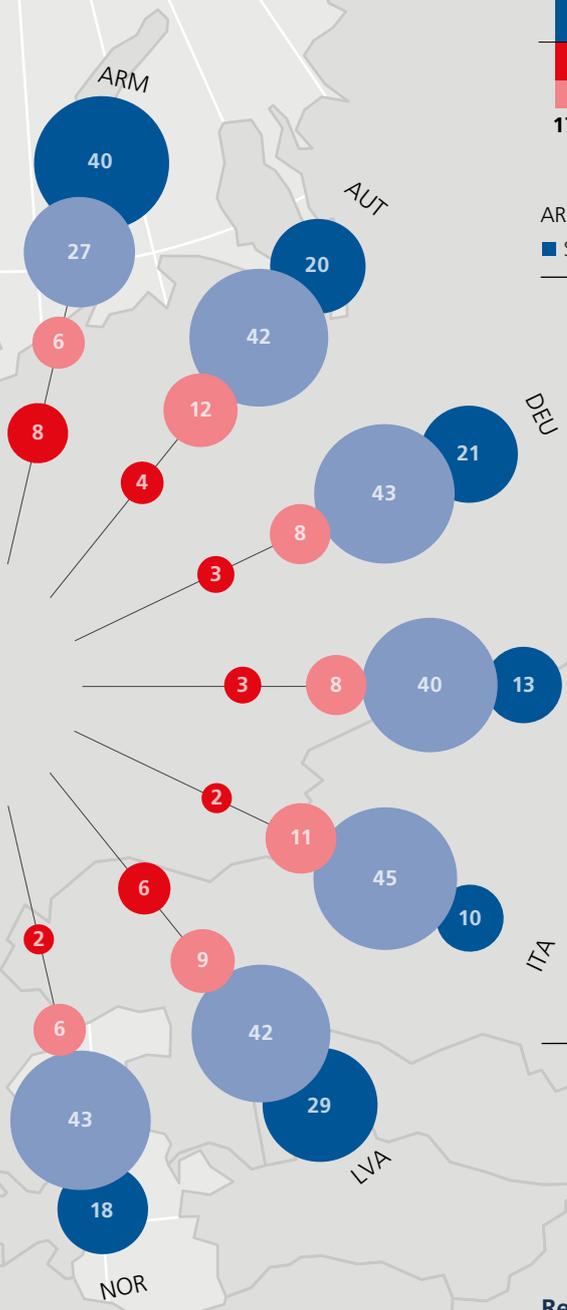
... the interference of Russia in the internal affairs of European states ◀ ◀  
 ... the interference of European states in the internal affairs of Russia ▶ ▶



All figures in % ■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree

**Relations are influenced by the Eastern enlargement of the EU and NATO.**

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree". All figures in %

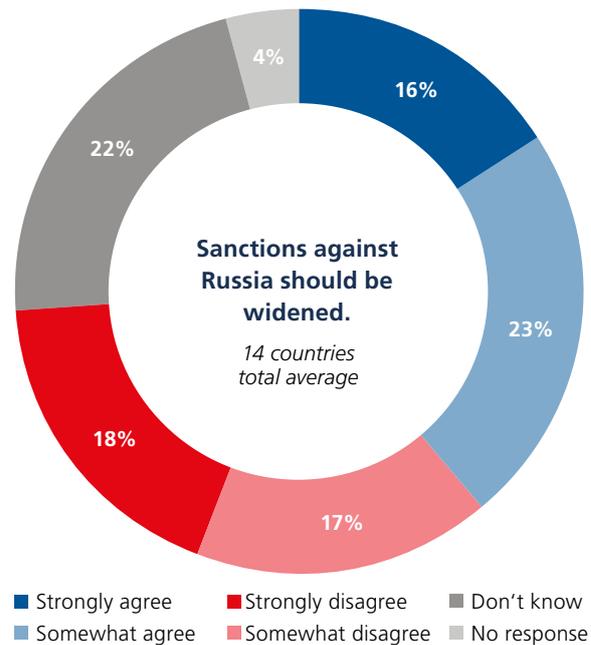


● Strongly agree  
● Somewhat agree  
● Strongly disagree  
● Somewhat disagree

more important than other factors. Western European countries are less likely to emphasise one particular factor as decisive, apart from the Ukraine conflict and the resulting sanctions for Russia. However, in some of these countries, especially in France, the United Kingdom, Norway and the United States high rates of respondents do not know whether the presented factors shape the relationship. On the other hand, respondents especially in Armenia and, to a lesser degree, in Turkey and Ukraine, consider a broad range of factors rather equally influential.

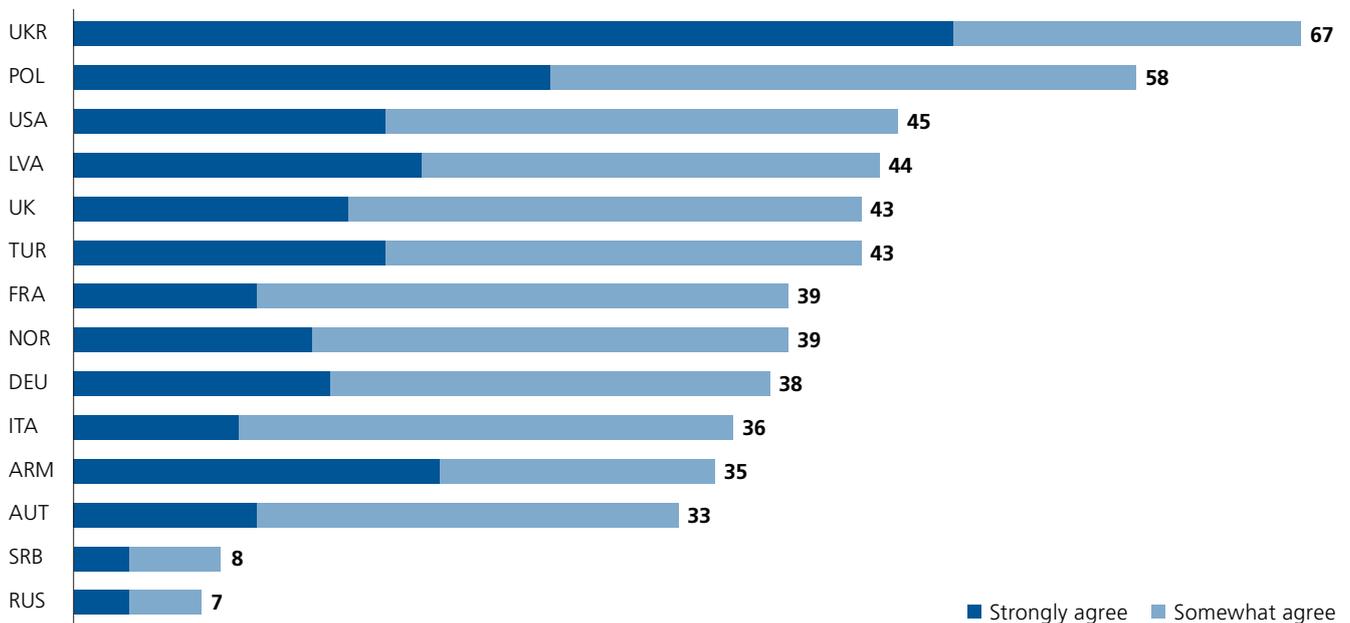
Sanctions have been used regularly in dealing with Russia in the context of the Ukraine conflict. But despite the fact that respondents in most of the polled countries believe sanctions to be a legitimate and effective foreign policy instrument (see also p. 49), the perspective on Russia is a little more differentiated. In Ukraine (67%) and Poland (58%) respondents support a widening of sanctions by a considerable majority, whereas in Russia and Serbia (both 77% against) we observe the opposite. In between, and especially in countries that would have the strongest impact on the Russian economy, there is a rather mixed impression. In the United States (45%) and the United Kingdom (43%) a relative majority support the widening of sanctions and only small fractions of respondents are opposed. In France (39%) and Italy (36%) those in support are even fewer, while there seems to be considerable opposition to more sanctions – 24% in France and 29% in Italy. Turkey presents a

similar picture at a higher level, with 43% for and 31% against more sanctions. Germany, Latvia, Austria and Armenia exhibit the most sanction-sceptical responses among this group of countries, with a very small margin in favour of more sanctions in Germany (38% for and 34% against) and Latvia (44% for and 40% against) and a considerable surplus against sanctions in Austria (33% for and 43% against) and Armenia (35% for and 46% against).



**Sanctions against Russia should be widened.**

Countries ranked in descending order. All figures in %



# The Ukraine conflict

## Who is responsible?

Because the Ukraine conflict is perceived as the main factor shaping the relationship between Russia and the rest of Europe, respondents in all countries believe that the resolution of this conflict is a prerequisite for peace and security in Europe. This sentiment is especially pronounced in Ukraine (81%) and Poland (70%). Additionally, the highest number of respondents strongly agreeing with this view apart from Ukraine (45%) is found in Armenia (33%).

Concerning who is responsible for the escalation of the Ukraine conflict, Russia is identified as the main culprit in all countries, with the exception of respondents in Russia and Serbia. Strong agreement can be found, unsurprisingly, in Ukraine (74%), but also in Poland (65%), Latvia (58%) and Norway (56%). The separatists are also believed by a sizable part of respondents as responsible for the escalation, although to a much smaller degree than Russia. The 40% of Ukrainians who believe this statement is the highest value for this question, while the other countries oscillate between 20% and 30%, with the exception of Armenia, where just 12% hold the separatists responsible.

The position that Ukraine itself is responsible is highly popular in Russia (55%); remarkably, however, also 28% of Ukrainians agree with this statement, the second highest rate of agreement, closely followed by Armenia (27%) and Serbia (25%), two countries, in which the respondents throughout the poll give responses similar to respondents in Russia.

This pattern can also be observed when asked whether the United States is responsible for escalating the conflict. Only in Russia is this view held by a majority (51%). Nevertheless, 38% of Serbs, 29% of Turks and 25% of Armenians also hold this belief.

The European Union seems to be regarded as the culprit by the fewest people. Only a very small minority in all countries believe that responsibility lies with Brussels, with sizeable minorities found only in Russia (19%), Serbia (16%) and Turkey (16%).

Concerning general knowledge of the conflict, it is observed that in all countries except for Russia, Ukraine and Latvia, a sizeable minority of respondents do not find any of the proposed actors responsible. This is especially the case in France (36%), the United States (35%), the United Kingdom (33%) and Italy (33%).

## Who should solve the Ukraine conflict?

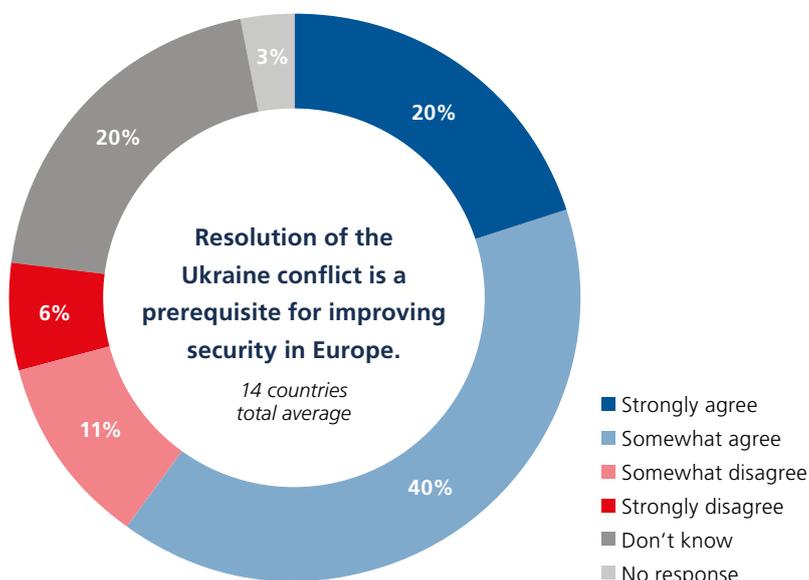
Most respondents perceive the latest efforts at solving the Ukraine conflict as not very successful and prefer the creation of a new framework. This fits with the fact that in most countries respondents disagree that the Ukraine crisis is a conflict between Ukraine and Russia in which no third country should intervene. Only in Serbia (64%) and Armenia (61%) does a majority believe the conflict to be a bilateral matter.

Taking a closer look at the Ukrainian respondents who would be most affected by a given strategy, the data shows that Ukrainians mostly favour internationalisation of the conflict, either by Ukraine joining the European Union (72%) or becoming a member of NATO (62%), as well as by widening sanctions against Russia (67%).

**55%**  
of Russians and  
**28%**  
of Ukrainians believe  
Ukraine to be responsible  
for the escalation  
of the conflict

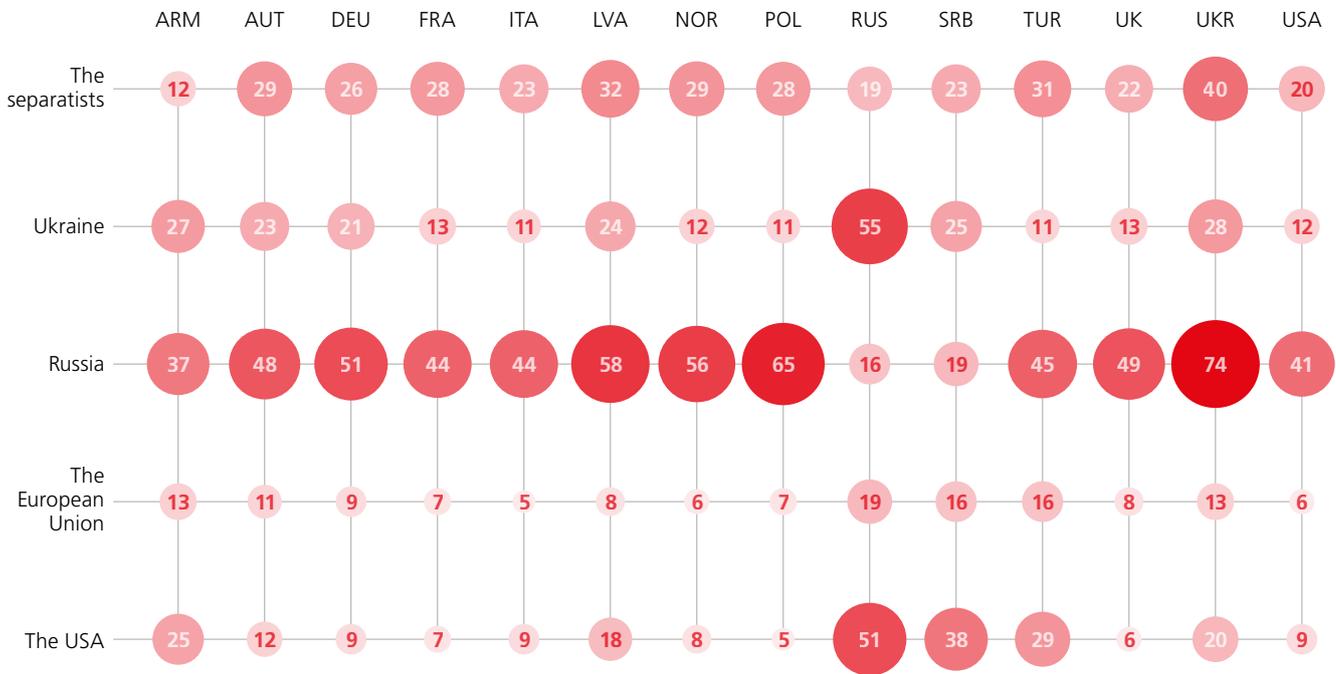
**74%**  
of Ukrainians and  
**16%**  
of Russians believe  
Russia to be responsible  
for the escalation  
of the conflict

**51%**  
of Russians believe the  
US to be responsible  
for the escalation of  
the conflict



### In your opinion, who is responsible for the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict?

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree", multiple answers possible. All figures in %



However, a little over half (51%) of Ukrainians support the view that the resolution of the conflict should be left to Russia. This number probably overlaps with different approaches such as a unilateral Russian de-escalation or perhaps a different solution.

The idea of Russia solving the conflict is clearly rejected in all other countries bar Armenia, with Latvia and Poland being among the most adamant opponents (73% and 66%, respectively). Overall, even though on average most respondents put the blame for the escalation of the conflict on Russia, it seems that putting this country in charge of solving the conflict is generally perceived as a suboptimal approach.

On the other side, Russian respondents paint a different picture: they clearly agree only with the statement that the crisis is a domestic matter and should be left to Ukraine (62%). Quite in line with this, 61% reject leaving the resolution of the conflict to Russia and rather think it should be left to Ukraine (62%). At the same time, a sizeable minority agrees with the belief that the Ukraine crisis is a conflict between Ukraine and Russia in which no third country should intervene (33%). Nonetheless, 54% of Russian respondents favour a new framework of conflict resolution.

The perspectives from other countries, not directly involved

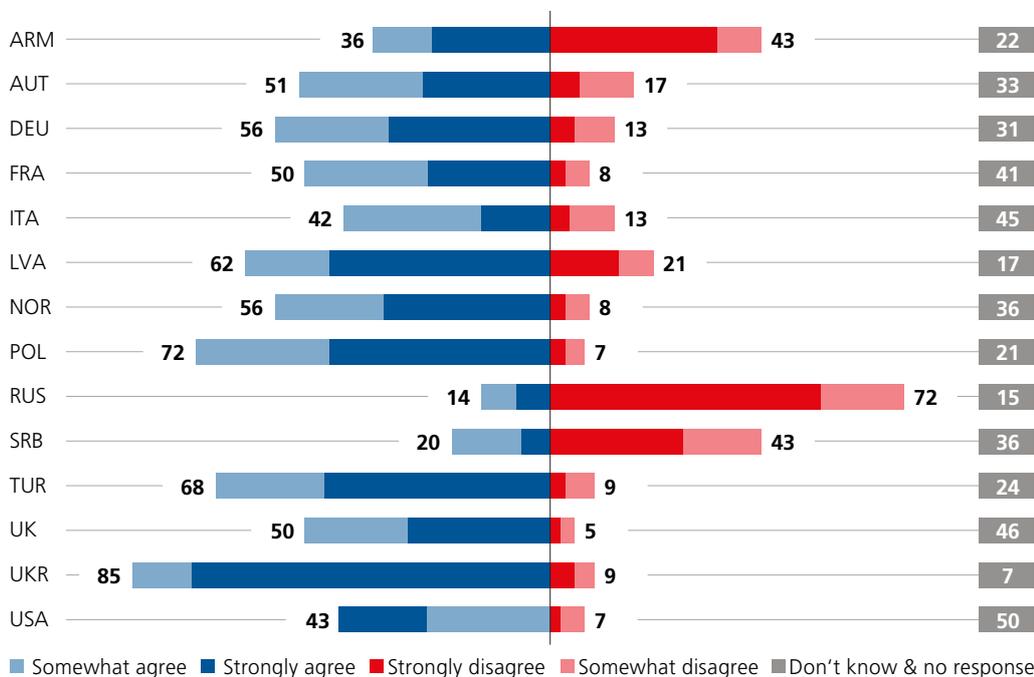
in the conflict, are rather diverse. Respondents in many countries consider the solution of the conflict a domestic matter to be resolved by Ukraine. However, significant variance can be observed concerning this proposal. While 62% of Turks and Armenians are in favour of this strategy, only 27% of Norwegians and 29% of Poles support it.

Most respondents obviously support more than one way of resolving the conflict. Therefore, in countries putting the blame on Russia, most respondents favour widening sanctions against Russia, believing this to be a way to resolve the conflict. Apart from Ukraine this view is also held in Poland (58%), Latvia (44%), Turkey (43%), Norway and France (39%).

The view of Ukrainian respondents that their country should become a member of the EU or NATO is widely accepted only in Poland, with 45% and 47%, respectively, and Latvia, with 43% and 45%. On the other side, the biggest opponents of this idea are Serbia and Russia, with 62% of Serbians and 56% of Russians disagreeing. Remarkably, there is a pronounced reluctance among the surveyed Western EU member states towards these proposals. When asked about Ukraine's potential EU membership the disapproval rates in Austria (51%), Germany and France (39% each) outweigh the advocates considerably. Only

### Crimea was illegally annexed by Russia.

All figures in %



in Italy do views differ (34% being in favour of Ukrainian EU membership).

The same applies to NATO membership for Ukraine. In all three countries the balance tilts considerably against this proposal: Austria (47% against vs 22% pro), Germany (38% vs 26%) and France (32% vs 23%). Italian opinion is split (29% in favour, 28% against).

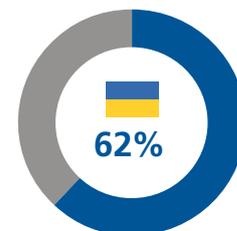
It is noteworthy that, in all polled countries bar Ukraine, large proportions do not have an opinion on Ukraine’s NATO or EU membership (30% on average). This is particularly the case for non-EU members Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, with ‘don’t know’ rates of around 40%.

### Crimea: illegal annexation or legal incorporation?

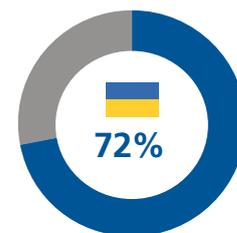
Most respondents clearly agree with the statement that Crimea was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014. This sentiment is naturally prom-

inent in Ukraine itself: 85% of Ukrainians agree with this perspective (73% strongly agree, 12% somewhat agree). In Poland (72%) and Turkey (68%) this statement is widely accepted as well. The Russian respondents hold the opposite view: 73% believe that Crimea was legally incorporated into Russia. Some 52% of Russian respondents strongly agree and 21% somewhat agree with this statement. However, the Russian respondents are not alone: 53% of Armenians and a sizable 41% of Serbians share this view.

### Ukraine should become a member of NATO.



### Ukraine should become a member of the European Union.



Note: Ukrainian respondents only

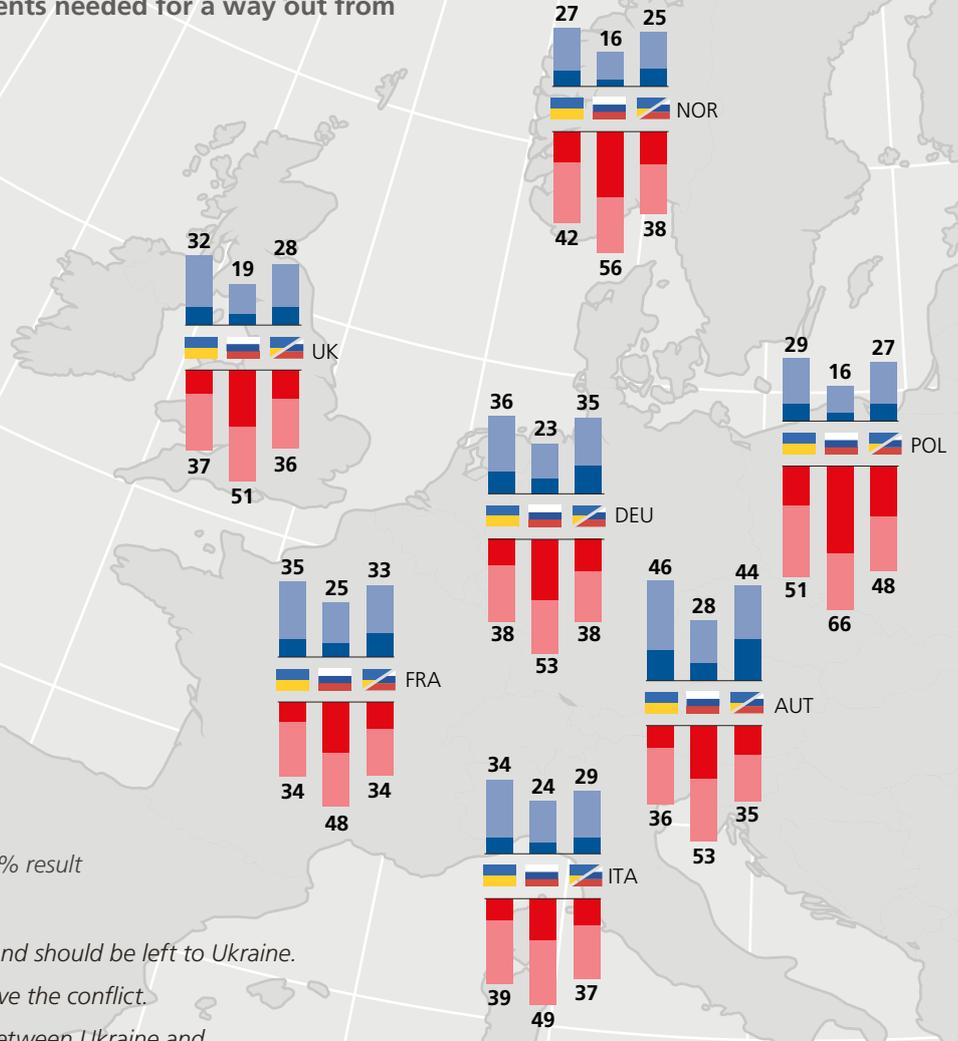
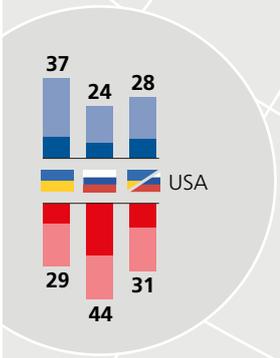
Combined responses “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree”

Around **47%** in Poland and Latvia believe that Ukraine should become a member of NATO. Respondents in Germany and France are rather opposed

Over **40%** in the United Kingdom and the United States don’t know how to answer this question

# Resolving the conflict

Here we asked our respondents about means, actors, institutions and formats for resolving the Ukraine conflict. These are important questions for the assessment of public acceptance of central elements needed for a way out from the critical status quo.



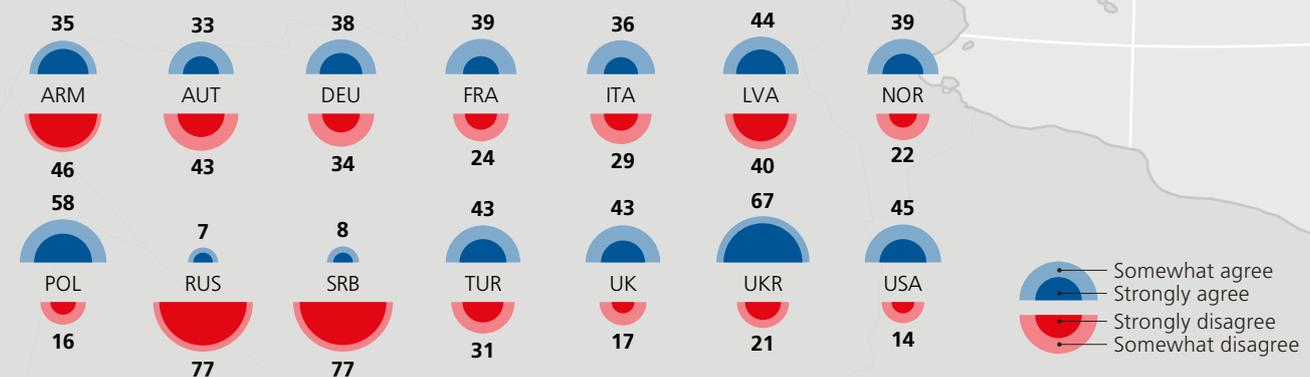
## Who should be resolving the conflict?

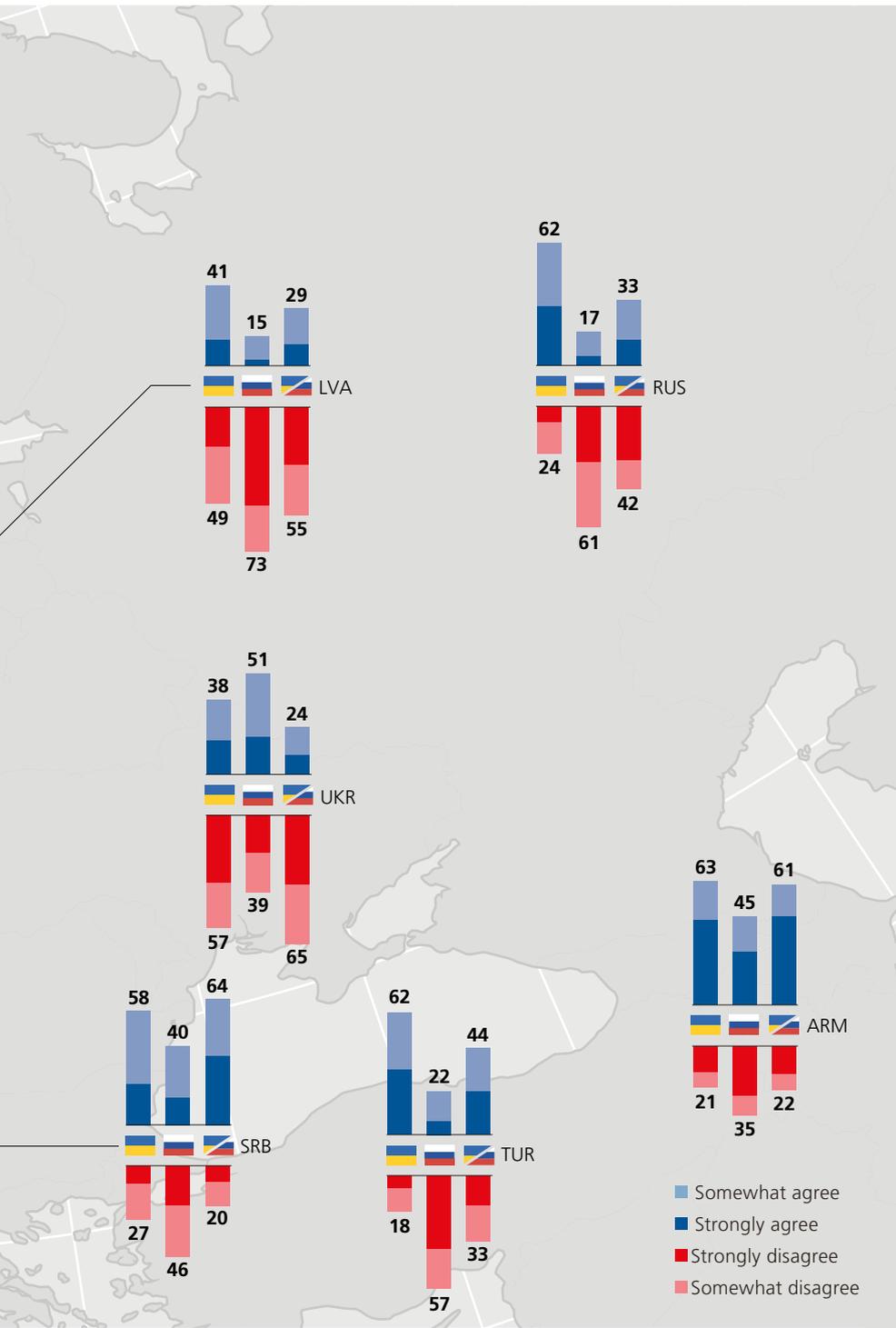
All figures in %. Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer".

- The crisis is a domestic matter and should be left to Ukraine.
- It should be left to Russia to solve the conflict.
- The Ukraine crisis is a conflict between Ukraine and Russia in which no third country should intervene.

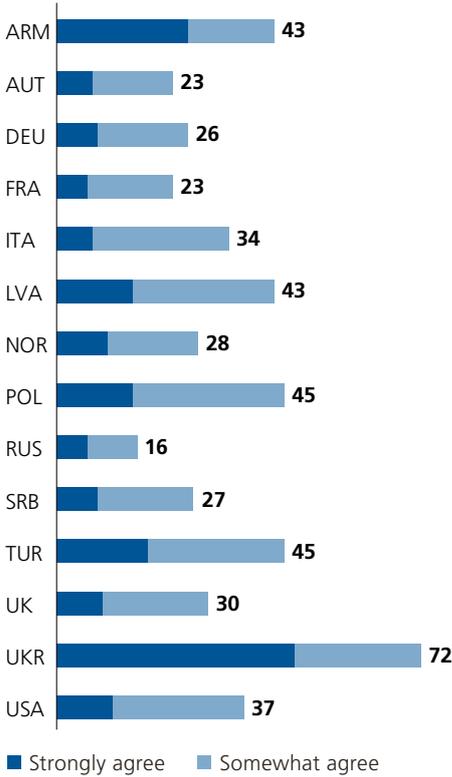
## Sanctions against Russia should be widened.

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %

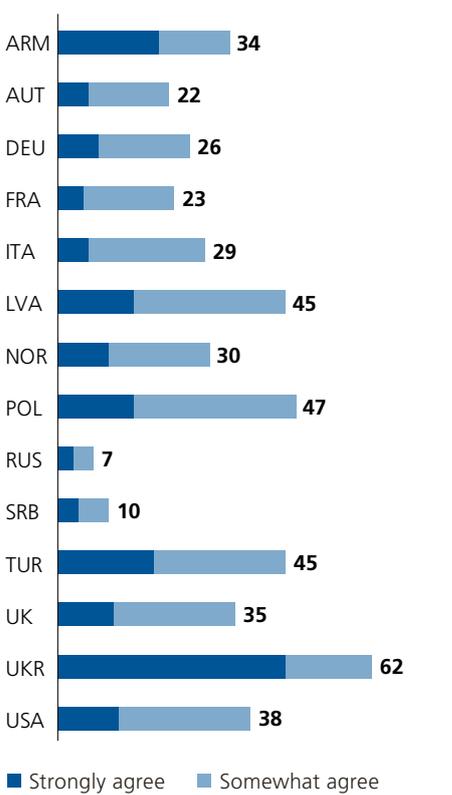




 **Ukraine should become a member of the European Union.**  
All figures in %



 **Ukraine should become a member of NATO.**  
All figures in %



**Previous efforts (e.g. Minsk agreements) have had little success. A new framework of conflict resolution should be created.**



# Relations with NATO and the United States

**65%**

*in Serbia and*

**57%**

*in Poland believe that the relationship between their country and the United States improved under the presidency of Donald Trump*

**50%**

*of Russian respondents agree that their country should collaborate more with the USA than before*

Overall, more of our respondents agree than disagree with the statement that NATO enlargement towards the Russian border poses a threat to security in Europe. However, the numbers need to be looked at specifically. Rather unsurprisingly this view is prominent in Serbia (70%), Armenia (58%) and Russia (56%). On the other hand, Ukrainians (50%), Poles and Italians (40% each) rather disagree with this statement. Respondents from Germany, France, Latvia and the United States are somewhat undecided. Finally, a sizable minority, especially in central and Western Europe and the United States, do not know whether NATO enlargement towards the East poses a threat to peace and security in Europe.

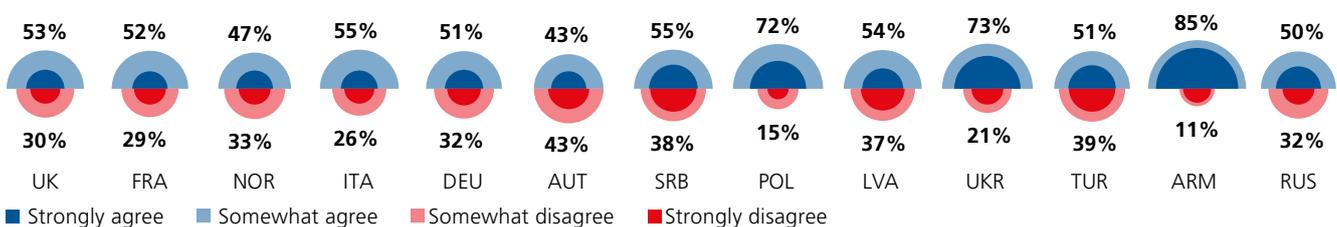
Generally, our respondents are of the opinion that relations between Europe and the United States became worse during the presidency of Donald J. Trump. Only in Poland and Serbia is there a clear majority of respondents who feel differently. Western Europe stands out: 80% of Germans, 74% of French respondents and 70% of Norwegians think their relationship with the United States developed in the wrong direction under the Trump administration. Similarly, in the United States 49% of respondents think that the relationship has worsened, although 32% of US-Americans believe they improved to some degree, indicating political polarisation there. Respondents from Ukraine, Turkey and Armenia are rather undecided on this matter.

The generally more negative assessment of the Trump years may have an effect on the considerably more positive view of President Joe Biden. However, there is an important caveat. The assessment of Biden's administration is far more polarised between countries. While in Poland, Russia, Serbia and Turkey respondents clearly perceive the transatlantic relationship as worse under Biden, all other polled countries in central and Western Europe, as well as Ukraine and Armenia see clear improvements. Our US-American respondents also rather assess the relationship as having improved under Biden, although a sizable minority of 35% believe it has worsened.

Irrespective of views on the previous or the current administration, in almost all countries a majority of respondents are in favour of their respective country intensifying cooperation with the United States. This attitude is particularly strong in Armenia (85%), Ukraine (73%) and Poland (72%). Even in Russia 50% of respondents opt for closer collaboration with the United States. Only in Norway (47%) and Austria (43%) are there only relative majorities in favour of increased cooperation with the United States. This may mean that they are already fairly satisfied with the level of transatlantic cooperation.

## My country should collaborate more with the USA than before.

*Ranked from West to East. Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"*



**What is your position on the following statements about the influence of US Presidents on the relationship between your country and the USA?**

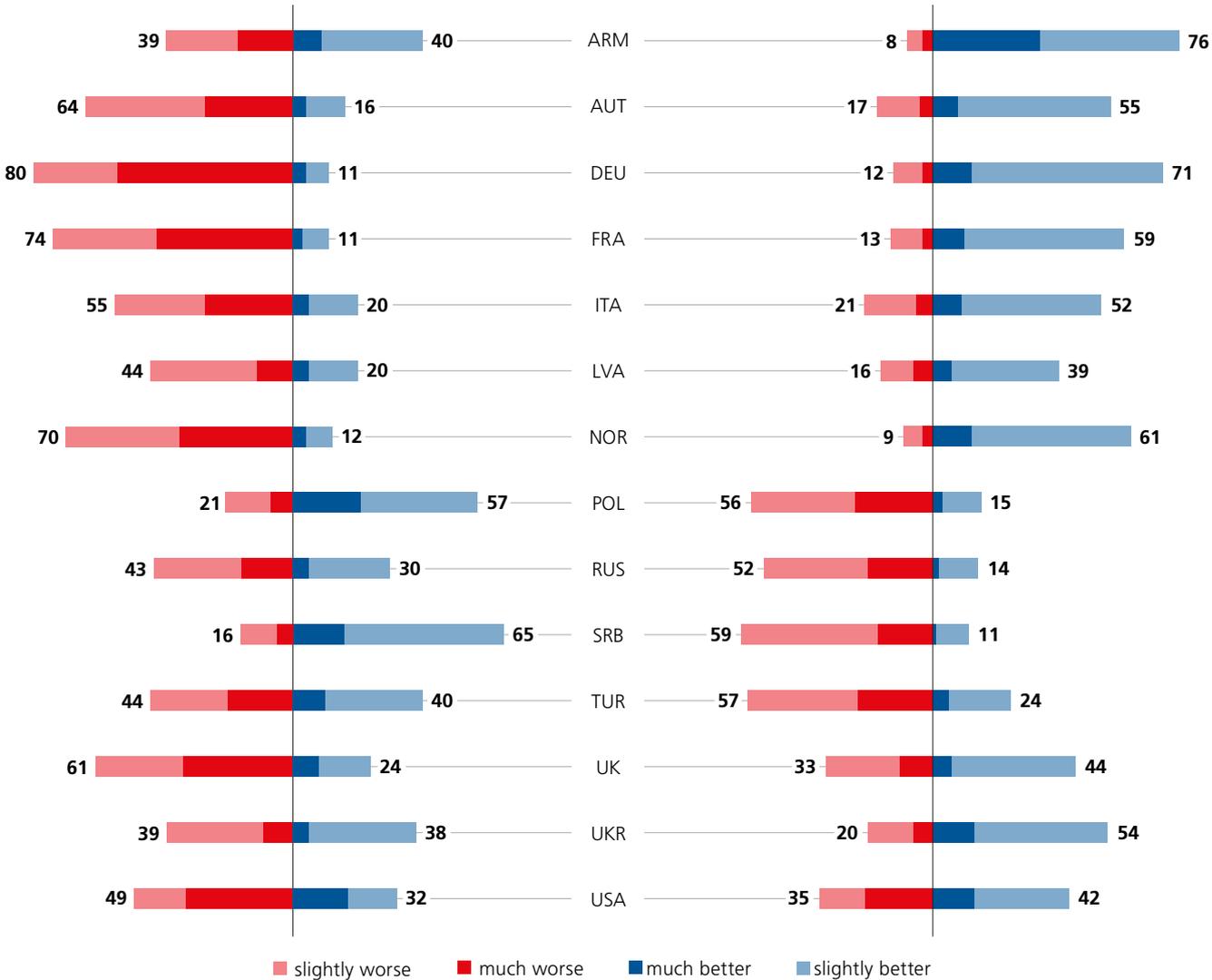
Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %



The relationship between the USA and my country during the presidency of **Donald Trump** became ...



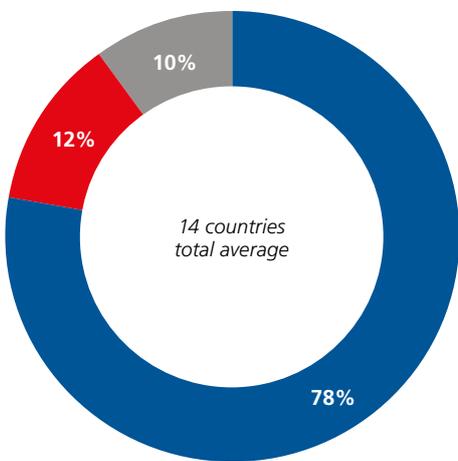
The relationship between the USA and my country during the presidency of **Joe Biden** is ...



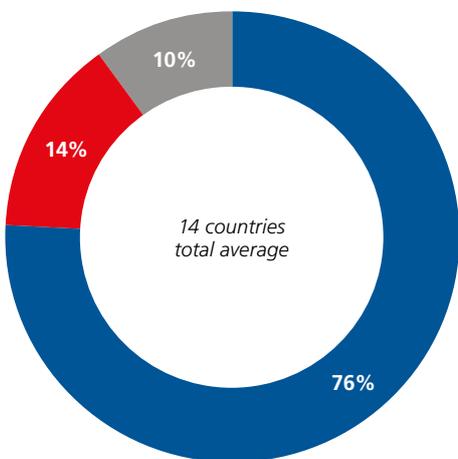
# A distant hope

Despite the rather bleak picture and the magnitude of the security challenges, the good news is that we cannot detect a tendency among our respondents to exercise violence in order to achieve security policy goals, but rather observe a considerable level of pragmatism, as was the case three years ago in the last Security Radar. This fundamental attitude is flanked by the high level of support for multi-lateral institutions. These and some other aspects give us at least a distant hope for a cooperative security structure in the OSCE area, provided that sufficient political will can be mustered to strategically balance interests and overcome the challenges described.

## Peace in Europe should be a policy priority in my country.



## My country should be committed to relieving tensions in international politics and the peaceful mitigation of conflicts.



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Don't know & no response

In all countries the vast majority of respondents agree with the statement that for their respective country peace and security in Europe should be a policy priority. The lowest approval for this idea can be found in the United States and Russia. Nevertheless, 58% of US-Americans and 59% of Russians agree with this statement. Interestingly, 19% of Russians and 18% of US-Americans do not know whether peace and security in Europe should be a priority for their country's foreign policy.

## Peaceful mitigation of conflicts

Similarly high levels of approval greet the question of whether their respective country should be committed to relieving tensions in international politics and the peaceful mitigation of conflicts. The lowest rate of approval for this statement is found again in the United States (60%), but also in the United Kingdom (67%) and Norway (68%).

When asked whether they believe that the prosperity of their country is linked to the well-being and positive development of other countries, there is general agreement among respondents in every observed country. This perspective is especially prevalent in Armenia (76%), while agreement is comparatively low in the resource-rich countries Norway (45%), Russia (49%) and the United States (54%).

Regarding which three global foreign and security policy problems should be given priority, terrorism and extremism make the top of the list. There is a high level of agreement especially in France (70% of French respondents select this topic), Russia (64%), the United Kingdom (62%), Norway (62%) and the United States (61%). Only in Armenia does this topic seem to be comparatively unimportant – only 34% agree that extremism and terrorism should be given priority.

The second topic on the list is climate change, however with a high variance between countries. It is a significantly more important topic in central and Western Europe, but only 21% of Armenians, 31% of Russians, 32% of Latvians and 36% of Ukrainians give climate change high priority. In the United States – the second largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> in the world – 44%

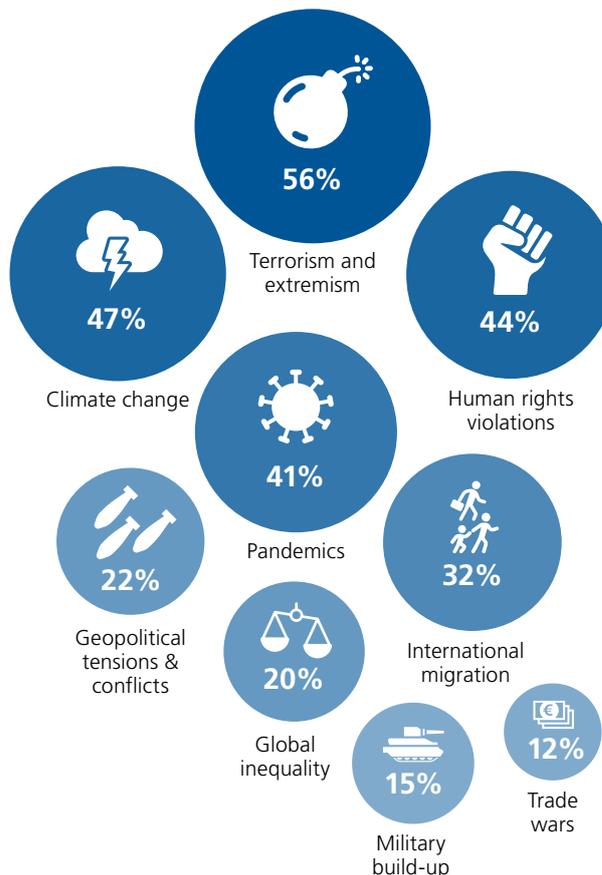
of respondents see climate change as a problem to be prioritised, making it national priority number three.

Human rights violations and pandemics are also given high priority in most countries, although the variance is smaller than with climate change. Here, the attitudes of British respondents stand out: only 33% of them regard human rights violations as a high priority, well behind Russia (40%) or Turkey (42%). Pandemics are perceived as less important in France and Poland. Despite the increase in coronavirus cases since summer 2021, only 30% of Polish and 31% of French respondents give this problem top three priority status. Taking into account the disruptions caused by the coronavirus, the importance given to pandemics is rather low, with the highest value given to it in Ukraine (53%) and the United States (50%).

International migration is a high priority in a number of countries, but is especially important in Turkey (51%) and Latvia (48%). However, in all countries sizable minorities put this topic on the list of three top priorities. Geopolitical tensions and conflicts are of comparatively high importance in Ukraine (41%) and Russia (37%), but far less important in most other countries, Poland and Armenia following with just 27%. Military build-up is of high importance in the conflict-experienced Armenia (48%) but not particularly in the other countries. Global inequalities and trade wars are not regarded as particularly important as a foreign policy problem in any of the surveyed countries.

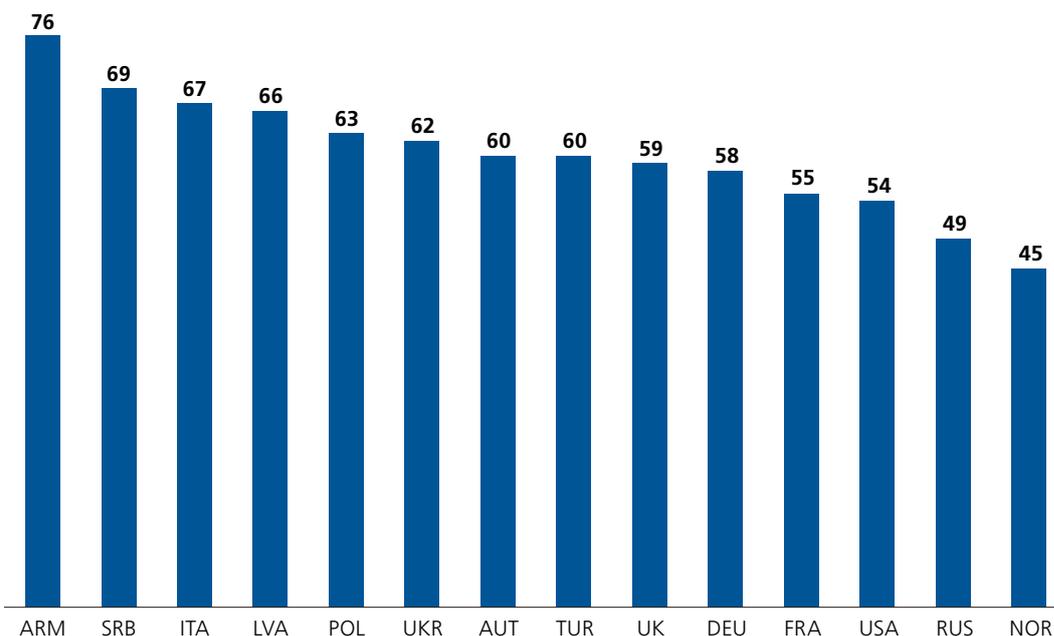
### Which of the following global foreign and security policy problems do you think should currently be given top priority?

Respondents were asked to select and rank three items out of nine



### The prosperity of my country is in many respects linked to the well-being and positive development of other countries.

Countries ranked in descending order (Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"). All figures in %



## Multilateral institutions

A clear majority in all surveyed countries are in favour of the United Nations playing a bigger role in international politics. This sentiment is particularly strong in Ukraine (79%), and comparatively weak in Germany (51%), Austria (53%) and the United States (54%).

The view that the EU should be more important is especially popular among member states Italy (67%), Latvia (64%) and France (63%), but also in Ukraine (71%), a member of the EU's Eastern Partnership programme. In contrast, although Norway has a deep and long-standing relationship with the EU, only 37% of Norwegians are of the opinion that this organisation should play a bigger role in the future. A similar rate can be observed, not surprisingly, in the United Kingdom (39%), where Brexit is still dominating the agenda.

Regarding the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe a relative majority in all countries favour this organisation playing a bigger role on the world stage. Particularly high rates of approval can be found in Ukraine (67%), which hosts an OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and whose respondents are generally supportive of international organisations. However, a high proportion of respondents in most countries do not know how the role of the OSCE should develop in the future. Quite a few respondents are not familiar with the OSCE in the first place.

The importance of NATO's future role is rather controversial. In NATO member states Poland, Norway, Latvia, the United Kingdom, Turkey, the United States and France, as well as non-member states Ukraine and Armenia, there is at least a relative majority for this organisation playing a bigger role, with particularly high rates of approval in Ukraine (65%) and Poland (59%). In neutral Austria, by contrast, there is a relative rejection and in Serbia and Russia a



### EAEU

*The Eurasian Economic Union is a customs union and trade block founded in 2015 on the basis of a 1995 agreement and comprising Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.*



### CSTO

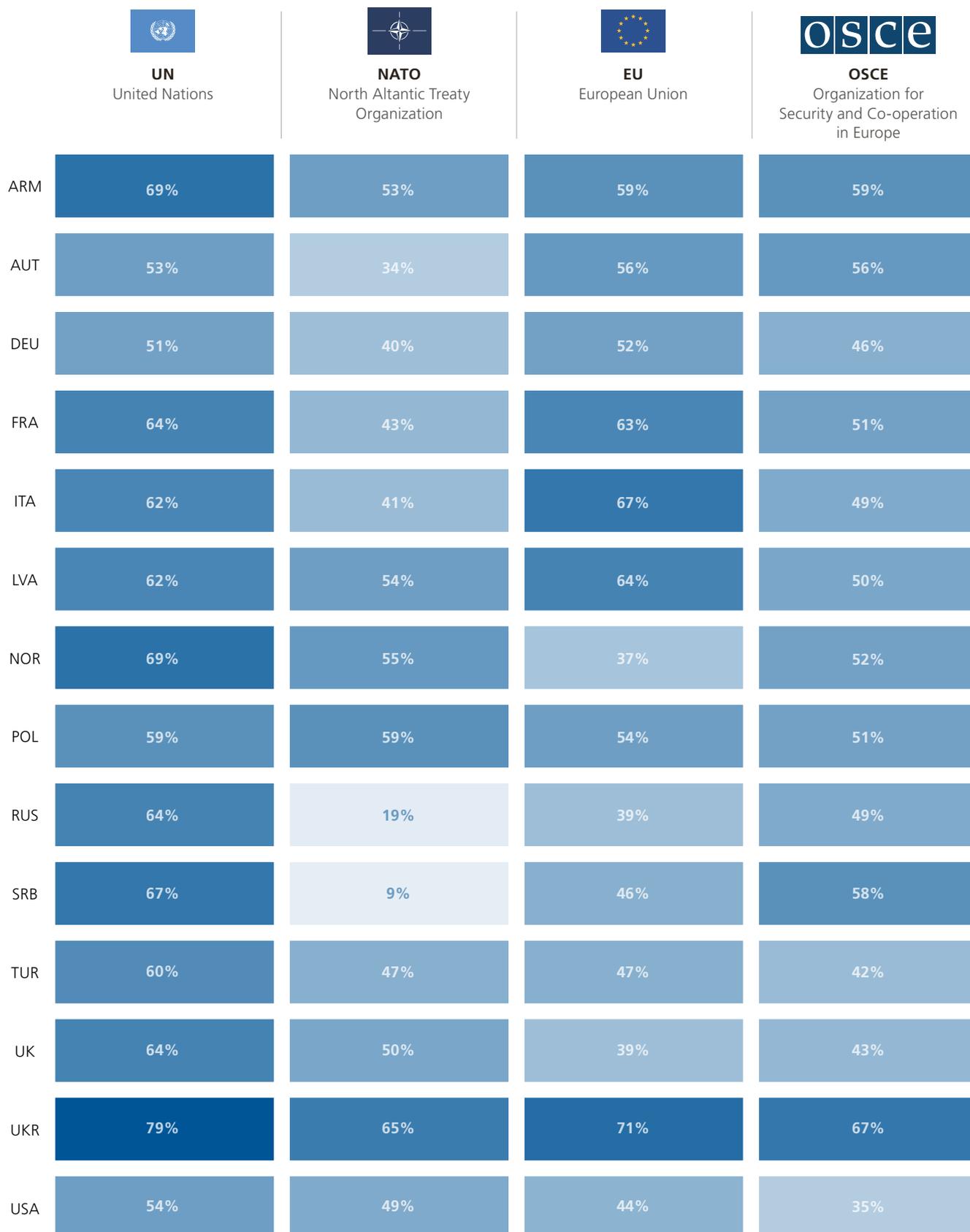
*The Collective Security Treaty Organization is a defence alliance founded in 2002 on the basis of the 1992 Collective Security Treaty. Its members are Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Most recently the organisation came into the limelight in the context of the deadly unrest in Kazakhstan in January 2022, when CSTO sent troops to Kazakhstan after being called in to stabilise the situation.*

clear rejection of this idea. Italy and Germany, although longstanding NATO members, are rather undecided on this matter.

Regarding the Eurasian Economic Union, and even more so the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, a sizable minority of respondents does not know how these organisations should develop in the future. Concerning the Eurasian Economic Union, only the two member states in the sample – Armenia (50%) and Russia (49%) – support a bigger role in the future. This idea is rather rejected or undecided in all other surveyed countries.

The question of whether the Collective Security Treaty Organization should play a bigger role is viewed relatively positively. In Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, Poland, Armenia and France at least a stable relative majority is found for this idea. Only in Germany is this proposal clearly rejected by 40% of the respondents versus 28% approving it. In the remaining countries respondents are rather undecided.

Which of these organisations should play a bigger role in the future?



Response "Yes, it should play a bigger role".

Deviations from 100% result from: "No, it should not play a bigger role", "don't know" and "no answer"

## Active foreign policy

When confronted with the question of whether their country should pursue an active foreign policy and play a significant role in solving international problems, crises and conflicts, a majority of respondents in all countries strongly or somewhat agree with this statement. Very high rates of approval can be found in Armenia (90%), Turkey (79%), Ukraine (78%) and Italy (75%). Comparatively low approval rates are found, interestingly, in the United States (51%) and also Latvia (54%).

Responses are rather mixed to the question of whether their country should take more international responsibility and help other states, even if there are no direct benefits. Clear approval of this statement can be found in Italy, Armenia, Norway, the United Kingdom and Poland. Rather opposed to this idea are Russian, Latvian, Ukrainian and US-American respondents. The remaining countries are rather undecided.

The question of whether the respective country should, if necessary, also pursue military intervention in conflicts, is polarising. While our respondents in Armenia, Turkey, France, Poland and the United States rather approve of military intervention as a means of foreign policy, Serbian, Austrian, Latvian, Italian, German, Ukrainian, Norwegian and Russian respondents are rather opposed. Especially, 73% of respondents from Serbia and 72% from Austria reject this idea. Only in the United Kingdom are respondents undecided on this issue.

The substantively related question of whether it is permitted

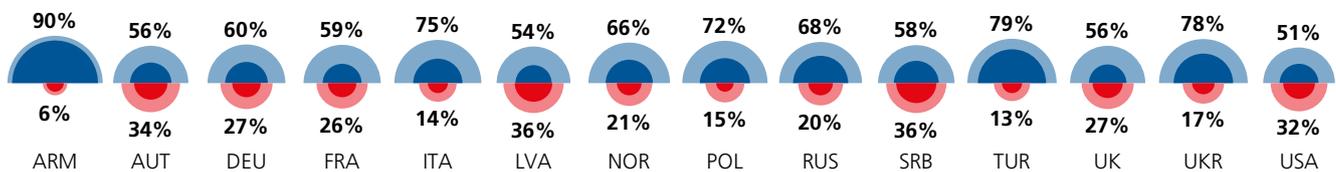
for their country to carry out military actions in other countries to ward off dangers is also polarising. While in France, the United States, Turkey, Armenia, the United Kingdom and Norway there is a clear preference for pre-emptive military measures, the remaining countries are clearly opposed. Notably, 68% of Serbians, 61% of Latvians and Ukrainians reject this idea. Also noteworthy is Germany, where respondents are rather undecided.

## Foreign policy instruments

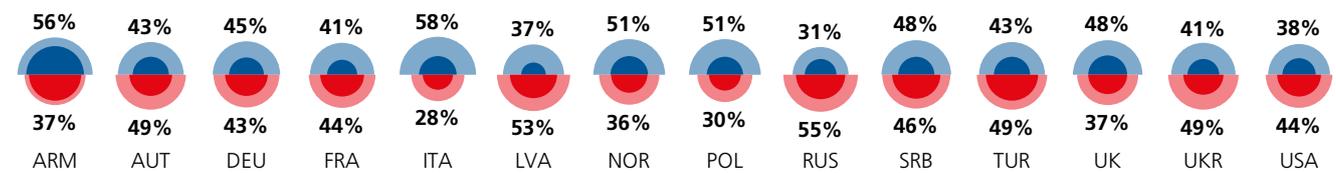
Respondents only in Turkey, Armenia, France, Ukraine and the United States consider military intervention to be an effective foreign policy instrument. However, only US-American and French respondents, two of the four surveyed permanent UN Security Council members, also perceive this instrument to be legitimate.

In contrast, diplomatic negotiations are perceived as far more effective. In all countries a majority of respondents approve of this assessment. Nevertheless, respondents in the United Kingdom, the United States and France have a comparatively low opinion of the effectiveness of diplomatic negotiations. Correspondingly, in all countries a vast majority of respondents also believe that this instrument is legitimate, albeit with a comparatively low legitimacy rating in the United States (64%).

### My country should pursue an active foreign policy and play a significant role in solving international problems, crises and conflicts.



### My country should take more international responsibility and help other states, even if there are no direct benefits for my country.



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

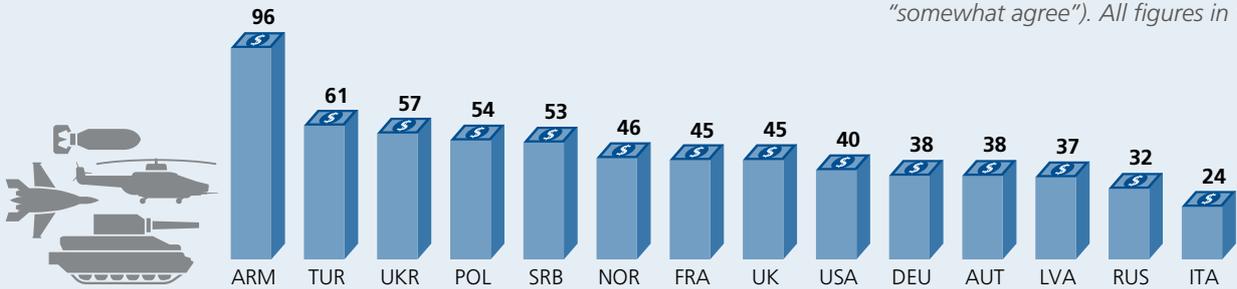
Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"

Whether national military spending should be increased is very strongly supported in Armenia: 96% of Armenians are in favour of implementing such a policy. There is clear approval also in Turkey, Ukraine, Poland and Serbia. In Norway, the United Kingdom and France respondents also rather

support such a step. In the United States respondents are undecided, which could be explained by the enormous military spending there. Rather opposed to spending more money on the national military are Italy, Latvia, Austria, Germany and, interestingly, also Russia.

**My country should increase its military spending.**

Countries ranked in descending order (Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"). All figures in %

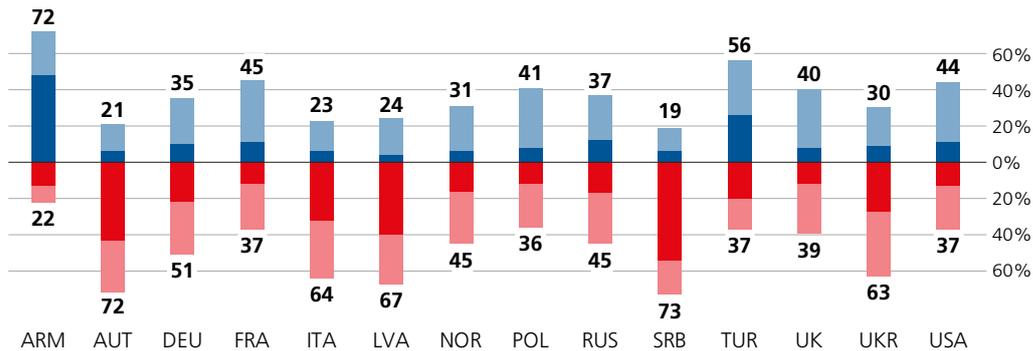


Asked about the effectiveness of economic sanctions respondents in two-thirds of the surveyed countries considered them to be rather effective, especially in Turkey (72%), Ukraine (60%) and Norway (59%). By contrast, they are perceived as rather ineffective in Serbia (60%), Russia (57%) and Latvia (51%). Respondents in the United Kingdom and Italy are undecided on

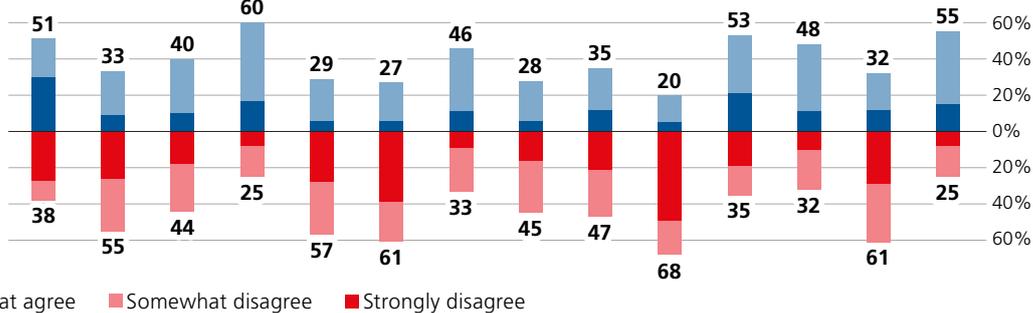
this. Regarding the question of whether economic sanctions are legitimate, only Serbian (67%) and Russian (46%) respondents perceive them rather as illegitimate than legitimate. Particularly high ratings of the legitimacy of economic sanctions can be found in Ukraine (69%) and Germany (66%).

**My country should, if necessary, also pursue military intervention in conflicts.**

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"



**To ward off dangers to my country it is permitted to carry out military actions in other countries.**



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

## Interest or value driven foreign policy

In all countries at least a relative majority of respondents are in favour of their country following its own national interests when it comes to foreign policy. This sentiment is especially strong in countries currently struggling politically or economically. Ukraine (88%), Turkey (86%) and Armenia (85%) have the highest levels of approval, while comparatively low rates can be identified in Poland (41%), Norway (46%) and the United States (47%).

However, when asked whether their country should enforce values even if it poses disadvantages for it, our respondents still rather approve of this foreign policy direction, although to a lesser degree. In Armenia, France, Italy, Latvia, Turkey and Norway, there is a clear majority for a value driven foreign policy, while respondents from Austria, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom only rather approve of this approach.

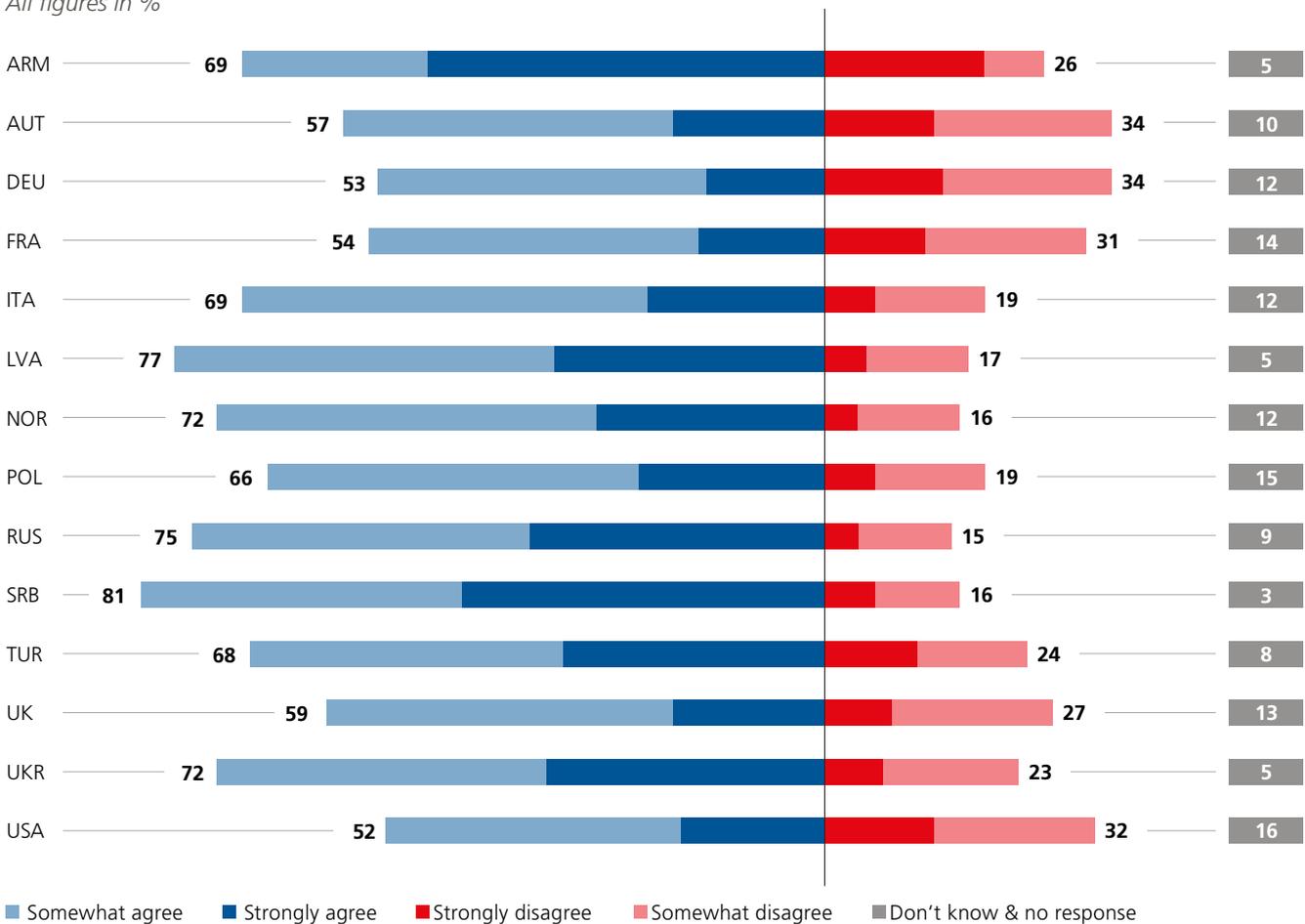
Poland is undecided. Strong disapproval is observed in Ukraine and Serbia, while Russian respondents rather disapprove.

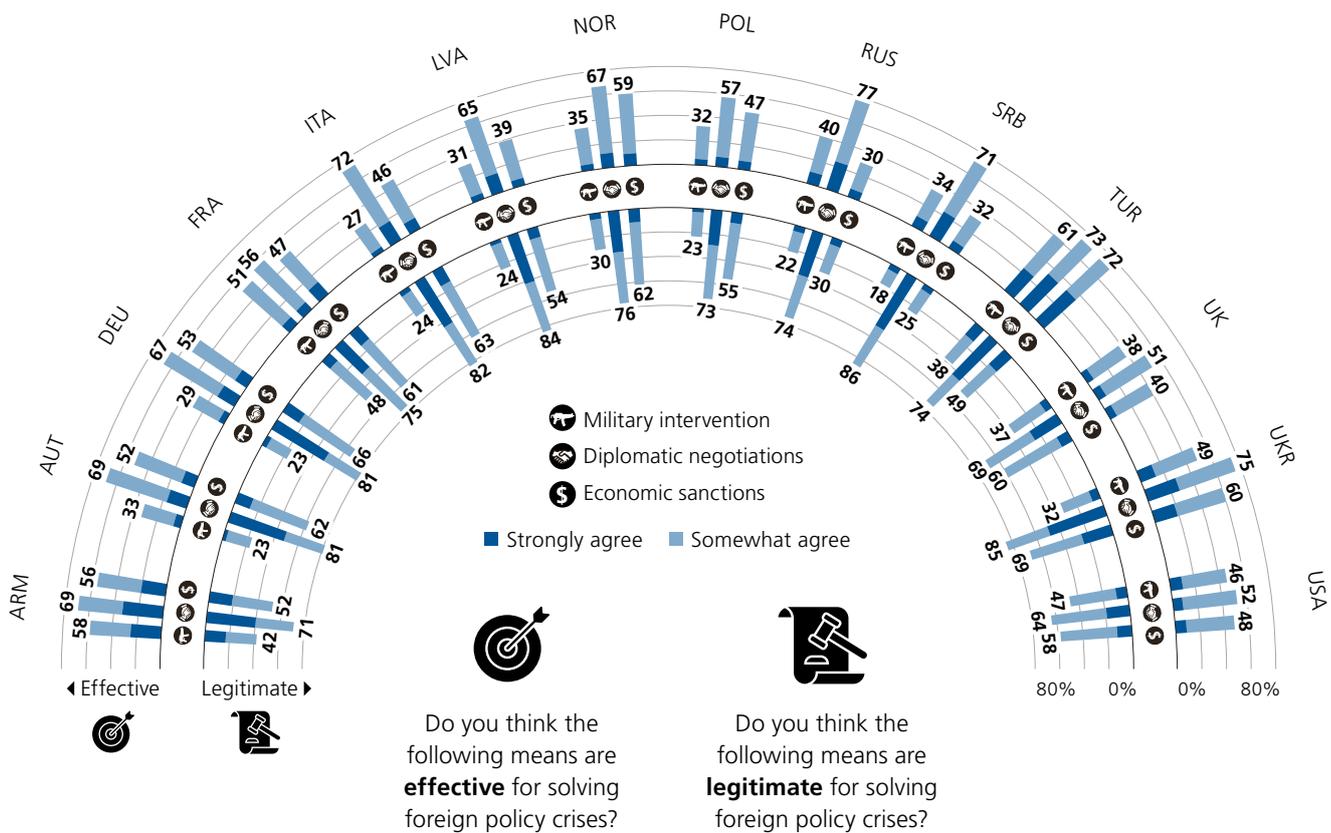
In conclusion, respondents do not seem to believe that value-driven and interest-based foreign policy approaches mutually exclude each other, which implies a certain degree of pragmatism.

A similarly pragmatic approach can also be found among respondents regarding whether their country should, for the purpose of peace and security in the world, cooperate with other countries, even those that do not share its values. Respondents answered a clear 'yes', with especially high approval rates in Serbia (81%) and Latvia (77%). Comparatively low approval is observed in France (54%), Germany (53%) and the United States (52%).

### My country should cooperate with every country, even those that do not share our values, if it promotes peace and security in the world.

All figures in %

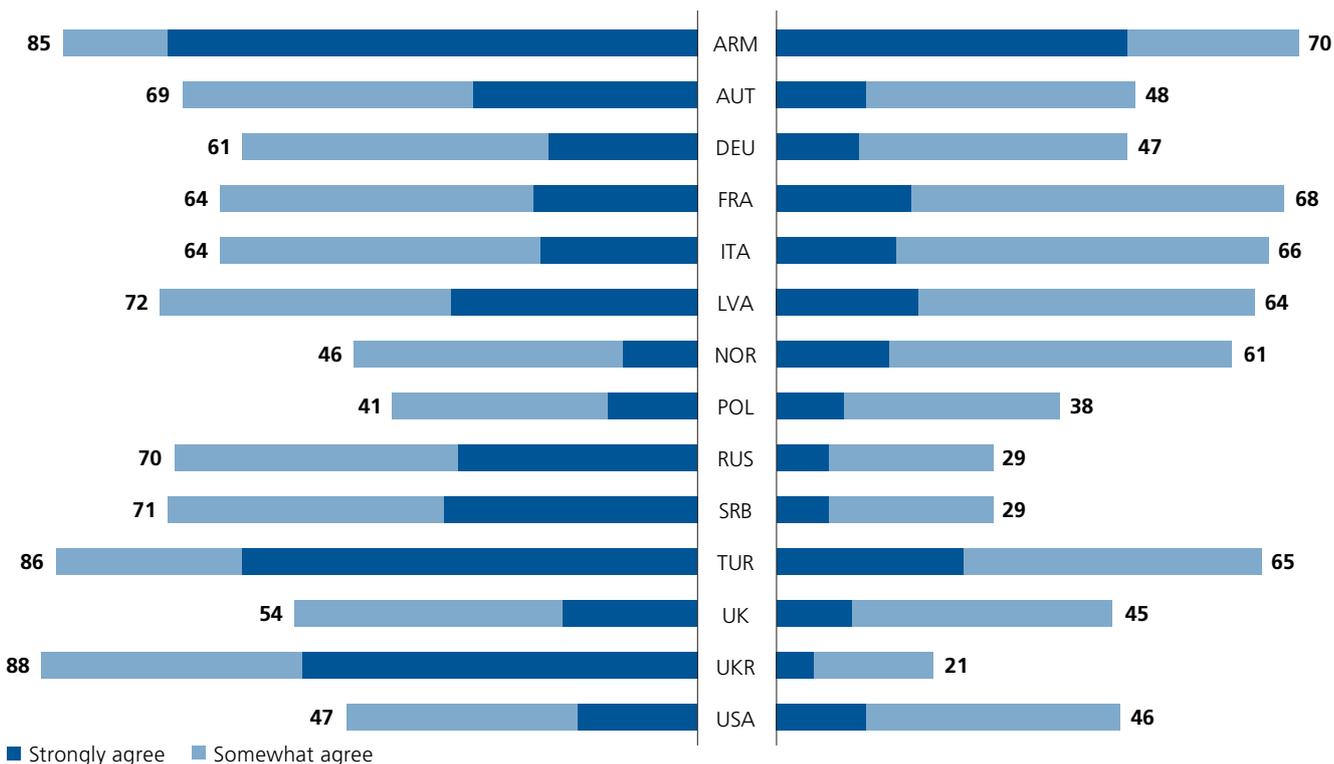




All figures in %

The foreign policy in my country should represent its own interests without restrictions.

Foreign policy should enforce values, even if this poses disadvantages.







## COUNTRY PROFILES

Armenia  
Austria  
France  
Germany  
Italy  
Latvia  
Norway  
Poland  
Russia  
Serbia  
Turkey  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom  
United States

# Armenia

[Nervous and resolute]

Armenia stands at a crossroads between East and West. As a former member of the Soviet Union, the country continues to be an important partner of Russia. At the same time, Armenia is also cooperating closely with the European Union. A series of peaceful protests culminated in a ‘velvet revolution’ in 2018, widely hailed as a democratic breakthrough at the time. One of the main foreign policy issues facing Armenia since the 1980s is the unresolved dispute with neighbouring Azerbaijan over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. In September 2020, this conflict erupted into a full-fledged war, in which Turkey heavily supported Azerbaijan. The result was a defeat and territorial losses for the Armenian side, and the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces in the region.

## Self-perception

The Armenian population is still processing the outcome of the war that erupted over Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020. Some 85% of respondents agree (73% of them strongly) that parts of neighbouring countries properly belong to Armenia – the highest proportion by far among the countries surveyed. This may reflect the sentiment about Nagorno-Karabakh (whose status is contested), but may also refer to other territories. Another 84% of Armenians are convinced that other countries are actively preventing their country from achieving true greatness, while 72% think that their country does not have the status it deserves. However, 76% agree that Armenia’s prosperity is tied to the well-being of other countries.

### Status in the world



*“In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries.”*

The Armenian respondents express strong concern about wars and conflicts (83%), economic crises (60%), and the coronavirus pandemic (58%). Internationally, they perceive human rights violations, military build-up, and terrorism and extremism as the top three global security problems. Global inequality, international migration and trade wars are seen as less urgent issues.

The majority of Armenians identify the coronavirus pandemic as a challenge to global peace and security but believe that other countries will show solidarity and help them fight the virus (46% strongly agree, the highest number in the poll). Armenia also ranked second-highest – after Ukraine (58%) – in terms of satisfaction with the management of the pandemic at international level (41%).

Some 71% of Armenians strongly agree that Armenian foreign policy should represent the country’s own interests without restriction. Almost half of the respondents also assert that they would expect foreign policy to enforce values despite possible disadvantages. Armenian national identity is seen as in need of protection, with 94% agreeing that the country has a unique culture.

## Perception of European security

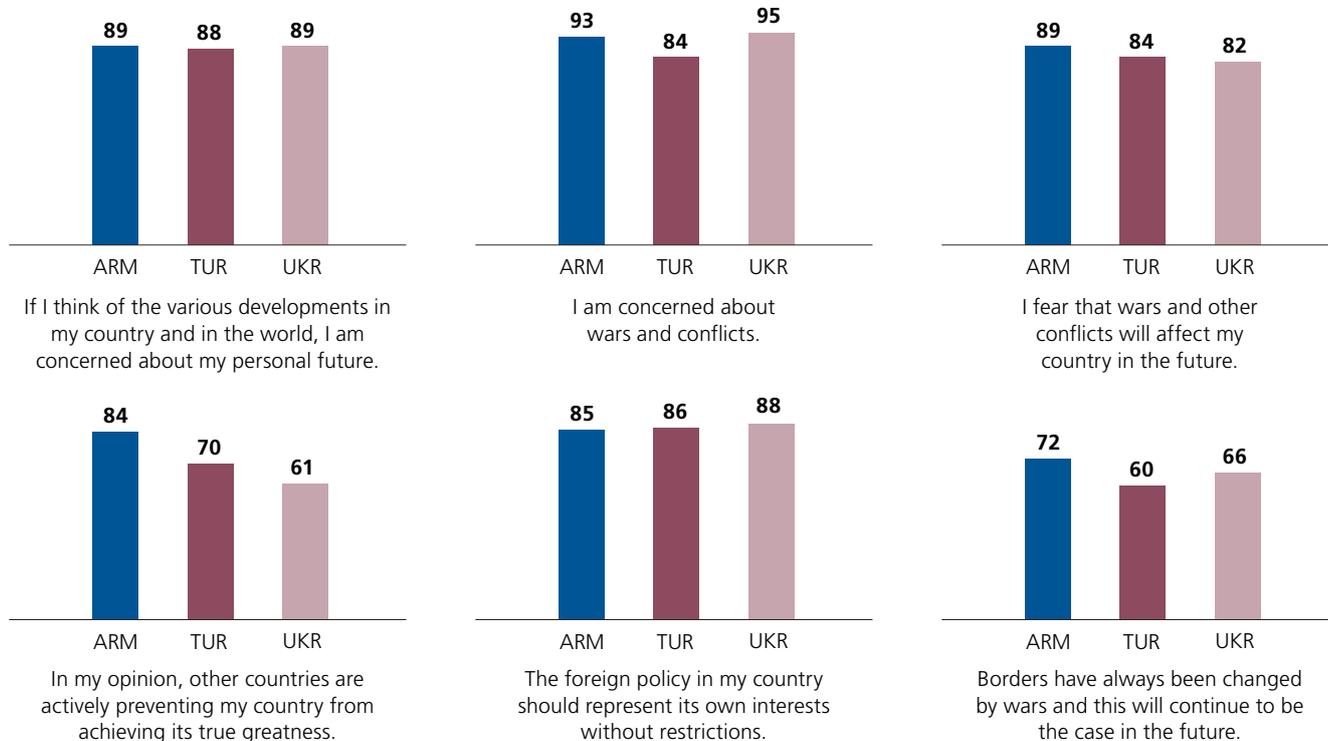
Having just experienced the war over Nagorno-Karabakh, many Armenians are worried that wars and other conflicts will also affect their country in the future (89%, 66% of whom strongly agree). Similar to Turkey and Ukraine, new wars in Europe as a result of increasing tensions between Russia and the West are seen as likely by 59% of Armenians. An even bigger concern, however, seems to be the dissemination of misinformation (66%, compared with only 27% on average).

The threat arising from the growing division between an assertive Russia and the West is also voiced by experts. In addition, they see a threat in the creation of regional spheres of national interest by non-Western powers and the rise of illiberal democracies in Europe. They express concern that Armenia, and especially Nagorno-Karabakh, could become a geopolitical fault-line of rivalry between Turkey and Russia if Western actors retreat or allow themselves to be squeezed out of the region.

When asked about countries that might pose a threat to peace and security in Europe, respondents regard Russia, Armenia’s traditional ally, as less of a threat (41% of respondents agreeing, compared with an average 50%). The experts explain this by the fact that Armenia is currently firmly in the Russian orbit, both economically, as a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, and militarily, with Russia’s role as peacekeeper in the country and in Nagorno-Karabakh. China, too, is not con-

### Comparison of perceptions in Armenia, Turkey and Ukraine

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree". All figures in %



sidered threatening: 42% of Armenians strongly disagree that China is a threat, second only to Serbia.

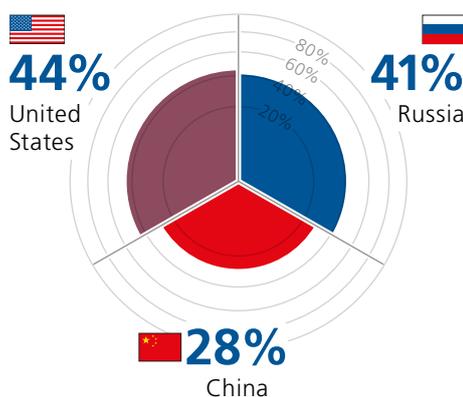
A total of 51% of Armenians worry that a direct military confrontation between Russia and the West is likely, the highest number among the countries surveyed. A third are convinced that resolving the conflict in Ukraine is a prerequisite for improving security in Europe.

Compared with other countries in the survey, Armenia is among the most concerned about the enlargement of NATO (58%) and the EU (46%) towards the Russian border. Similar to Serbia and Russia, more than a quarter of the population would like the EU to develop a security policy independent of NATO.

### The way forward

When asked about the future, Armenians seem to be cautiously optimistic: more than half be-

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



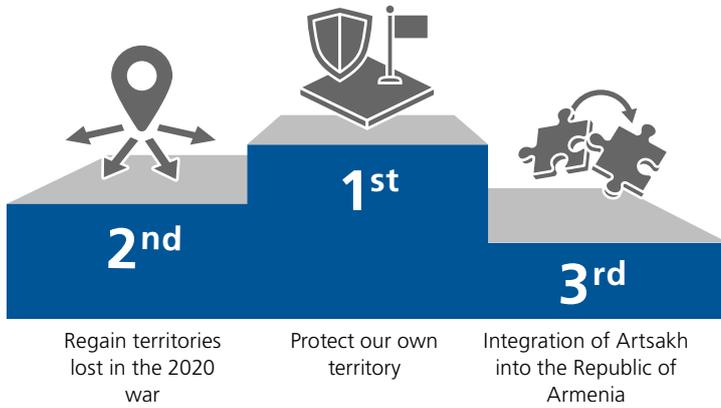
lieve that peace and security in Armenia will improve, and more than a third are convinced that the same is true for Europe and the world in general. According to Armenians, both the EU and the OSCE should play a bigger role internationally (59%). The latter is already involved in

**94%**  
of Armenians believe that Armenia has a unique culture

*"Armenia is currently firmly in the Russian orbit, both economically and militarily"*

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.



the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through the efforts of the OSCE's Minsk group. The experts criticised the group's role in the peace process as being too shallow and ineffective. Renewed efforts by the Minsk group would be welcomed, as the format continues to offer a unique option for dialogue. However, they urged the forum to engage more with civil society actors to ensure ultimate success.

The Armenian population is adamant that their country should play a more prominent role internationally. An overwhelming majority of 90% agree that Armenia should pursue an active foreign policy. Military interventions are seen as an effective means of resolving policy crises by 58% of Armenians, the second highest number after Turkey (61%). However, on the legitimacy of military interventions the opinion in Armenia is split: 42% think they are legitimate, 42% disagree. Similar to Ukraine, 73% want their country to take a clear stand in favour of one side or the other in political conflicts abroad.

One year after the ceasefire, Armenians seem determined to increase their military spending: a whopping 96% of Armenians see this as a necessary step. This is by far the highest number among all the countries surveyed and is also reflected in the answer given about the most important foreign policy objective: 81% of respondents name the protection of Armenia's own territory as the top priority.

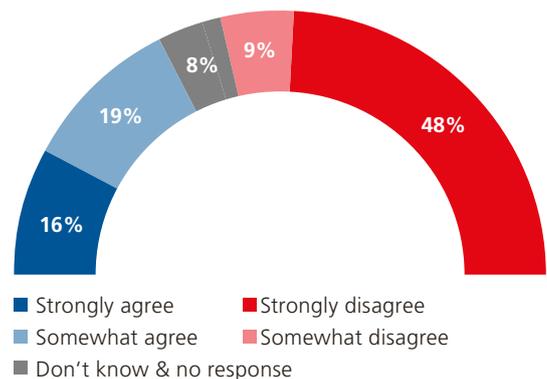
The experts agree that Armenia needs a strong army to secure its interests and sovereignty. Because

*Both the respondents and experts want a strong army to secure Armenia's interests and sovereignty*

this is expensive, it can be accomplished only by a legitimate government and strong institutions. However, hard power is not seen as the only way forward for Armenians: as many as 86% agree that they should also be committed to the peaceful mitigation of conflicts and diplomatic solutions – the highest number among all polled countries. This is also voiced by the experts, who recommend that Armenia return to diplomacy in relation to the future of Nagorno-Karabakh and therefore the region. They believe that the aforementioned OSCE Minsk group could be an important platform in that regard.

When asked about the countries or regions with which the country should cooperate more, 86% of Armenians name China, followed by the USA (85%), the EU (85%), and Russia (76%). The experts, however, stress that Armenia should also look for potential allies in their neighbourhood, such as Iran and Georgia, and seek to re-establish diplomatic ties with Turkey. In contrast, the Armenian population takes a critical view of deeper cooperation with Turkey, with almost half of the respondents strongly disagreeing with a normalisation of relations with this particular neighbour.

**Armenia should normalise relations with Turkey, resume diplomatic relations and encourage an opening of the border.**



# Austria

[Neutral and self-centred]

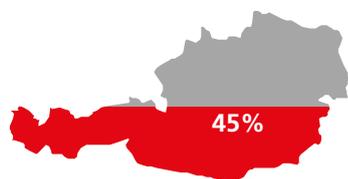
Austria's approach to international politics is strongly shaped by its neutrality, which was initially imposed from outside and declared shortly after the founding of the Second Austrian Republic in 1955. Neutrality is an important element of Austria's identity and was the reason for the country's late accession to the European Union, as neutrality and EU membership were deemed incompatible. As one of the four UN headquarters and the seat of the OSCE and OPEC, Vienna is a diplomatic capital. In recent decades, the small country has repeatedly acted as a mediation platform between different parties, most notably the Iran nuclear deal negotiations, the peace talks on Syria and the nuclear arms reduction treaty New START between the United States and Russia.

## Self-perception

Austrians seem to feel remarkably safe: only 36% worry that their country may be affected by wars and conflicts, by far the lowest share in the entire poll. Thinking about their personal future, Austrians are far less concerned than people elsewhere (58%, almost on a par with Germany).

Oddly, Austrian opinions on the status of their country are evenly split: 44% are satisfied with it, while 45% are not.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

The other 13 countries polled had a clearer opinion. Just like their EU peers, Austrians perceive their country as interconnected, its prosperity depending on the development of other countries (60%). At the same time, they are most concerned among the EU countries surveyed that the EU is in regular conflict with the interests of their own country (46%). Elderly people and people with low or medium levels of education perceive this conflict of interest.

One of the main worries of Austrians is uncontrolled immigration (68% are worried); among EU members polled, only Latvians worry more about this. The top three foreign policy preferences of Austrian society are related to this concern: regulation of migration (51%), continuation of Austria's neutrality policy (44%) and protection of its territory (40%). Linked to these priorities, which are closely linked to domestic politics, it is hardly surprising that 69% of Austrians think that its foreign policy should represent its own interests without restriction, which is the highest share among the EU countries investigated.

In addition, the experts identified EU enlargement and the special historical and geographical nexus between Austria and the Western Balkan countries as crucial policy areas.

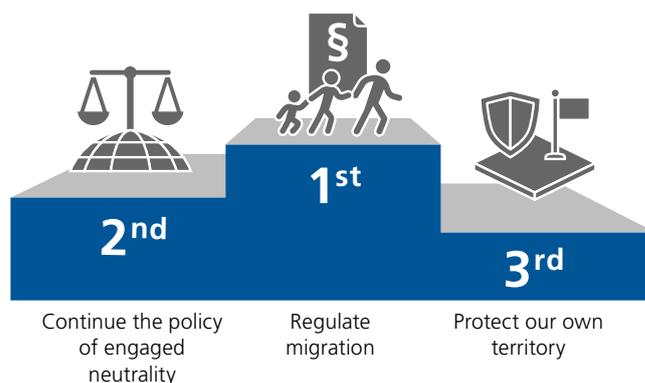
Regarding the EU's pandemic management, Austrians were slightly more dissatisfied (57%) than the average (51%). In EU comparison, Austrians assessed the solidarity among states during the pandemic critically: 41% of Austrians think that countries were able to rely on the help of others, compared with 58% in Italy, the highest value in the EU.

## Perception of European security

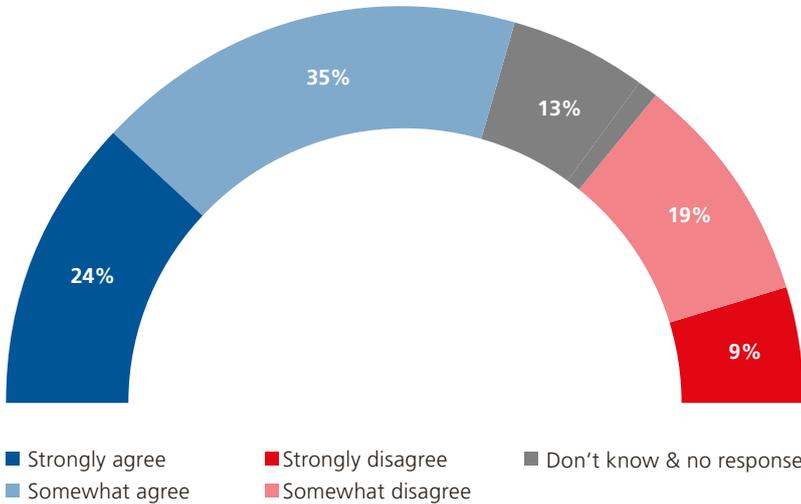
Austrian respondents are slightly more sceptical than others concerning strengthening collaboration with Russia: 49% disapprove of it. In general, Austrians stand out as the most sceptical within the EU concerning stronger cooperation with other big geopolitical actors. Russia, followed by China, is viewed as a threat to peace and security in Europe (45% and 41%, respectively). At the same time, as many as 59% of Austrians think

### Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\*

\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.



**Austria should do its best to help reduce tensions between Russia and the West.**



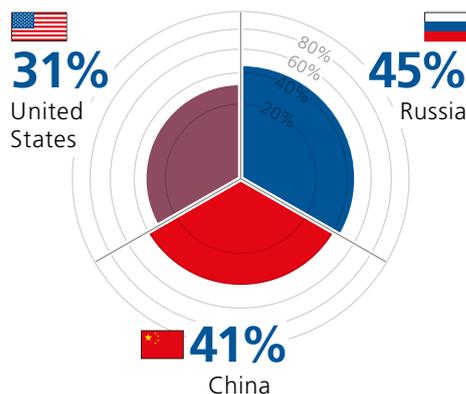
*Austrians feel remarkably safe*

*Regulation of migration is the number one foreign policy preference*

that their country should engage in easing relations between East and West.

The experts acknowledged European responsibility for the conflict in Ukraine, even though Russia was seen as responsible for the military escalation. Ukraine was cited as an example of failed neighbourhood policy on the part of the EU, which cannot automatically expect convergence with neighbouring states despite different values.

**Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?**



**The way forward**

Linked to the concept of neutrality, Austrian respondents stand out as wishing to be impartial. Only a small minority (21%) approve of military intervention abroad in case of conflict – by far the lowest figure in the poll. More strongly than most other countries, Austrians reject military intervention to resolve foreign policy crises and rather opt for diplomatic negotiations or economic sanctions. Furthermore, Austrians are more sceptical about the pursuit of an active foreign policy and playing a role in solving international problems compared with other Western European states: only 56% want it. By contrast, the experts interpreted Austria’s concept of neutrality as ‘engaged neutrality’, which allows Austria to take an active stance in EU foreign and security policy. Unlike most other respondents, Austrians are split on taking sides: in case of a political conflict abroad, 44% want to take a clear stand in favour of one side and 45% do not.

Not being part of NATO, Austria is more in favour of the EU becoming increasingly (19%) or completely (16%) independent of NATO than all other polled EU and also NATO members. Taken together, however, almost half of Austrians seem quite satisfied with the status quo of EU-NATO relations or think the cooperation should be deepened. This means that even in Austria the idea of EU strategic autonomy is not widely supported. In a similar vein, the experts expressed worry about the EU’s limited influence on the geopolitical stage and in major conflicts. The experts called for more foreign policy competences to be given to the EU institutions to counter this deficiency. At the same time, they regard the implementation of EU strategic autonomy as barely feasible. Scepticism that the EU would be able to become a well-established foreign policy actor is also shared by the public, which is lukewarm about building up a European army: opinions in Austria are almost evenly split, with 42% in favour and 44% against.

Most Austrian respondents (61%) do not think that the increasing tensions between Russia and the West will lead to new wars in Europe –

the most relaxed attitude of all polled countries. Yet Austrians are very pessimistic about peace and security in general: 41% think that peace and security will deteriorate in their country, 56% think that the situation in Europe will deteriorate. Only France is more pessimistic in this regard.

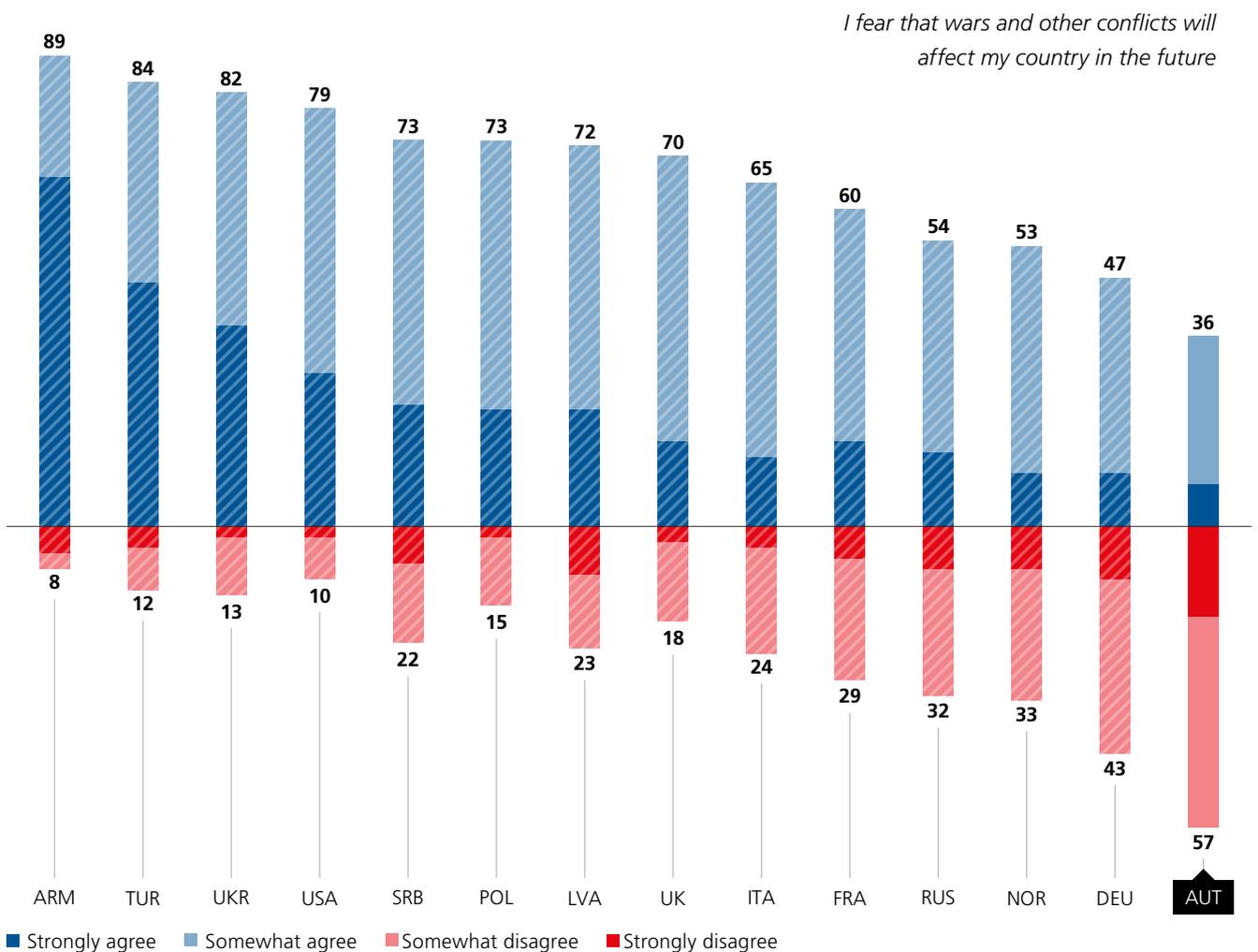
As a host country of several international organisations, it comes as no surprise that Austrians

would like a bigger role for the EU (56%), the OSCE (56%) and the UN (53%). More Austrians are familiar with the OSCE (89%) than their EU peers, given that Vienna houses the headquarters of this institution. The experts identified the EU as the most important institution for Austria and viewed it as a suitable platform for dealing with big powers such as China and Russia.

*Even in Austria the idea of **EU strategic autonomy** is not widely supported*

### Concern about wars and conflicts

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %



# France

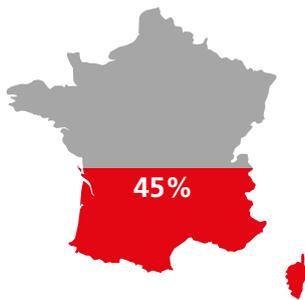
[Confident and active]

France, a nuclear power with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, has a long history as a military and colonial power. Together with Germany, France is considered to be the main driver of the European Union. Under President Emmanuel Macron, France has been actively advancing the EU as a geopolitical actor, with aspirations to establish it on the same footing with the United States, China or Russia.

## Self-perception

Among the Western nations in the survey, French respondents stand out as being dissatisfied with its status (45%). A substantial proportion of 40% even thinks that other countries strive to prevent France from achieving true greatness.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Recalling the number of terrorist attacks France has experienced in recent years, it is not surprising that French respondents are most concerned about international terrorism (82%), much more than their EU peers. However, they are equally worried by climate change. Terrorism and extremism is identified as the prime global security problem by 70% of respondents – by far the highest number in the poll. When asked about the top three priorities for French foreign policy, French respondents point to the protection of French territory (51%), the regulation of migration (47%) and the assertion of French economic interests (44%).

Although most French people (63%) view pandemics as a challenge to global peace and security, they do not identify them as a crucial global problem (only 31% think so, the lowest along with Poland). The French are also most pessimistic in terms of future cooperation in the aftermath of the pandemic (only 27% think it will increase, again similar to Poland).

French respondents distrust civilian institutions and put most confidence in the military (80%). Only 23% trust the media – as few as in Russia – and only 24% consider media reporting factual and objective, compared with 47% in neighbouring Germany. At the same time, compared with their EU peers,

French respondents are most concerned about dissemination of misinformation and cyber-attacks against public institutions (78%).

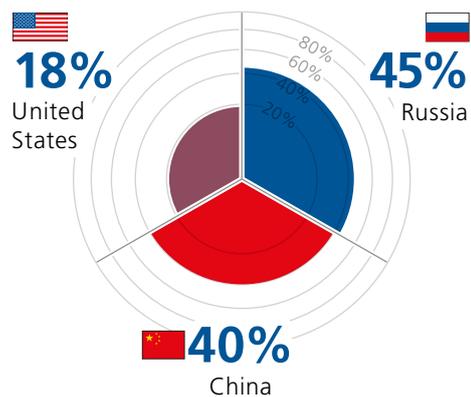
## Perception of European security

France has a long history as a military power and is still a large-scale provider of troops for UN-mandated missions in Mali, Central Africa and Lebanon. Perhaps because of that, French respondents have a markedly positive attitude towards the military and military intervention.

French respondents stand out in their belief that military actions in other countries are an accepted means of warding off dangers to their country (60%), compared with a survey average of only 40%. In general, nearly half of French respondents (45%) are open to pursuing military intervention in conflicts, in contrast to only 19% in Serbia, the most sceptical country surveyed.

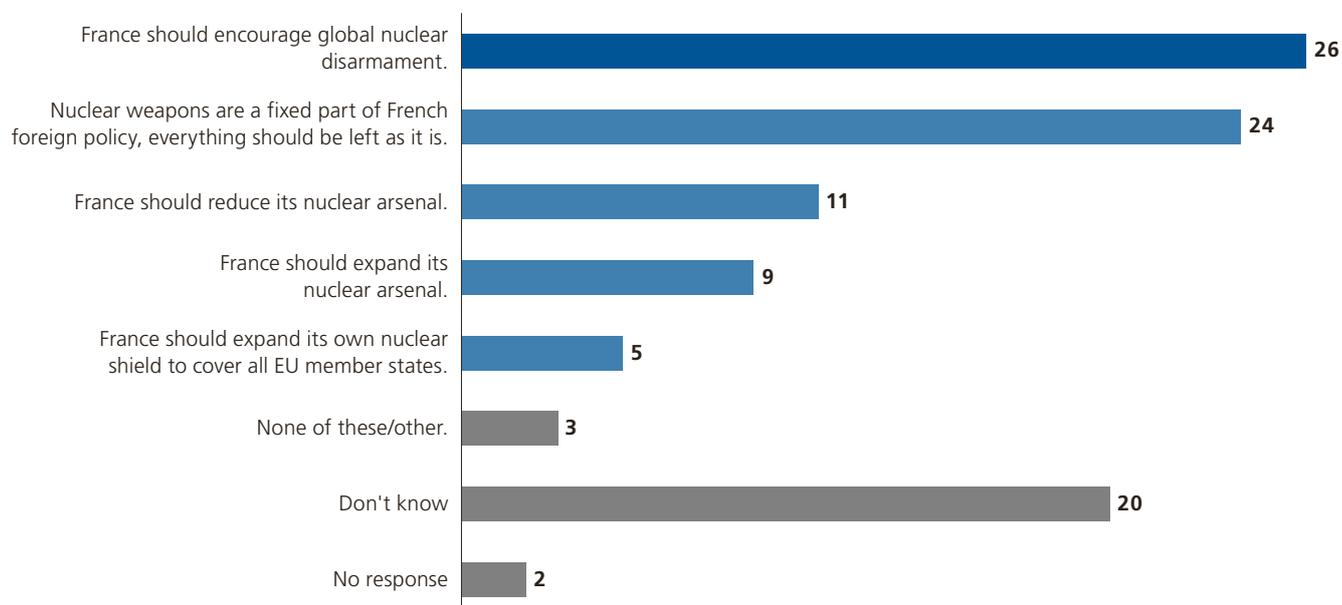
Half of French respondents consider military intervention to be effective – compared with an average of 40% – and slightly more (56%) have faith in diplomatic negotiations as a conflict resolution instrument, compared with 72% in Italy, who are the

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



## When you think of the French nuclear arsenal, what would you like to see happen here in the future?

All figures in %



### The way forward

most positive in the EU about diplomatic negotiations. At the same time, a value-based foreign policy is important for the French: 68% favour enforcing values, even if this may cause disadvantages, by far the highest share among the polled EU and NATO countries.

Fewer French respondents than in most polled EU and NATO members perceive Russia as a threat (45% agree, 37% disagree). On China, opinion is somewhat split (40% perceive it as a threat, 43% disagree). However, 53% (the highest in the EU) think that the interests of the EU and China are at odds. French experts identified Russia as "more than ever" a threat and referred to the London NATO summit in December 2019, at which Emmanuel Macron mentioned Russia as a security threat in that framework.

The French are known to be sceptical about the USA, but their relations improved with the change of US presidents: in 2019, 44% of French respondents identified the USA as a threat to the security in Europe, whereas only 18% think so in 2021.

France is by far the most pessimistic country in the poll concerning the future of peace and security at home: 49% think the situation will deteriorate in the next five years. A substantial figure of 60% of French respondents think that wars and other conflicts will affect their country in the future, in contrast to 47% in Germany and only 36% in Austria, the most optimistic country in this respect.

French experts underlined that possible security threats come not only from the East, as in the case of most European countries, but also, because of French history and geographical position, from the South. Even though France has an active role in Ukraine through the Normandy Format, the French public does not seem to be following the conflict very closely: more than most other respondents, the French do not have an opinion on many questions related to Ukraine.

France's uneasy relationship with NATO is reflected in the public's stance: 29% are in favour of sticking to the status quo of EU-NATO relations, 23% don't know how to proceed and

*French respondents have a markedly positive attitude towards the military*

*The French are the most supportive within the EU of the development of an EU army*

19% are in favour of the EU pursuing a security policy completely independent of NATO.

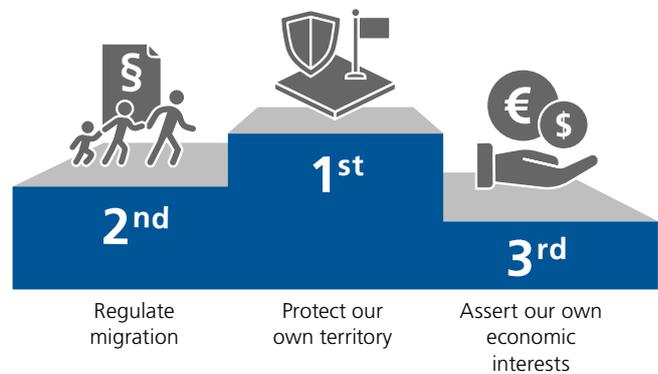
A similar division is evident when respondents are asked about the future of the French nuclear arsenal: 26% are in favour of France encouraging global nuclear disarmament, 24% consider nuclear weapons to be a fixed part of French foreign policy that should not be changed, and 20% are indifferent. Some 9% are in favour of expanding the nuclear arsenal, whereas 11% speak in favour of reducing it. Only 5% favour sharing French nuclear capabilities with the EU.

Concerning an EU approach to defence policy, the French respondents are the most supportive within the EU of the development of an EU army (53%, compared with 45% on average among the surveyed EU countries). However, only 27% of French respondents share the policy aim of strengthening the EU as a foreign policy power and only 59% favour stronger collaboration with the EU, compared with 67% of their EU peers.

The central policy aim identified by French experts was the development of a strategically autonomous EU acting on the world stage. Experts linked the concept of strategic autonomy closely to geoeconomics, technological development and

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*

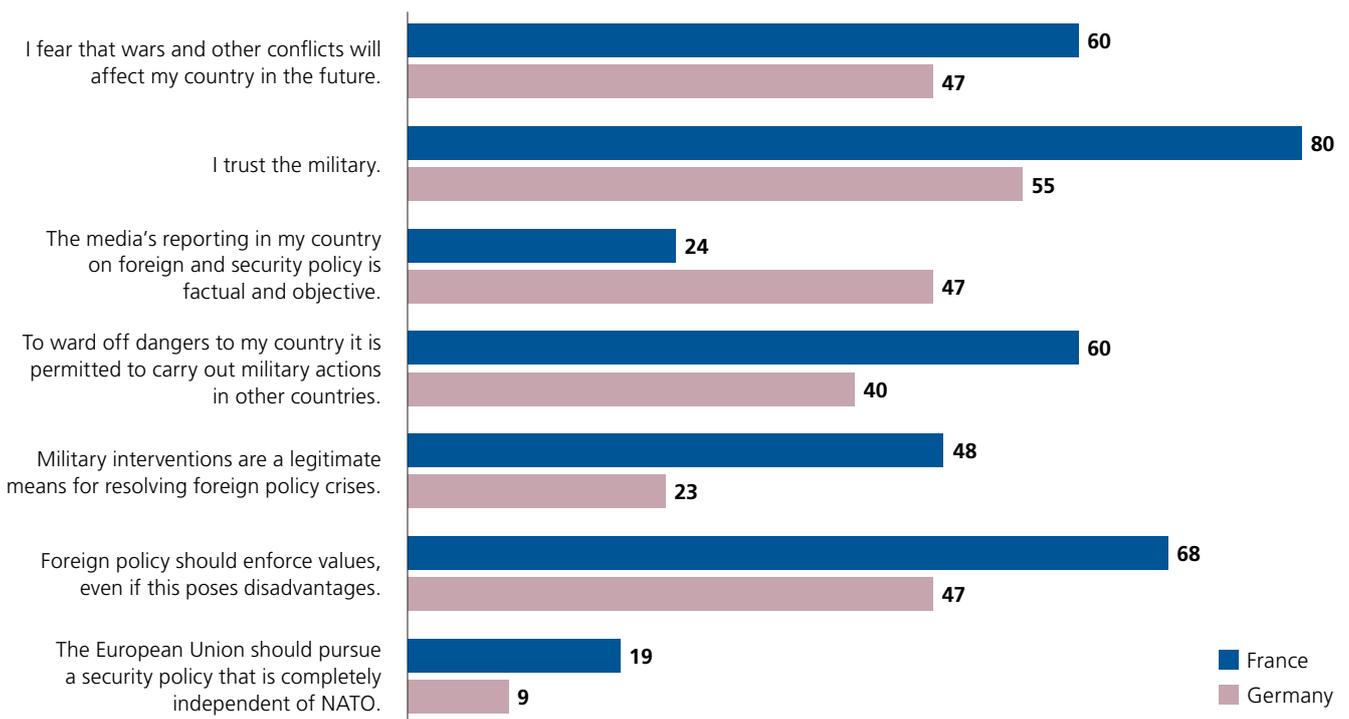


artificial intelligence. These can be – but are not necessarily – connected to security matters, but the EU must keep up with the other geopolitical actors. In general, French respondents stand out as steady supporters of a bigger role for the EU ahead of other international organisations (63%).

**Differences in perceptions in France and Germany\***

*Combined responses “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree”. All figures in %*

*\*for commonalities, see graph in Germany chapter, p. 63.*



# Germany

[Restrained and responsible]

Germany has increasingly assumed a leading position in the European Union, both economically and politically. The German public, however, remains ambiguous regarding this dominant role. This can be explained by the catastrophic experiences of totalitarian rule by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945, and the subsequent division of the country during the Cold War. At the same time, the latter re-enforced the unique position of Germany between East and West. Overall, these experiences have contributed to a rather hesitant approach to security policy. Nonetheless, Germany is increasingly realising the need to take on more responsibility for peace and stability in Europe and is becoming more assertive in representing its own political and economic interests in the world.

## Self-perception

Germany stands out as one of the few countries, alongside the United States and the United Kingdom, in which people are fairly content with their country's status in the world. Most respondents support a pragmatic but nonetheless value-based approach to foreign policy. The share of respondents who think that foreign policy should enforce values even if this may have disadvantages is lower than in most other countries, but still quite high (47%). At the same time, only a narrow majority of Germans (53%) support cooperation with countries that do not share common values, compared with an average of 66% in other countries. In this context, the experts also pointed to the importance of the Green Party as part of the new government as they are expected to push for a more normative foreign policy.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

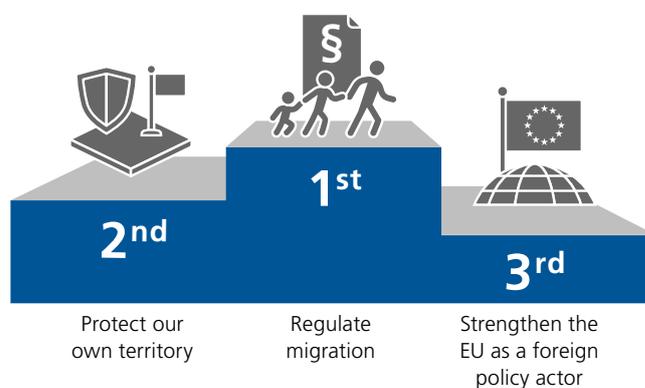
Germans appear to be generally less worried than respondents from other countries. In the context of the pandemic, for example, Germans are less concerned than citizens in other countries, and trust in the German health care system is very high (72%). The main concern by far is climate change (75% are concerned about it). Uncontrolled migration worries 61% of German respondents, which is the lowest share among the EU countries surveyed. Still, when asked about the top three foreign policy priorities for their country, Germans identified regulating migration

as the top priority, followed by protection of own territory and, remarkably, strengthening of the EU as a foreign policy actor.

Regarding their economic situation, Germans are more confident than respondents in most other countries. Even so, economic crises preoccupy Germans more than three years ago (67% compared with 51% in 2019).

### Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\*

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*



Germans seem to be satisfied with EU policies, with only 34% – less than elsewhere in Europe – thinking that EU policies contradict German interests. Nevertheless, Germans seem to view their country's development as more independent from others than its position as 'export champion' may suggest. While 58% acknowledge that Germany's prosperity depends on the well-being and positive development of other countries, this figure is much lower than in most other polled EU members.

German respondents take a rather sober view of former chancellor Angela Merkel's 16-year reign, rating her migration policy least favourably.

**How do you rate Angela Merkel's 16 years in power?**



**Economic crises preoccupy Germans more than three years ago**

**Perception of European security**

Germans appear to be less pessimistic than citizens of other countries when it comes to threats from war and conflict. Some 47% fear that wars and conflicts will affect their country in the future – only neutral Austria feels less threatened (36%). Similarly, only 33% of respondents in Germany believe that new wars in Europe are likely in the context of rising tensions between Russia and the West. Only a quarter of respondents think that a direct, military confrontation between Russia and the West is likely to happen – a figure close to that of other Western European countries and Russia itself.

However, Germans are very aware of nationalist tendencies and 66% consider them a threat to security in Europe. Experts pointed to the danger of populism and highlighted the risks from nationalist and populist tendencies in important

partner countries, such as France. The prospect of Marine Le Pen replacing Emmanuel Macron as President in France's spring 2022 elections is seen as one of the main security risks for Europe.

The end of the Trump administration seems to have restored trust in the United States among most Germans. While in 2019 German respondents mentioned the United States as a threat to peace and security in Europe, even ahead of Russia, now only 23% consider the United States to endanger European peace and security, while 51% view Russia as a threat.

Experts identified great power conflict between Russia, the United States and China, as well as systemic competition between democracies and autocracies as major trends in European security. They criticised the lack of a coherent European strategy towards Russia and called for new approaches to de-escalate and stabilise the situation in Eastern Ukraine. In a similar vein, 59% of surveyed Germans perceived the resolution of the conflict in Ukraine as a prerequisite for improving security in Europe.

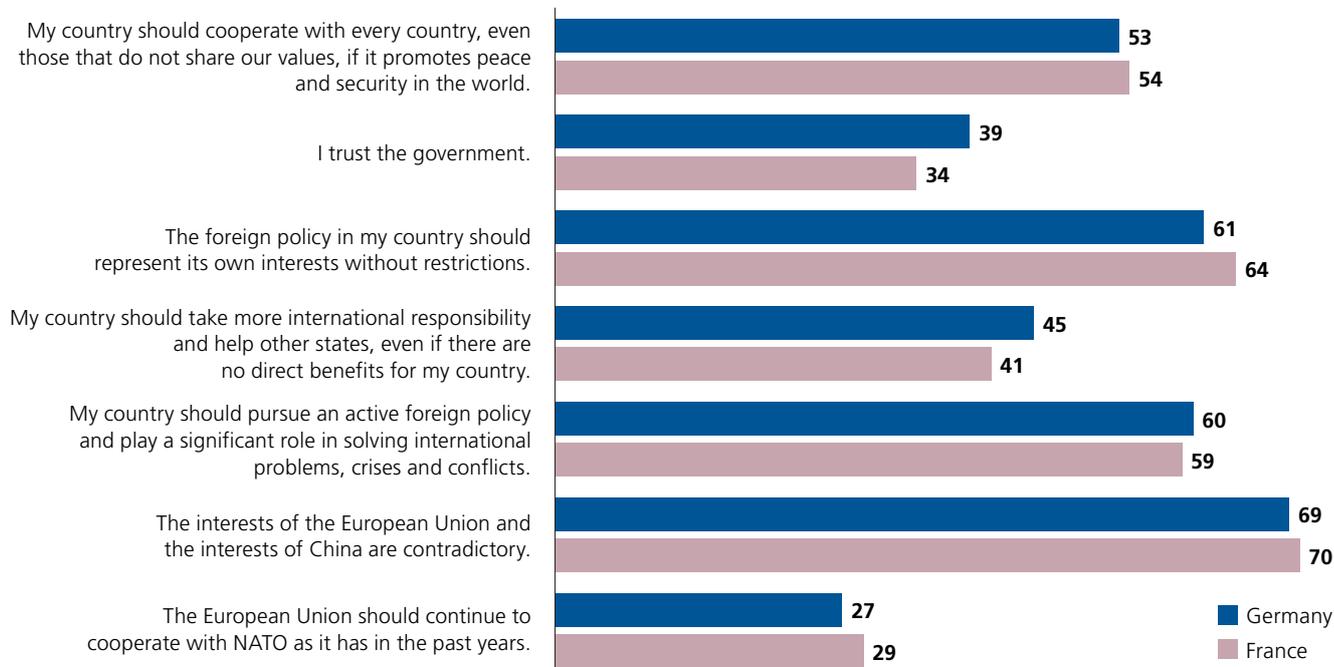
Interestingly, slightly more Germans think that EU enlargement towards the East poses a threat to security in Europe (40%) than the enlargement of NATO (37%). The vast majority support cooperation between the EU and NATO, while about a third would like to see this cooperation further deepened. Only 23% would prefer more or total EU independence from NATO. In a similar vein, experts identified the EU strategic autonomy and a unified voice in foreign policy as among the main challenges in the years to come.

**The way forward**

Germans appear increasingly willing to acknowledge the country's responsibility for preserving peace and security in Europe. However, they remain reluctant when it comes to military commitments. A majority reject increases in military spending (50%). Furthermore, half of German respondents oppose military intervention in conflicts, although in 2019 the share was even higher at 65%. Military intervention is not viewed as a legitimate way of solving foreign policy crises –

### Commonalities in perceptions in Germany and France\*

Combined responses “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree”. All figures in %  
 \*for differences, see graph in France chapter, p. 60.

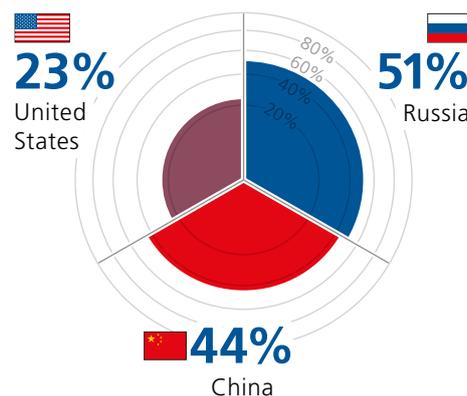


only 23% think it is legitimate, a much lower percentage than in most other surveyed countries. Germans are also more hesitant than other EU countries, such as France (53%), the country’s main strategic partner in the EU, when it comes to the creation of a European army, with only 43% in favour.

The vast majority (80%) want their country to be committed to relieving tensions in international politics and the peaceful mitigation of conflicts – one of the highest percentages in Europe. Diplomatic negotiations are highly valued by the same share of respondents. Notably, Germans demonstrate strong approval of sanctions, second only to Ukraine, with 66% of respondents considering them a legitimate means of solving foreign policy crises.

The UN and the EU are the most trusted international organisations in Germany and over 50% think they should play a bigger role in the future. Cooperation with the EU should be increased, and most respondents also believe that Germany should cooperate more with the United States than before. Only 37% believe, however, that cooperation with Russia should be expanded and 45% disagree. With regard

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



*German aversion towards military operations persists. Some 51% oppose military intervention in conflicts and 50% reject increases in military spending*

to China, Germany’s biggest trade partner, Germans are even more sceptical: 53% oppose stronger cooperation. Furthermore, the experts highlighted the crucial importance for Germany of the partnership with France. They advocated a stronger willingness to compromise in order to strengthen France’s and President Macron’s position and the Franco-German motor within the EU and in the world.

# Italy

[Cooperative and constructive]

Italy plays a central role in Europe politically, economically, militarily and culturally. One of the founding members of the European Union and NATO, the country is strongly pro-European and a key player in the EU. Italy was hit hard by the global economic crisis in 2008 and more recently by the coronavirus pandemic, but remains the third largest economy in the Eurozone. Strong regional differences remain between the richer North and the poorer South of the country, however.

## Self-perception

Italians are the least satisfied respondents in the EU with regard to their country's status. A large majority of 68% believes that the country does not have the status it deserves. Generally, Italians appear to be more worried than respondents in other Western European countries. The main concern of Italians is climate change: 90% worry about it, the highest number in the poll. A majority of 57% also think that climate change is a global problem that should be given top priority.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Italians are much more concerned about the coronavirus pandemic (74%) than, for instance, their German or French counterparts (each around 60%). Trust in the health care system is nevertheless high, at 71%. Experts highlighted the disruptive impact of coronavirus on the economy and in boosting populist discourse in the EU. Indeed, the decline of social cohesion preoccupies Italians more than most other respondents (77%). Italians also feel deeply insecure about their economic situation: almost 90% are worried about economic crises, one of the highest percentages overall. The difference with Germany (67%) and France (76%) is particularly striking.

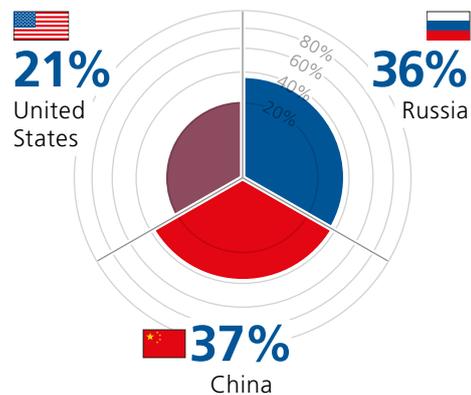
Notably, Italians do not have a stronger perception of uncontrolled migration as a threat than respondents in other countries (65%). But when asked to name priorities for the country's foreign policy, Italian respondents rated regulating migration as the number one issue, followed by asserting the country's own economic interests and protecting the country's territory.

Most Italians adopt a value-based approach to foreign policy, with 66% of respondents believing that values should be enforced even if this may have disadvantages. A majority of 58% also agrees that Italy should take international responsibility and help other states, even if there are no direct benefits for the country. At 51%, Italians give the highest ranking to human rights violations in terms of foreign policy and security priorities. At the same time, Italians display a rather sceptical attitude towards military action: only 5% of Italians believe that a military build-up should be a top foreign policy and security priority, which is the lowest percentage of all countries.

Italians are more oriented towards cooperation than other large European countries. The majority is convinced that Italy's prosperity is linked to the well-being and positive development of other countries (67% agree – the highest score among EU countries). Even cooperation with countries that do not share common values is regarded as important by 69% of respondents – again, stronger than most other large EU countries and a clear sign of pragmatism in foreign policy.

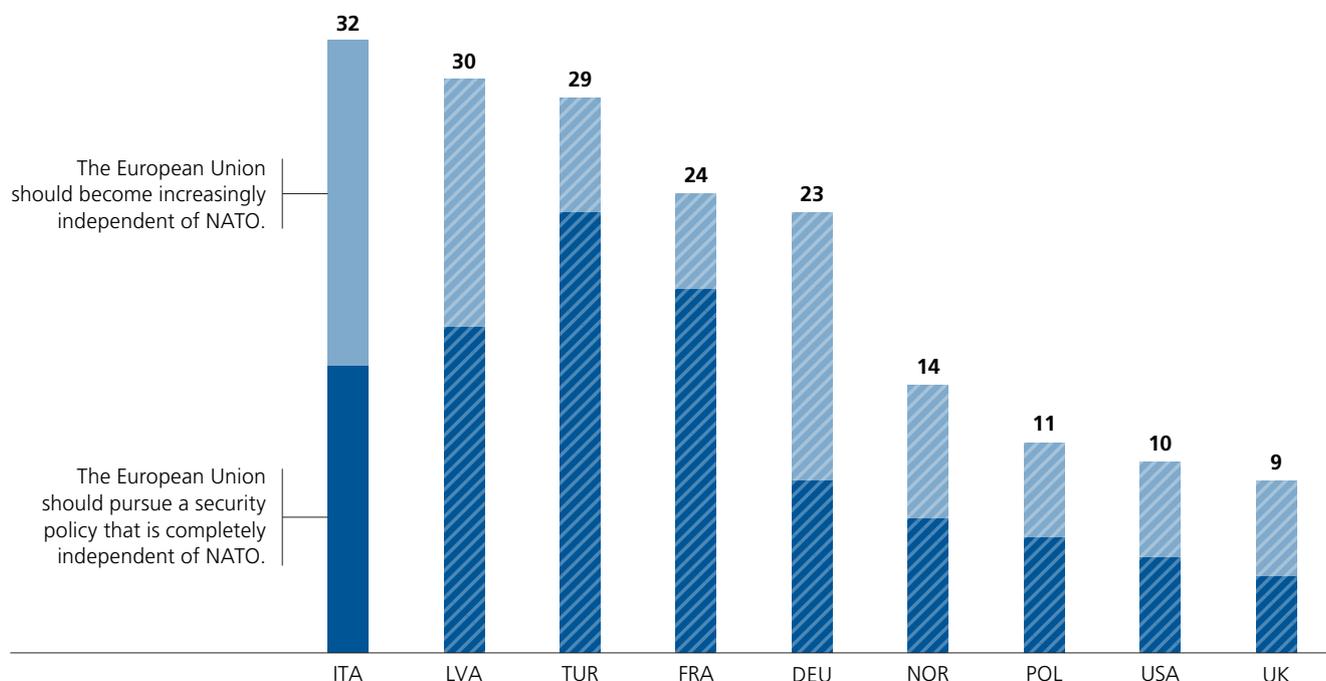
In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, Italians strongly believe in cooperation as well: 88% are convinced that pan-

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



### Attitudes towards EU strategic autonomy

NATO members only, all figures in %



demics can be tackled only by international cooperation between as many countries as possible (the highest percentage overall). This conviction stems from their own experience, it seems, as 58% agree that the pandemic has shown that Italy can rely on the solidarity and help of other countries. Also, more Italians (87%) think that rich countries should make vaccines available for the rest of the world than respondents in other prosperous countries surveyed, such as Germany (78%), France (80%) or the United States (69%).

### Perception of European security

The overall sense of insecurity seems to translate into Italians' perception of the security situation in Europe. At 65%, more Italians fear that wars and other conflicts will affect their country than respondents from other Western European countries (Germany, for instance, stands at 47%).

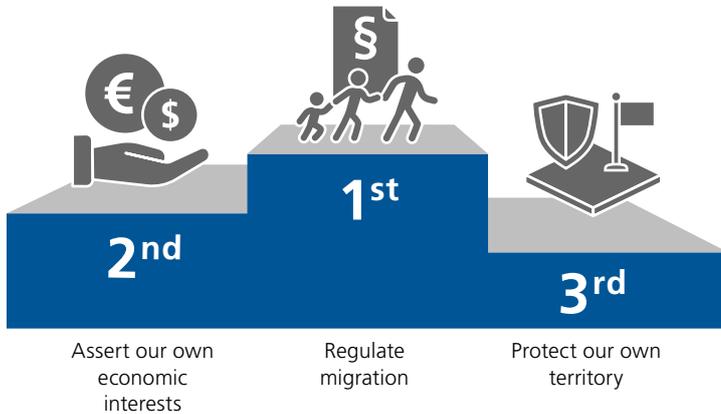
While experts in the focus groups expressed their concern about attempts to destabilise the EU by Russia and China, they also pointed out that other regions might have an even more immediate impact on Italy, in particular the Mediterranean. This is reflected in the survey, in which Italians appear to be much less concerned about Russia than respondents elsewhere. Only 36% think that Russia is a threat to peace and security in Europe, which is considerably lower than the average of respondents from polled NATO members (56%). They also don't expect the increasing tensions between Russia and the West to lead to new wars in Europe, nor do they consider a direct, military confrontation between Russia and the West to be likely – only 18% agree, which is the lowest percentage among all countries surveyed. Similarly, just 37% are of the opinion that China is a threat to peace and security in Europe, making Italians the most relaxed about China among the surveyed Western European countries.

**90%**  
of Italian respondents worry about climate change

Italians present a strong desire for cooperative foreign policy

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*



Italians have a rather distinct view of NATO’s role. Remarkably few respondents are concerned with the enlargement of NATO towards the Russian border (only 31% think it poses a threat to security in Europe, the second lowest share after the United States). Opinions on EU-NATO cooperation differ. On the one hand, as elsewhere, most respondents favour existing or even closer EU-NATO ties. But on the other hand, of all polled NATO members, Italy exhibits the highest share of respondents believing that the EU should act increasingly or completely independent of NATO (32% in total), signalling support for EU strategic autonomy.

**The way forward**

Looking to the future, 75% of Italians want their country to take on an active role in foreign policy, the highest percentage among polled Western European countries. A commitment to relieving tensions in international politics and the peaceful mitigation of conflicts is important to a large majority (81%).

The sceptical attitude among Italians towards military interventions is also reflected here, however. Only 23% agree that the country should pursue military intervention in conflicts, which is much lower than in the rest of the polled Western European countries. Accordingly, while diplomatic negotiations are highly valued, 82% of respondents considering them a legitimate means of resolving foreign

*The EU enjoys its highest support in Italy.*

**67%**

*believe the EU should play a bigger role in the future*

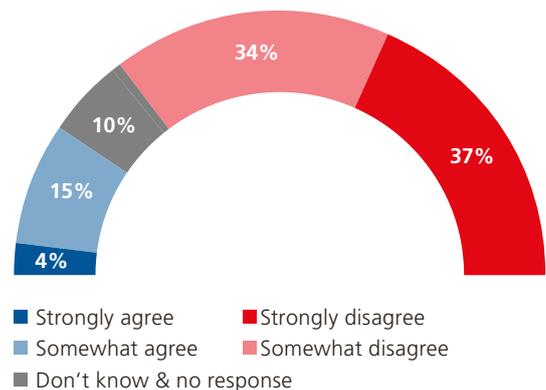
policy crises, only 24% believe that military intervention is legitimate. This is also in line with the majority of 62% who is against the country increasing its military spending – the starkest result among all countries surveyed.

Among the surveyed EU countries, the EU enjoys its highest support in Italy and is also Italy’s most trusted international organisation: 67% of respondents believe it should play a bigger role in the future. A substantial majority of 72% believe that the country should increase its collaboration with the EU. This cooperation could include EU support for coping with the flows of refugees coming to Italy, which was rated as insufficient by 71% of respondents.

Italians are also more in favour of integrating defence policy at EU level than other countries. Only 30% believe that defence is a matter for individual member states and not the job of the EU. Nevertheless, just about the same proportion of Italians seem to be in favour (42%) of a European Army as is against it (41%). This could possibly be explained by their sceptical stance towards the military in general.

Experts point out the importance of cohesive EU and NATO institutions for future stability. They highlight the crucial role of the United States in the European integration process and reject any ‘Macronism’ aimed at making the EU more independent of American influence. While alliances are better for Italy than standing alone, experts also cautioned that Italy must make its voice heard more clearly in alliances than hitherto.

**The EU provides Italy with enough support for it to cope with the flow of refugees.**



# Latvia

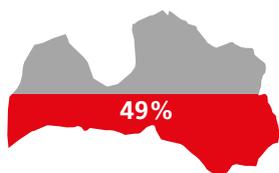
[Concerned and bridge-building]

Latvia's accession to both the EU and NATO in 2004 was hailed as a return to the European community after five decades of Soviet occupation. It had also passed through a democratic transition period in order to meet EU and transatlantic membership requirements. This Baltic nation still hosts a considerable Russian minority, a source of frequently heated domestic debate. Youth emigration to Western Europe and socio-economic challenges resulting from the pandemic are becoming more prominent issues, as they are in Latvia's closest partners and neighbours, Estonia and Lithuania.

## Self-perception

Latvian respondents are quite dissatisfied with their country's status. The three biggest concerns are wars and conflicts, economic crises and uncontrolled migration. These issues worry around 80% of respondents – significantly more than the cross-country average.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

About two-thirds of polled Latvians would like to see their country's foreign policy enforce values. This is higher than the survey average but significantly lower than in 2019 (82%). The expert discussion also mentioned values as an important aspect of Latvia's foreign policy, especially as regards cooperation with Poland, a 'natural' partner that is currently challenging EU values. Pragmatism is equally desired, however. Latvians support cooperation to ensure international peace and security even with countries that do not share their values (77%, second highest figure in the poll).

However, over half of respondents are not willing to take international responsibility and help other states if there is no direct benefit to Latvia. Experts suggested that values should guide Latvia's policy inside the EU, while *realpolitik* should be preferred globally. Along with Serbia, Ukraine and Turkey, over a half of Latvian respondents do not agree that ethnic groups should have the right to break ties with a state.

Latvians are less certain than respondents elsewhere that Latvia's health care system can tackle the pandemic successfully. Remarkably, they are most dissatisfied with their government's handling of it (73%). In contrast, they are more satisfied with the EU's performance than other surveyed EU member states. In line with the average among all surveyed countries, Latvians ex-

pect to see more international cooperation, or the same level, as a result of shared experience of the pandemic.

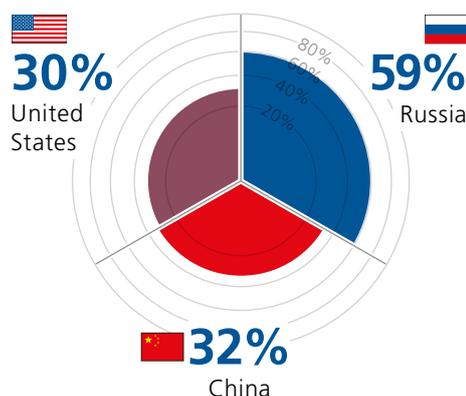
## Perception of European security

A large majority fears that wars and conflicts will affect Latvia in the future. Respondents aged 18–29 are more worried than other age groups about war as a result of tensions between the EU and Russia. Misinformation and cyber attacks are perceived as a threat.

Opinions divide on Eastern enlargement of NATO and the EU: about 40% consider it a threat to European security and around the same percentage disagrees. Out of all NATO members in the survey, Latvia is among the wariest about the Alliance's enlargement to the Russian border (surpassed only by Turkey). As in other countries (except the United States), a majority views the resolution of the conflict in Ukraine as a prerequisite for improving European security (64%).

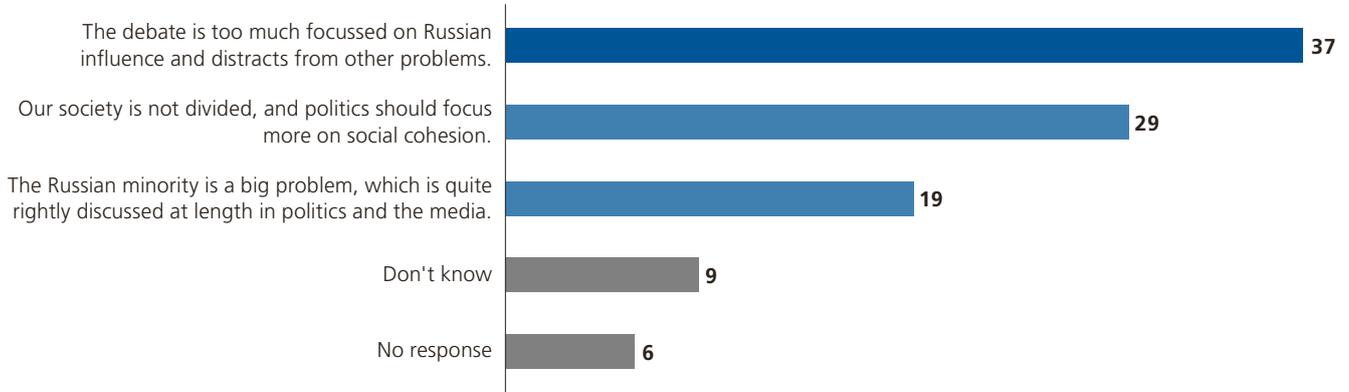
Among polled EU member states, Latvia is the most willing to deepen cooperation with NATO (30%), along with Poland. Another third would like to see cooperation continue at the

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



**Here are some statements about the situation in Latvia. Choose one statement that you agree with most.**

All figures in %



*Out of all polled NATO members, Latvia is among the wariest about the Alliance's enlargement to the Russian border*

*“Latvia has two choices: either bandwagon with great powers or enhance its standing in multilateral fora”*

same level. The experts argued that while Russia constitutes a threat to Latvia, the ‘Russian card’ is often abused by politicians to draw attention away from other problems. Survey respondents also deemed an overemphasis on Russia as most clearly reflecting the situation in Latvia (37%).

Furthermore, experts cited the EU legitimacy crisis as a far more important challenge for democratic states, along with digitalisation and insufficient data protection or cyber-attacks. The central challenge to Latvia is posed by social divisions, especially between the elites and ordinary citizens.

### **The way forward**

Most respondents expect security in Europe and the world to deteriorate in the next five years. They are slightly more optimistic about security inside Latvia, where the prevailing opinion is that it will remain unchanged. As the top global problems, Latvians name terrorism and extremism, international migration and pandemics.

Among international organisations, almost two-thirds would like to see the EU play a bigger role – more than in most other surveyed countries. The UN comes a close second, followed by NATO. Although 50% want to see a bigger role for the OSCE, it is notable that over a fifth were not familiar with the organisation. Experts argued that a small state like Latvia has only two choices in international politics: either band-

wagon with great powers or enhance its standing in multilateral fora.

Insufficiently active multilateral diplomacy reflects a somewhat passive attitude to foreign policy in Latvia, as mentioned by the experts. Slightly over a half of respondents would like to see Latvia pursue an active foreign policy, compared with the two-thirds average among all surveyed countries. Experts noted that Latvia should actively engage in EU-level policy initiatives, for example the Green Deal. It should also strive to build coalitions with both Germany and Poland.

Latvia comes near the bottom as regards support for increased military spending (37%), only ahead of Italy and Russia. Similar to all other countries in the survey, diplomatic negotiations are considered the most legitimate means for resolving foreign policy crises (84%). Latvia is among the NATO members that are least enthusiastic about military intervention, with only a quarter of respondents endorsing it. Economic sanctions are perceived to be a legitimate tool by over half of respondents, similar to other surveyed EU member states.

Respondents in Latvia – more than in most of the other countries – want to see increased cooperation with the European Union (74%), while being divided on Russia, the USA and China. About 40% disagree that there needs to be more cooperation, while about a half support enhanced cooperation with those countries. Experts emphasised Latvia’s adherence to the Euro-Atlan-

tic community, but also noted that economic interdependencies with other global powers, including Russia and China, are welcome, as they provide for more security and stability. In addition, they criticised the EU for alienating China and pushing it into an alliance with Russia, which does not serve EU interests.

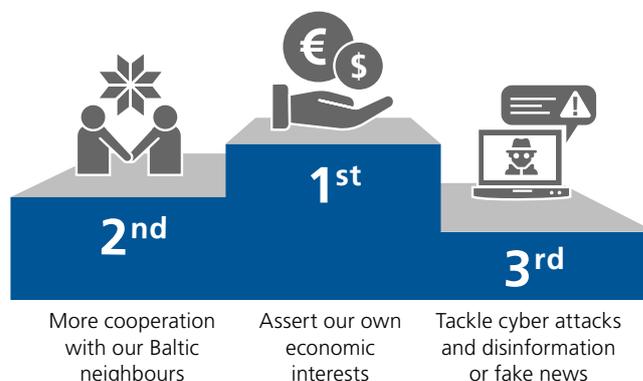
Half of Latvian respondents (50%) support the establishment of a European army, ranking second among surveyed EU member states after France (53%). Latvians want the EU to be more active in defence policy, disagreeing more strongly than most other EU members with the statement that defence is primarily a concern of individual member states. Experts say that the primary source of security is NATO and the United States, while acknowledging the importance of the debate on EU strategic autonomy and the need for Latvia to engage in it more actively.

Relations between Russia and other European states is seen as primarily affected by the conflict in Ukraine and resulting sanctions, incompatible values and domestic developments inside Russia.

Latvian respondents were clear on two areas they would like to see as foreign policy priorities: asserting economic interests and increasing cooperation with Baltic neighbours. These were followed by tackling cyber-attacks, encouraging the repa-

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*



triation of former citizens and protection of own territory. Experts said more efforts should be made to reach out to minorities and ensure media coverage in different languages. However, the foremost task for the political elites must be the consolidation of Latvian society.

**Perceptions of likelihood of new wars in Europe**

*By age, all figures in %*

*In view of increasing tensions between Russia and the West, I think new wars in Europe are likely.*



# Norway

[Untroubled and vigilant]

Norway, because of its geographical location, plays an important role in European security today as NATO's northernmost flank, with a land and maritime border shared with Russia. Although Norway rejected EU membership in the 1994 referendum, it is associated with the Union through its membership of the European Economic Area (EEA), which constitutes the cornerstone of EU-Norwegian relations today. In 1949, Norway joined NATO as one of its founding members, but committed to not allowing foreign bases to be established on Norwegian territory in peacetime. In addition, Norway is a member of various frameworks for regional and subregional cooperation in the Arctic – most notably the Arctic Council – and has concluded bilateral and trilateral defence cooperation agreements with other Nordic countries within the framework of the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFECO).

## Self-perception

Norway stands out as the most satisfied and trusting country in the survey. Only 24% of respondents believe that Norway does not have the status it deserves – the lowest figure in the poll by far. Relatedly, trust in both civilian and military institutions is strikingly high in Norway, in marked contrast to all other polled nations. The only institutions not trusted by a majority are the media and political parties – trust in both stands at some 43% in Norway, which is still two to five times more than elsewhere. As regards trust in the health care system and satisfaction with the government's management of the coronavirus pandemic, Norway again ranks highest among all the countries polled.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Norwegians identify with the European cultural sphere (62%), albeit to a lesser extent than other surveyed European countries. Only the United Kingdom scores lower. The impression of Norwegian self-reliance is reinforced by the fact that only a minority (45%) believe that Norway's prosperity depends on the well-being and positive developments of other countries. Only two other resource-extracting countries – Russia and the United States – scored similarly.

Correspondingly, support for increased collaboration with the EU is weaker in Norway than in other surveyed countries (only 54%). At the same time, fewer people than in most polled

EU members think that EU policies are in conflict with Norway's interests (37%).

Remarkably, Norwegian respondents give higher credit to the OSCE than any other polled country and consider its influence close to that of the EU or the UN. The expert group underlined the importance of the Arctic Council as a forum for regional cooperation, including with Russia. Experts believe that the High North and Russian-Norwegian cross-border relations continue to remain stable because of the many overlapping institutions that govern Arctic affairs.

## Perception of European security

Compared with the other 13 countries, the Norwegian respondents feel safest in their immediate surroundings (95%). They also appear to be least concerned about their personal future and about the possibility that their financial circumstances might worsen as a result of the various developments the country faces today.

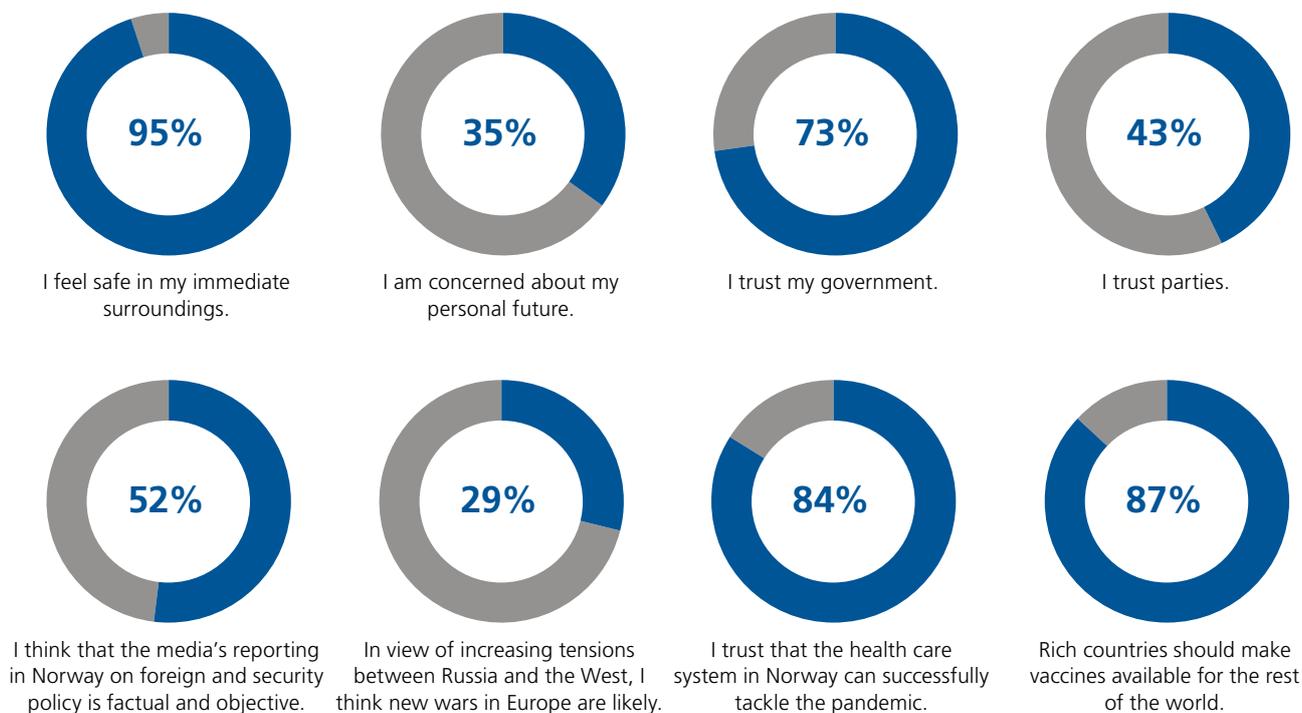
Slightly more than half of the respondents are worried that wars and conflicts might affect Norway in the future. However, only 29% consider increasing tensions between Russia and the West to have the potential to trigger new wars in Europe.

Norwegian respondents are most worried about terrorism (68%), climate change (66%), cyber-attacks (62%) and economic crises (62%). In addition, as many as 68% identify the dissemination of disinformation and cyber-attacks against public institutions as threatening. This is in line with the expert group discussion, which stressed the need to build societal resilience and raise awareness of increasing hybrid threats.

The expert group identified great power competition, climate change and migration as the most pressing challenges faced by Norway today. In terms of threatening actors, survey

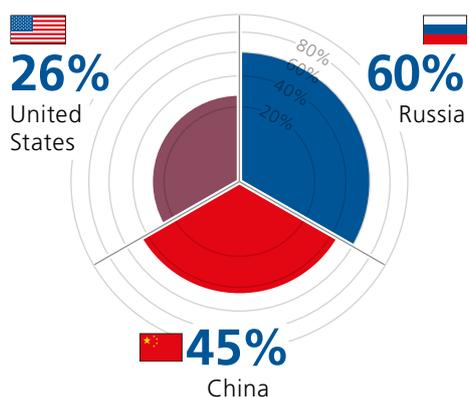
### Selected perceptions in Norway

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree". All figures in %



respondents identify Russia as most threatening to peace and security in Europe (60%), followed by China (45%). The experts consider Norway to be caught in the middle of great power rivalry between the United States and Russia, which has spilled over into the Arctic.

#### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



Both sets of results suggest that the military build-up in the High North does not pose a threat to Norway's foreign and security interests. But the expert group felt that in the absence of effective military-to-military dialogue, the growing military activity on the part of both Russia and NATO might lead to misinterpretation of intentions and unintended escalation. Military cooperation with Russia has been suspended since 2014.

### The way forward

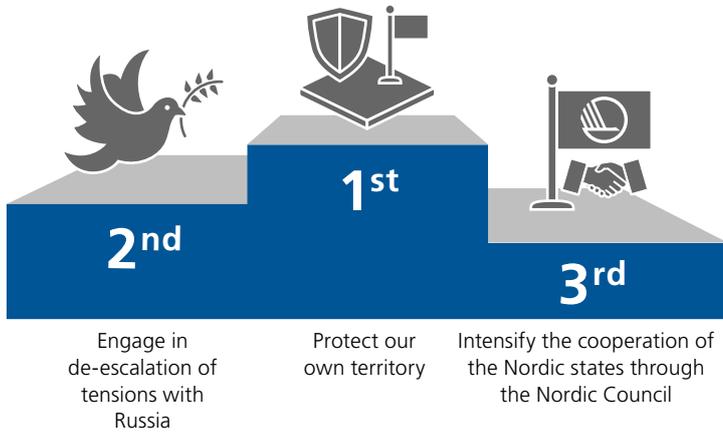
Among global foreign and security problems, Norwegian respondents would like the government to prioritise, first, international terrorism and extremism (62%), followed by climate change (52%), human rights violations (48%) and pandemics (40%). In terms of effectiveness of foreign policy tools, Norwegians are among the strongest proponents of economic sanctions

*Trust in institutions in Norway is the highest among the polled countries*

*"Overlapping institutions in the Arctic provide for stable security"*

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.



(59%), but they prefer to solve foreign policy crises diplomatically (67%). Military interventions are considered both ineffective (45%) and illegitimate (48%) and are rejected by most respondents (45%) – a stance not shared by their polled NATO peers.

When asked about their top three priorities for Norwegian foreign policy, respondents name protection of their own territory, de-escalation of tensions with Russia and intensification of cooperation between the Nordic states through the Nordic Council.

In line with Norway’s commitment to meet the 2% defence spending target by 2024, both the expert group and the polling results reveal public support for an increase in military spending (46%). Among polled NATO member states, only Turkey and Poland exhibit greater public support for increased defence spending.

**De-escalation of tensions with Russia is a foreign policy priority for Norwegian respondents**

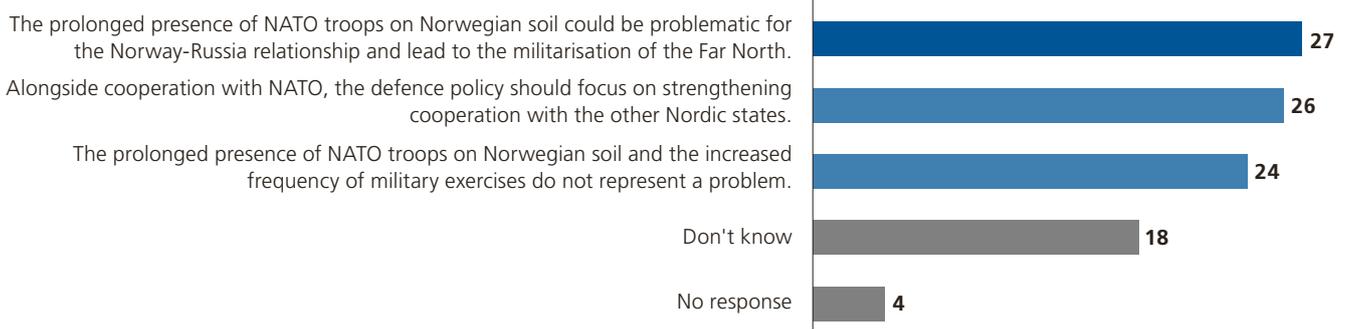
Public opinion is split on the contentious issue of the presence of NATO troops on Norwegian soil. About equal shares (around a quarter of respondents) believe a prolonged presence would not be a problem; would jeopardise relations with Russia; or do not have an opinion on the topic. Another quarter believe that alongside cooperation with NATO, Norway’s defence policy should focus on strengthening cooperation with the other Nordic states.

As regards Ukraine, Norwegian respondents regard Russia (56%) and Russian-backed separatists (29%) as responsible for the ongoing conflict in the country. Some 56% of respondents agree that Russia annexed Crimea illegally. These results are largely consistent across all polled NATO member states. Respondents were almost equally divided on Ukraine’s eventual membership of NATO and the EU, with as many as 38–41% of respondents not having any opinion on this issue. Most respondents consider European-Russian relations to be influenced primarily by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine (61%), incompatible values and mindsets (55%) and domestic developments in Russia (54%).

Recognising the growing security dilemma in the Arctic, the expert group underlined the need to improve mechanisms for de-escalation in the event of an unintended incident or a minor crisis. It was suggested that mechanisms that are already in place, such as the Incidents at Sea Agreement or a hotline from the military Headquarters near Bodø to the Northern Fleet Headquarters in Severomorsk, should be implemented by other members of the Alliance to help reduce the risk of misunderstanding and escalation.

**Here are some statements about Norway’s relationship with NATO. Choose one statement that you agree with most.**

All figures in %



# Poland

[Anxious and ambitious]

Poland is located at the geographical centre of Europe, broadly speaking, and, throughout its difficult history, has often found itself torn between the powers to its East and West. After the country's three partitions by its larger neighbours in the eighteenth century, Poland ceased to exist as a sovereign state for more than a century, until 1918. In the course of the Second World War, Poland again fell prey to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. After 1945, the country was turned into a Communist satellite state, until Poles rallied to induce change under the banner of *Solidarność*, one of the first in the Socialist camp. Since then, Poland has turned its back on its Communist past, joining NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004. Poland's central but vulnerable position has forced its people to constantly assert themselves and continue to nourish a desire for strong alliances.

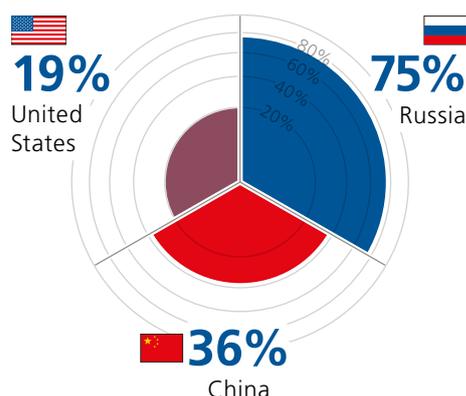
## Self-perception

Identification as European is very high among respondents in Poland. Among all EU member states, Poland remains most interested in closer cooperation with the EU (75%). Poles are also the most worried about disagreement within the Union (77%). Despite the current dispute over the rule of law, fewer respondents are apprehensive about regular conflict between the EU and Polish interests (41%) than in 2019 (66%).

While still generally dissatisfied with their country's international standing, Poles are somewhat less concerned about it than three years ago. Polish respondents are also least convinced among all surveyed countries that their culture is unique and in need of protection. There is strong identification with the European cultural sphere (78%).

By EU comparison, Polish respondents are very worried about wars and conflicts (81%, preceded only by Latvians) and see human rights violations as among the most pressing global problems. On average, Poles generally have an even lower level of trust in state structures than respondents in other countries.

## Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



## Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Only 17% trust the government, while 66% express dissatisfaction with its management of the coronavirus pandemic.

## Perception of European security

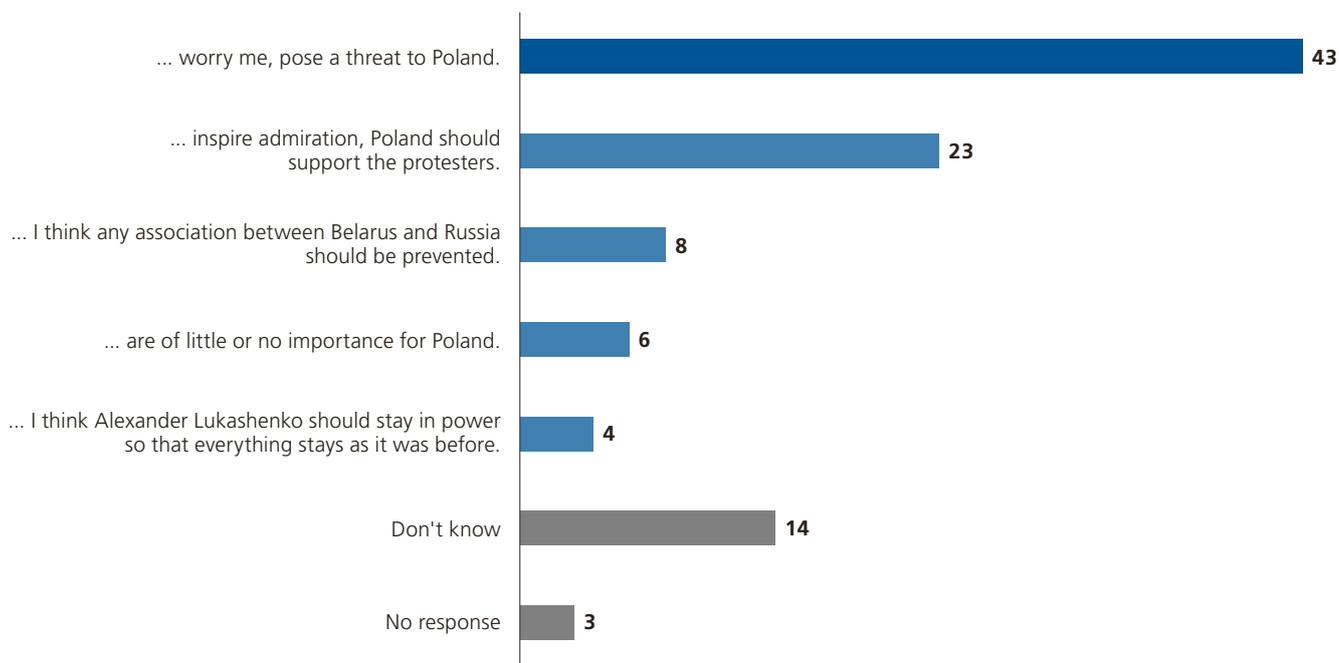
Polish respondents are very concerned about European security. Among their EU peers, Poles are also the most concerned that war and conflict will affect their country in the future (73%), closely followed by Latvia.

The expert group underlined the importance of the EU for Poland, which has benefitted greatly from European integration and the transition to liberal democracy. In the context of European security, this liberal order is seen as a guarantee of stability and cohesion in the EU and NATO. A weakening of the liberal order and democracy worldwide is consequently pointed out as a threat to European security. Eastern Europe plays a special role in that regard. Stable democracies in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood are understood to be a prerequisite for peace and security on the continent.

In the eyes of Polish respondents, Russia is a major threat. With three-quarters subscribing to this statement, Poland remains the most suspicious of Russia, just like three years ago, surpassing even Ukraine. Increasing tensions between Russia and the West make Poland the most concerned EU member state about new wars in Europe (59%). They even consider a direct military confrontation between Russia and the West likely

**Since August 2020, there have been nationwide protests in Belarus against Alexander Lukashenko. The security forces have suppressed the protests multiple times. The events in Belarus...**

All figures in %



*Polish respondents are very worried about wars and conflicts*

**54%**  
of Poles support an increase in military spending – one of the strongest endorsements among polled NATO members

(46%) – much more than most EU and NATO peers, on a par only with Latvia and Ukraine.

In their assessment of the Ukrainian conflict, Poles see Russia as the main culprit, and overwhelmingly consider the annexation of Crimea an illegal act. Second only to Ukraine itself, Poles are most convinced that a resolution of the conflict is a prerequisite for improving security in Europe (70%).

Dovetailing with their opposition to Russia, Poles overall express a strong affinity with NATO. The idea that the Alliance's Eastern enlargement could pose a threat to European security is thus rejected. Poles show, in turn, striking support for deeper cooperation between NATO and the EU (41%) – more than elsewhere.

Remarkably, Polish support for a greater future role of NATO is highest among all polled NATO members (59%) and second only to Ukraine, whose leadership wishes to join the Alliance. It is noteworthy that Poles endorse a stronger NATO on a par with a stronger UN – a marked contrast with all other polled countries, which

clearly ranked the UN first in terms of desired greater future role.

**The way forward**

Thinking about the next five years, Poles share the overall pessimistic attitude towards peace and security in Europe and the world. Compared with other EU member states, they are most concerned about their personal future.

Regarding their own country, approval of an active foreign policy and playing a significant role in international conflicts has decreased from 83% to 72% since the last poll, while remaining high by overall comparison. Poles prefer to solve foreign policy crises diplomatically (73%) over economic sanctions (55%) or military intervention (23%). Despite spending more than 2% of GDP on the military already, Poles nevertheless clearly support an increase in military spending (54%). This is the strongest endorsement among polled NATO members by a high margin (bar Turkey). Conversely, the rejection of increased

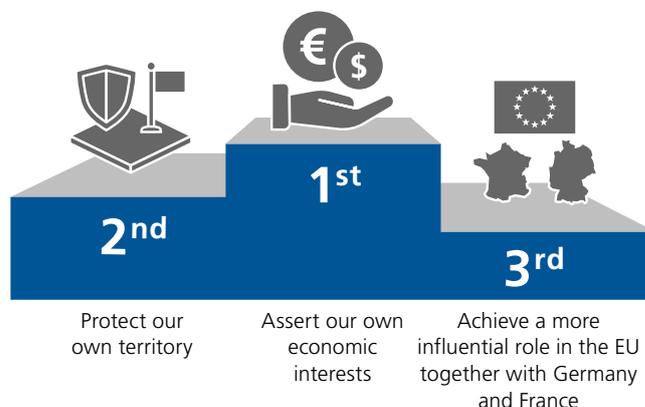
military expenditure in Poland (only 29%) is the lowest among polled NATO members and contrasts strikingly with the 53% in neighbouring Latvia. The most important foreign policy objectives cited were asserting Polish economic interests (48%) and protecting national territory (43%). But respondents also expressed a desire to play a more influential role in the EU, together with Germany and France (28%).

There is a slight tendency to see defence policy as matter for individual member states rather than the EU. Poles would prefer the Union to resort to diplomacy rather than build up a European army. The expert group considers EU unity the main answer to contemporary security challenges, namely from systemic rivals such as Russia and China. According to them, Poland – as a major beneficiary – ought to be a driver of European unity. Experts also point out, however, that strategic autonomy understood as the EU becoming a stand-alone power is an illusion. While they would welcome increased EU foreign policy capabilities, they underline the importance of strong ties to NATO and the United States.

When it comes to transatlantic relations, Poland is the EU member state most interested in increased cooperation with the United States (72%). Most respondents find that the interests of the EU and the US are compatible. Poles differ from their EU peers, however, in their assessment of the past two US presidencies. While an overwhelming majority consider the Trump administration as conducive to Polish-US relations, Joe Biden is

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*

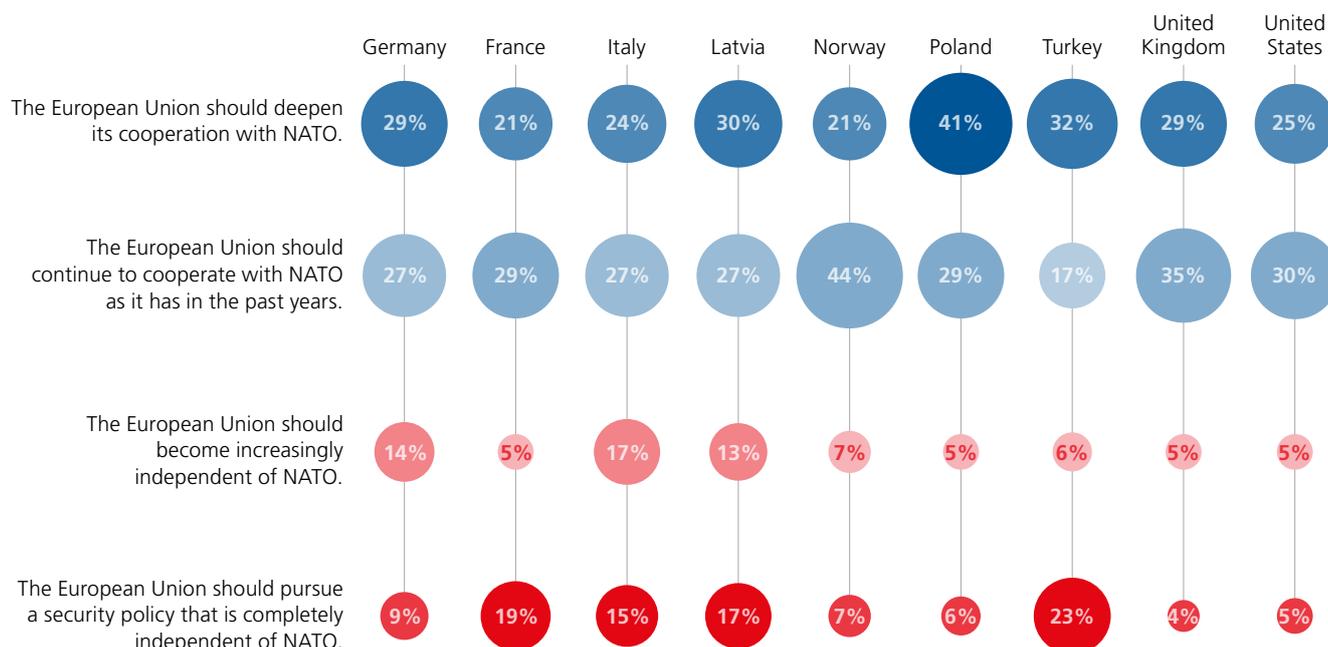


regarded with scepticism. Of the other 13 polled countries, only Serbia takes a similar view.

Regarding how to deal with the conflict in Ukraine, Poland is the strongest supporter within the EU and NATO of widening sanctions against Russia (58%). Besides Ukraine itself, Poles are also keenest on their Eastern neighbour becoming an EU (45%) and a NATO (47%) member state. Opinions on Belarus differ starkly, however. Almost half of all respondents view the turbulence there as a threat to Poland – even before the situation at the border escalated in autumn 2021.

**Here are four statements on future relations between the EU and NATO. Please choose one that you agree with most.**

*NATO members only. Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer"*



# Russia

[Pragmatic and self-reliant]

Russia today emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union 30 years ago. Ever since, its leadership has sought status parity vis-à-vis other influential states in the international system, in particular the United States. After Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, relations with Russia’s former close ally Ukraine and with EU countries have deteriorated. Russia’s major trade partner is still the EU, but in recent years the country has been increasingly turning eastwards, enhancing economic and military cooperation with Beijing.

## Self-perception

More than half of Russian respondents (54%) are dissatisfied with the status of their country, which somewhat surprisingly is less than some NATO and EU members. Wars, economic crises and international terrorism are of greatest concern for most Russians, with over 80% worried about them. Regarding foreign and security policy priorities, tackling international terrorism stands as a priority (64%), followed by human rights violations, and geopolitical tensions and conflicts. In the expert discussion, the first two issues were not addressed at all.

Concerning foreign policy, only a third of respondents deem it important that Russia enforces values in that domain. A large majority (75%) are willing to cooperate with countries even if they do not share their values. Experts, too, did not discuss Russia’s foreign policy in value terms, but rather focused on specific areas of mutual interest where pragmatic cooperation with the West was possible. They did acknowledge, however, that there are increasingly few such areas.

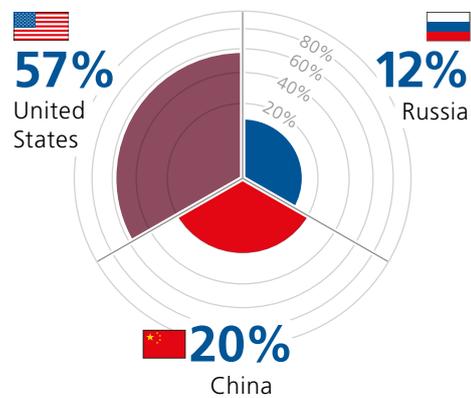
There is, however, one value that Russians would like to see in their country’s foreign policy. The question of Russia’s international status and the desire to be seen as an equal partner is listed by respondents among the three most important foreign policy goals. Only the assertion of the country’s own economic interests ranks higher. The expert discussion echoed this demand, arguing that the West reserves the right for itself to establish and interpret international norms and law, rejecting Russia’s attempts to do so.

### Status in the world



*“In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries.”*

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



Unlike most other countries in the survey, Russians do not think that tackling climate change should be a foreign policy objective (only 31% agree). Experts see this area as having the potential for cooperation with the West in principle, but as things stand, a specific agenda or road map is lacking.

Similar to respondents in other countries, Russians believe that the pandemic is a global security challenge that can be tackled only through international cooperation. However, among all countries in the survey, they are least convinced that they can rely on other countries in tackling the pandemic (39% as against an average of 53%). Likewise, experts declared that in the face of global challenges, the West and Russia tend not to seek joint solutions, but instead compete, trying to make individual gains and enhance their geopolitical status.

## Perception of European security

Similar to other surveyed countries, the majority of Russian respondents worry that future conflicts will affect their country. Nevertheless, they do not believe that a direct military confrontation between Russia and the West is likely. Similarly, the interviewed experts noted a perception of the ‘impossibility of

war’ (rather in the West than in Russia). They warned about the risks of such a perception and recommended the establishment of a military balance between potential adversaries. However, they also said that the importance of existing confidence-building measures and military-to-military contacts should not be underestimated and that they should be developed further.

Over 60% believe that nationalistic tendencies constitute a threat to European security – similar to other surveyed countries. A significant majority are concerned about disinformation and cyber-attacks (63%), although less than in 2019 (73%). The figure is also lower than among Russia’s neighbours Poland, Latvia and Ukraine (over 70%).

A majority (57%) view the United States as a threat. Conversely, China is feared by only 20%. Remarkably, 12% think that Russia itself is a threat to European security.

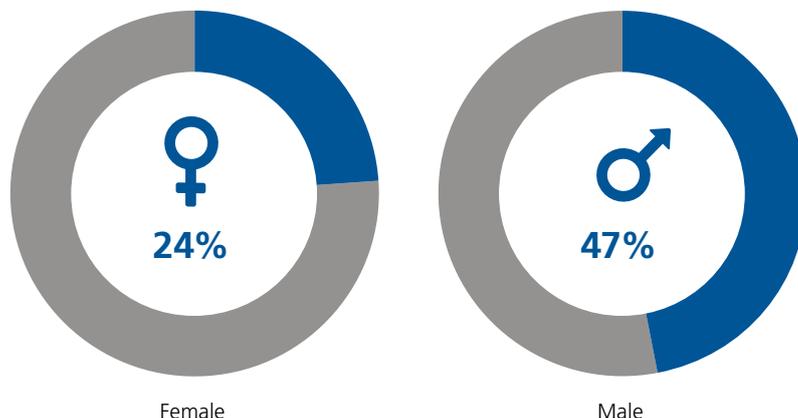
NATO and EU enlargement seem less of a threat to Russians than in 2019. Just like elsewhere (apart from the United States), a majority deem resolution of the conflict in Ukraine to be a prerequisite for improving European security. Respondents name Ukraine (55%) and the United States (51%) as responsible for the conflict, while only 16% blame Russia. In contrast to 2019, when more than half of respondents saw the EU as a responsible party, only 19% chose this option in 2021.

The Ukraine conflict and resulting sanctions are considered the most influential factor in Russia’s relations with European states (71%), followed by the United States (64%). Interviewed experts also noted that the Ukraine conflict was both a symptom and a cause of the current tensions in Europe, arguing that without concrete steps by the Ukrainian government, resolution is impossible. They also lamented the EU’s inability to take decisions on European security, continuing to rely on the United States. Some 73% of Russian respondents think that Crimea was legally incorporated by Russia, 14% think it was illegally annexed, around 15% do not know or refuse to answer.

### Attitudes to military action abroad

By gender, all figures in %

*To ward off dangers to Russia it is permitted to carry out military actions in other countries*



### The way forward

Looking ahead, Russians are more optimistic about peace and security inside their country in the next five years than in the outside world. Among the international organisations, they would clearly like to see the UN play a bigger role (64%), unsurprisingly given Russia’s permanent seat on the UN Security Council, followed by regional organisations of which Russia is a member (CSTO, EAEU, and OSCE). Only 19% of respondents want NATO to play a bigger role, while an even bigger share – 26% – does not express an opinion.

Respondents are less enthusiastic about Russia’s active involvement in solving international problems (68%) compared with 2019 (83%). A slight majority agree that Russia should take a clear stand in case of political conflicts abroad – a mid-range value among the surveyed countries. Concerning the nationwide protests in neighbouring Belarus, a quarter of the population says they want Alexander Lukashenko to remain in power, whereas 13% wish that Russia supported the protests.

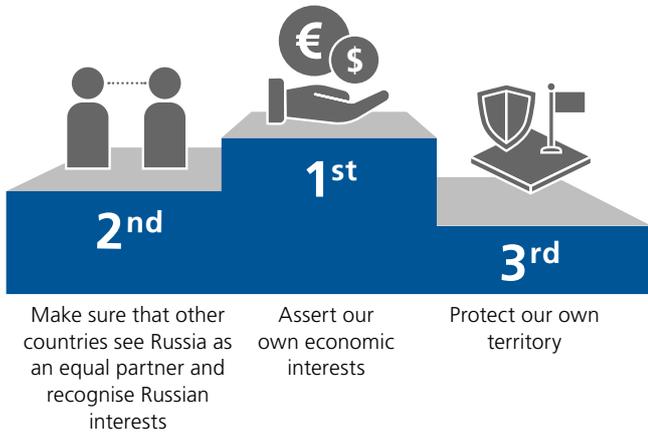
A significant majority (75%) agrees that Russia should be committed to peaceful mitigation of conflicts abroad, while only a third advocate increased military spending – one of the lowest

**Desire for an equal footing is crucial for Russians**

**Only one third advocate increased military spending**

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*



values among all surveyed countries and a significant drop compared with 2019, when 53% of Russian respondents supported increased military spending. It remains open whether this mirrors a prevailing non-belligerent attitude or rather the realisation that Russia’s military spending is already excessive.

A majority names diplomatic negotiations as legitimate

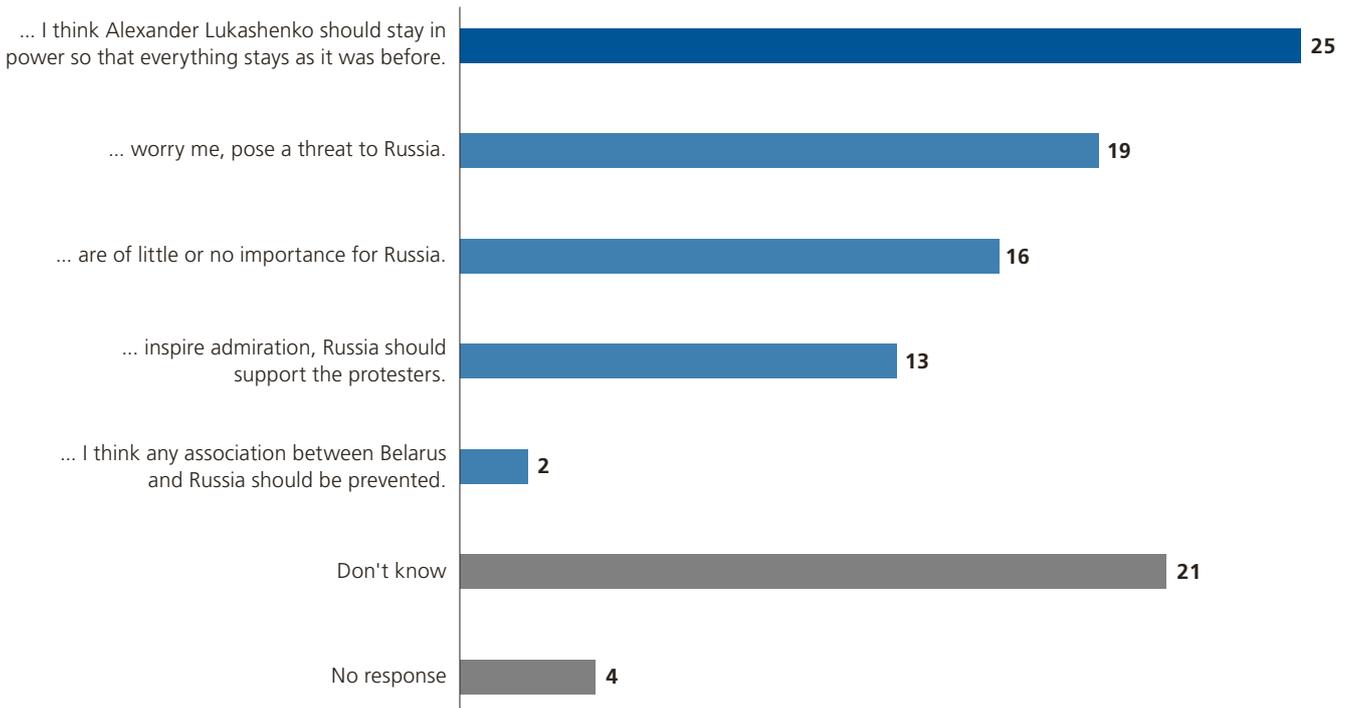
means of solving foreign policy crises, while less than a third are content with economic sanctions – unsurprisingly, given that the country has been under sanctions since 2014. Over half reject military intervention, similar to the cross-country average. Russians overall are pessimistic about the post-pandemic world. Only about a third of respondents think that the shared experience of the coronavirus pandemic will lead to more international cooperation. About the same amount think that the pandemic will not significantly impact cooperation.

Most respondents in Russia list China as the preferred cooperation partner (71%), followed by the EU, but with an impressive margin (66%), and the United States (50%). The interviewed experts noted extremely positive media coverage of China in Russia, mentioning that while Beijing was not the easiest partner to deal with, the (geopolitical) circumstances were conducive to Sino-Russian cooperation. Regarding Russia-EU relations, they noted few incentives on either side to enhance cooperation. On the Russian side, there is disbelief that positive steps would lead to Western reciprocity. The overall goal should be to prevent further deterioration of relations to avoid an uncontrolled confrontation. Sectoral cooperation should be encouraged for this purpose, for instance, in areas such as climate change policy, business ties and arms control.

**Since August 2020, there have been nationwide protests in Belarus against Alexander Lukashenko.**

**The security forces have suppressed the protests multiple times. The events in Belarus...**

*All figures in %*



# Serbia

[Indecisive and moderate]

Serbia has been a candidate for European Union membership since 2014. The country's non-recognition of Kosovo's independence and distrust of NATO, however, remain the main hurdles to further EU accession. Until these issues can be resolved, the country is adamant about pursuing a strategy of non-alignment and tries to keep channels of communication open with Russia and China, as well as the West.

## Self-perception

Almost four-fifths of Serbian respondents are convinced that their country does not have the status in the world it deserves compared with other countries. Some 68% think that other countries are actively preventing Serbia from achieving true greatness, a sentiment that Serbia shares with Armenia (83%) and Turkey (70%). The relationship with the EU continues to be rocky, with almost two-thirds of Serbian respondents seeing a conflict between EU policy and Serbia's interests. The experts explain this in terms of Serbia's ongoing non-recognition of Kosovo, which continues to have a major impact on Serbian politics. It therefore comes as no surprise that almost 50% of the population strongly agree that ethnic groups and parts of countries should not have the right to break ties with the state.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Serbian respondents stand out in terms of their pragmatism, however: 81% support cooperation with any country if it promotes peace and security in the world – the highest score in the poll. Furthermore, 69% of Serbian respondents believe that their prosperity is linked to the well-being of other countries.

As in 2019, the issues seen as most concerning in Serbia continue to be climate change, uncontrolled immigration and economic crises. Topics that are perceived as less concerning are cyber-attacks and conflicts within the EU.

Serbia is among the top three countries whose respondents are not satisfied with their own government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic (63%); only Latvia and Poland express greater dissatisfaction. In addition, international coronavirus management leaves much to be desired according to 64% of

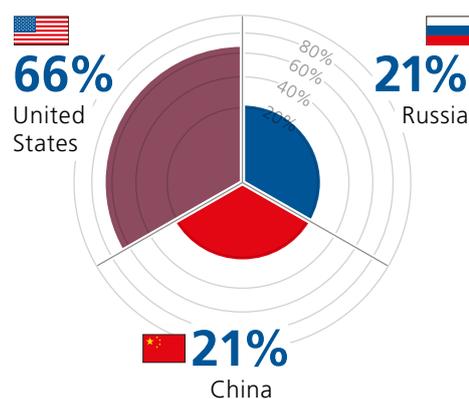
Serbian respondents. In this context, the experts emphasise the EU's loss of credibility in the Western Balkans: shortfalls and mistakes in the handling of the pandemic are directly attributed to the EU and the relatively slow rollout of vaccines has affected the EU's prestige and standing in the region.

## Perception of European security

Some 73% of Serbian respondents are concerned that wars and conflicts will affect their country in the future (69% in 2019). Threats to Europe's safety are attributed mainly to rising nationalist tendencies (71%). New wars because of increasing tensions between Russia and the West are seen as unlikely; so is direct military confrontation between Russia and the West (54% and 56% thought this way, respectively).

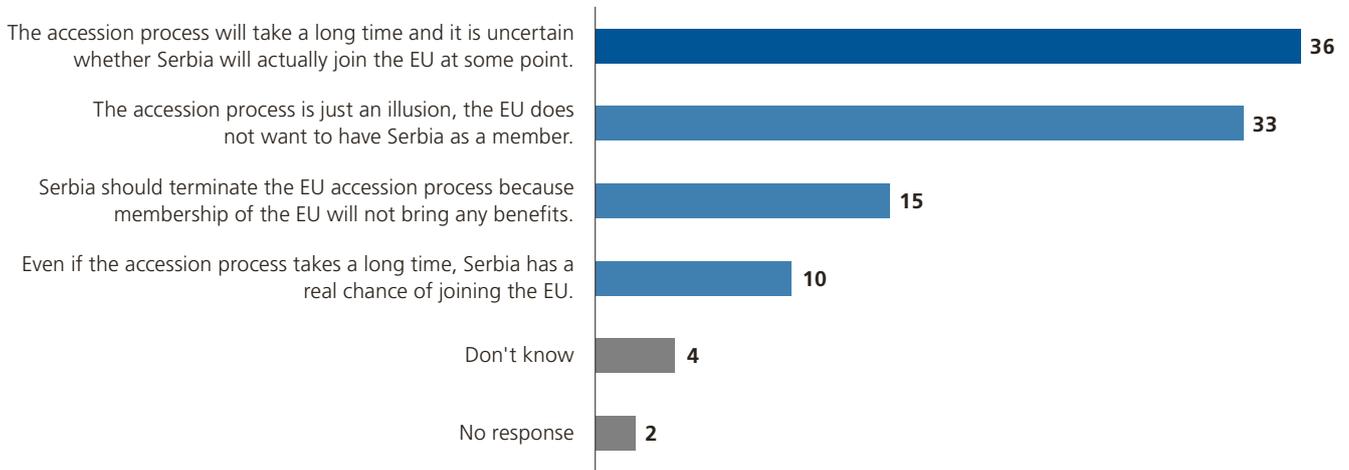
Russia is not seen as a threat to security in Europe (only 21% agree, second only to Russia itself). The United States, on the other hand, is seen as a threat by two-thirds of Serbian respondents, although this has decreased somewhat since 2019 (71%). Finally, as many as 72% disagree that China is a threat to security, which is in stark contrast to the other surveyed countries (47% disagree on average).

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



**At the end of 2009, Serbia applied for membership of the EU. Serbia has been holding accession negotiations with the EU since 2014. What do you think of the accession process?**

All figures in %



Almost **two-thirds** of Serbian respondents see a conflict between EU policy and Serbia's interests

**72%** of Serbian respondents **disagree** that **China is a threat to security**

Serbian respondents voice strong opinions regarding NATO enlargement towards the Russian border. As many as 70% agree that this poses a threat to security in Europe – the highest number among all surveyed countries, including Russia, where ‘only’ 56% perceive this as a threat. The enlargement of the EU to the East, however, is considered less of a problem by Serbians (36% agree that this is a threat).

Serbian respondents stand out in their clear stance towards EU strategic autonomy, being the only ones in the poll who clearly support it. Only combined 15% of Serbians think that the EU and NATO should continue or deepen their cooperation, while combined 73% think that the EU should become increasingly or fully independent of NATO. In this context, the experts suggest that the Serbian government could cooperate more closely with the EU through PESCO to avoid being seen as moving towards NATO, but still becoming much more integrated in European affairs and defence cooperation.

**The way forward**

Serbian respondents seem to be neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic when looking into the future: attitudes towards peace and security in Serbia, Europe and the world roughly correspond to the average of all countries surveyed.

Serbs are pessimistic about renewed cooperation resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. Only 27% of Serbian respondents expect to see more international cooperation after the pandemic, the lowest number among the countries surveyed, together with France.

As a top foreign policy priority, Serbs identify assertion of their country’s own economic interests, followed by protection of national territory and Serbian interests in the region.

When asked about the countries or regions with which Serbia should cooperate closer, the respondents name Russia (75%), the EU (72%), China (67%) and the United States (55%), indicating a preference for a multi-vector foreign policy. The experts attribute the need to maintain relations with Russia and China to the unresolved Kosovo question, as these countries regularly veto efforts to extend recognition of Kosovan statehood. They stress, however, that this focus on Kosovo cannot continue to be the main driver of Serbian foreign policy. Instead, the country should re-evaluate its core principles, align itself much more closely with the EU by broadening its search for new allies there, and strengthening economic and political relations with its neighbouring countries. Survey respondents see the path towards EU membership much more pragmatically: one-third suspect that the EU only pretends to want Serbia in the EU,

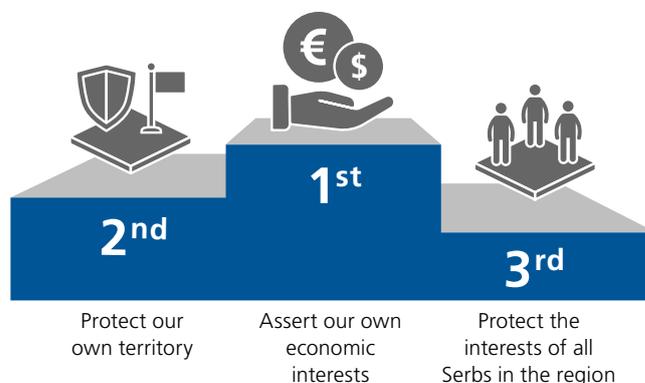
and only one-tenth are convinced that the country has a chance of joining the EU at some point in the future.

Concerning Serbia's international role, respondents do not favour the pursuit of military intervention (only 19% agree, the lowest among all countries surveyed). Respondents are also adamant about taking a clear stand regarding one side or the other in political conflicts abroad (almost 50% disagree, with only Turkish respondents disagreeing more). Some 86% of Serbian respondents consider diplomatic negotiations a legitimate means of resolving crises compared with military intervention (18%). Economic sanctions are similarly disparaged by two-thirds of Serbians, the highest number among the countries surveyed.

Serbs have a clear opinion regarding the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Some 64% agree that the crisis should be viewed as a conflict between Ukraine and Russia, and that no third country should intervene, especially not the United States, which 38% of Serbian respondents hold responsible for the continued escalation of the conflict. According to the experts, this comes as no surprise, as the United States and NATO are deliberately portrayed in a bad light by the Serbian government and the media.

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

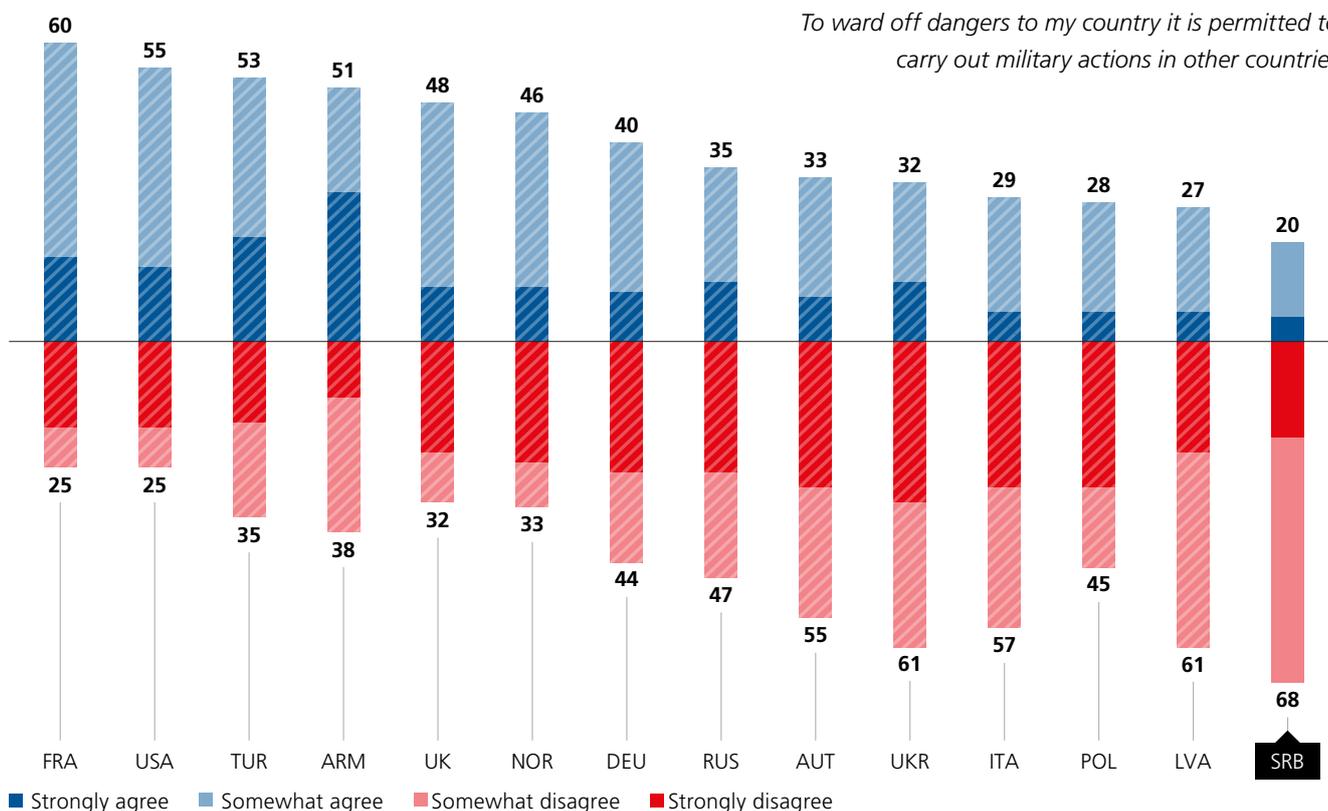
\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.



NATO membership of Ukraine is rejected in Serbia: 47% strongly disagree with that option, the highest among the countries surveyed. In general, only 9% of Serbian respondents would like NATO to play a bigger role in the future – the lowest number in the poll by far. Instead, Serbs put more faith in the UN and the OSCE.

**Attitudes to military action abroad**

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer". All figures in %



To ward off dangers to my country it is permitted to carry out military actions in other countries

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

# Turkey

[Worried and assertive]

After Kemal Ataturk proclaimed Turkey an independent state, the country became increasingly liberal. It became secular in 1928, and in 1950 the first free elections took place. In the following years, Turkey tried to build international ties. It joined NATO in 1952 and signed an association agreement with the European Economic Community in 1963. A history of conflicts abroad (Cyprus) and at home (conflicts in the Kurdish regions) as well as domestic restrictions of freedom of speech and repression make EU membership a very distant, seemingly unattainable prospect. Since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan assumed power in 2003, attempted coup, economic problems tied to mismanagement and high inflation, as well as involvement in conflicts abroad (Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh) have unsettled the population.

## Self-perception

The vast majority of Turkish respondents (82%) are dissatisfied with the country's international status. Over two-thirds believe that other countries are preventing Turkey from achieving true greatness. A similar share (69%) see the EU as regularly in conflict with Turkey's interests. This value is the highest in the survey, even outstripping Russia (62%), which has long had tense relations with the EU. Nevertheless, a large majority of Turkish respondents (70%) favour expanding relations with the EU.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Turkish respondents stand out as being especially worried about current threats and crises. For example, while 90% are concerned about climate change, as well as current economic crises, 85% worry about uncontrolled immigration. Across most items, Turkish levels of concern are paralleled only by Armenia and sometimes by Ukraine – perhaps not a coincidence given the wars these countries face or recently faced.

Turks are second only to Armenians in fearing that wars and other conflicts will affect their country in the future (84%). When asked whether new wars in Europe are likely in view of increasing tensions between Russia and the West, Turkish respondents lead the poll with 65%.

A large proportion of Turks seem to support the mantra 'Turkey first'. Many Turkish respondents feel that a number of areas outside its borders actually belong to Turkey: 56% agree with this, the second largest number in the survey after Armenia. Furthermore, 86% of surveyed Turks believe that foreign

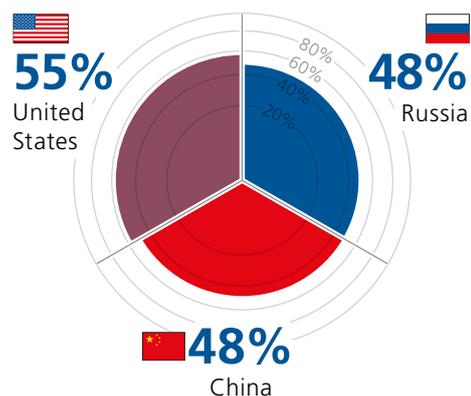
policy should represent the country's own interests without restriction – the second highest value after Ukraine.

In many areas, Turks differ from other respondents when it comes to issues of national identity and domestic interests. For Turks, both are priorities. Experts believe that this is very much due to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's personalistic and populist foreign policy, which he needs to legitimise his super-presidency. Experts believed that Turkish foreign policy was inconsistent and unlikely to resolve crises, for instance in Syria.

Turkish respondents' demand that their country's interests be represented first is confirmed in relation to coronavirus vaccines. For example, almost 77% of the Turks surveyed believe that the government should first secure enough vaccine supply for its own population, even if this puts other countries at a disadvantage. This figure is the highest in the survey, followed by Russia (72%) and Armenia (66%).

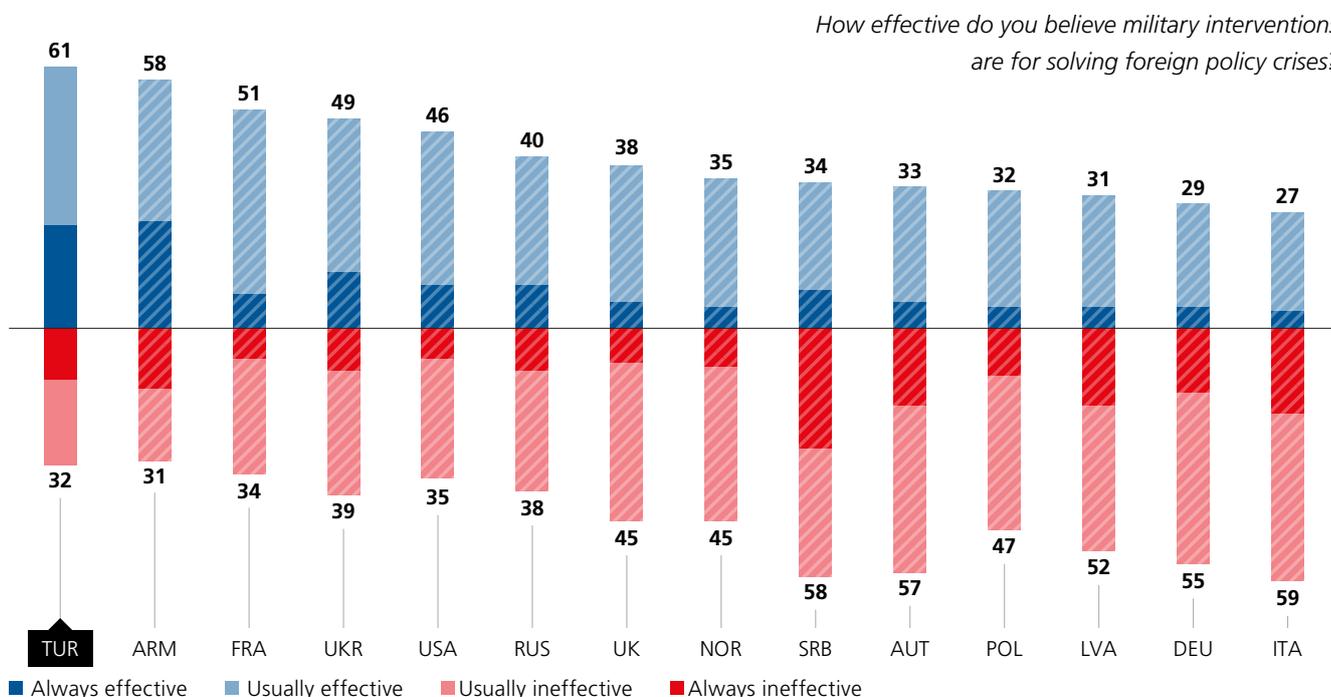
Migration is a big issue for the Turks, which might be related to the large influx of people fleeing the conflict in Syria. Over half of the respondents believe that international migra-

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



### Effectiveness of military interventions

Deviations from 100% result from: "don't know" and "no answer".  
All figures in %



tion should have top priority among global foreign and security policy issues. At country level, most Turks prioritise 'bread and butter' issues, such as assertion of national economic interests and protection of the country's own territory. Remarkably, the development of prospects for refugees in Turkey jointly with the EU is cited in third place.

### Perception of European security

Compared with the other countries surveyed, Turks are much more worried that wars and conflicts will directly affect their country in the future – 84% think so. This number is higher only in Armenia (89%), a country that recently emerged from a war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Even in Ukraine (82%), a country suffering an ongoing conflict on its own territory, respondents worry less about wars than those in Turkey.

The strained relations between Turkey and the United States are reflected in respondents' answers. The majority in Turkey views the United States as a threat to security in Europe (55%), similar to Russia – a remarkable threat perception of a NATO ally. As many as 29% blame the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict on the United States. Russia and China are both viewed as a threat by 48%, not dissimilar from polled Western European nations. Relatedly, support for expanding US cooperation is lower (51%) than for cooperation with Russia (63%) or China (61%).

### The way forward

Although the majority of Turks are pessimistic about the future when it comes to peace and security in their country, Europe and the world, this view is not so different from most other countries surveyed.

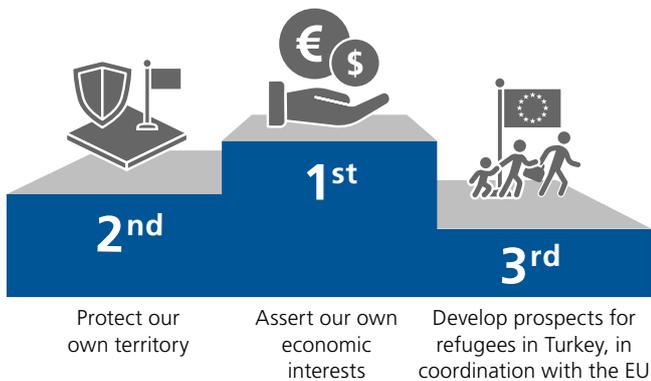
Turkish respondents stand out in their favourable attitude towards the military. Thus,

**69%**  
see the EU as regularly in conflict with Turkey's interests

**56%**  
of Turkish respondents feel that a number of areas outside its borders belong to Turkey

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

*\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.*



79% agree that Turkey should pursue an active foreign policy and play a significant role in resolving international problems, crises, and conflicts. Interestingly, exactly 56% of respondents are also in favour of getting the military involved to help to achieve this goal. With the exception of Armenia, this is by far the highest value compared with the other polled countries. It is therefore notable that 61% of Turks would like the country to spend more on its military – again the highest figure in the poll after Armenia.

At the same time, Turkish respondents are optimistic about the future of international cooperation. For example, Turkish respondents are most optimistic when it comes to increased cooperation in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic (63% believe so). Some 60% of respondents believe that the UN should play a bigger role in the future, while 47% want the EU and NATO to play a more important role. These values are not outliers compared with other countries.

Experts asserted that in order to achieve more stability in the region, further cooperation with NATO was necessary, as Turkey would not be able to settle these conflicts on its own. According to experts, Turkey has managed to stabilise certain hot spots in the EU neighbourhood, and now the member states must become more active. Germany was called upon to invest more in its military.

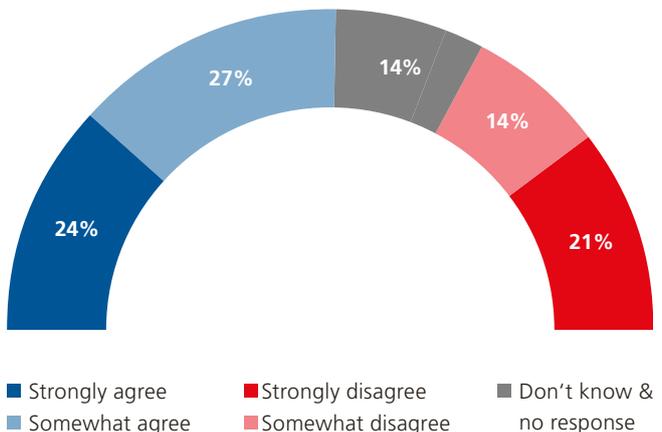
Turkish respondents endorse deepening or sustaining current levels of EU-NATO cooperation (49%

combined). At the same time, as many as 23% believed the EU should act completely independently of NATO – the highest number among polled NATO members.

When asked about relations with Armenia, the majority of Turkish respondents (51%) opt for normalisation, including a resumption of diplomatic relations and the opening of the border (35% are against). This is the exact opposite of opinion in Armenia on this question (35% in favour of normalisation, 57% against).

**55%**  
of Turkish respondents believe the United States to be a threat to peace and security in Europe

**Turkey should normalise relations with Armenia, resume diplomatic relations and work towards an opening up of the border.**



# Ukraine

[Threatened and reaching out]

Since emerging as an independent state from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has gone through a number of far-reaching transformations. During the 2004 Orange Revolution, Ukrainians rose against the old elites for the first time. Nine years later, the Euromaidan fundamentally reinforced the country's orientation towards the West, involving tough political, economic and social reforms. Russia's annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in the East of Ukraine, however, have added economic hardship and put the country at the centre of European security concerns. Despite some new initiatives by President Volodymyr Zelensky, elected in 2019, there is currently no prospect of a significant improvement of the situation.

## Self-perception

Ukrainians are self-confident about their nation, while also seeing themselves deeply anchored in Europe. A large majority of respondents think that Ukraine does not have the status in the world it deserves (79%). Most respondents (61%) furthermore suspect other countries of actively trying to prevent Ukraine from achieving its true greatness.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

At the same time, trust in domestic institutions such as the government, the police and especially the courts is lower than in most other European countries. Among all states in the survey, Ukrainians are among the most convinced that their country has a unique culture that should be protected more than ever before (86%). At the same time, however, an overwhelming majority sees Ukraine as part of the European cultural sphere (84%). As in Latvia, half of all respondents see no regular conflict between EU policies and Ukrainian interests – more than in any other country. Ukrainians are also most supportive of increased collaboration with the EU (84%).

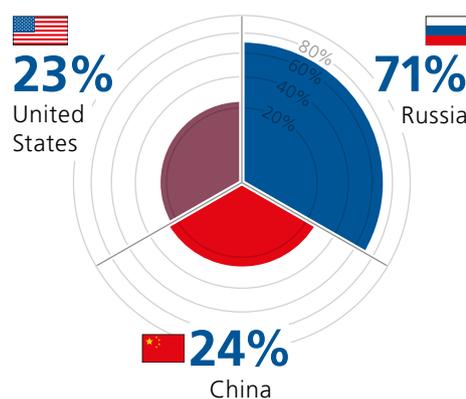
Unsurprisingly given the ongoing conflict, Ukrainians are very worried about their personal situation. Almost 90% express concern about their personal future and many even feel insecure in their immediate surroundings. Almost all respondents (95%) – more than anywhere else – are concerned about wars and conflicts, and a large majority (82%) fear that the country will be affected by them in the future, too.

Ukrainians see the ongoing pandemic as one of the most pressing global problems. They are most convinced that the coronavirus represents a challenge to global peace and security (84%). In contrast to other respondents, however, most Ukrainians find that the international community of states has handled the pandemic relatively well (59%) and they are confident that Ukraine could rely on the solidarity and help of other countries. This and the statements of the experts illustrate Ukraine's strong tendency to rely on the international community, especially the Western partners.

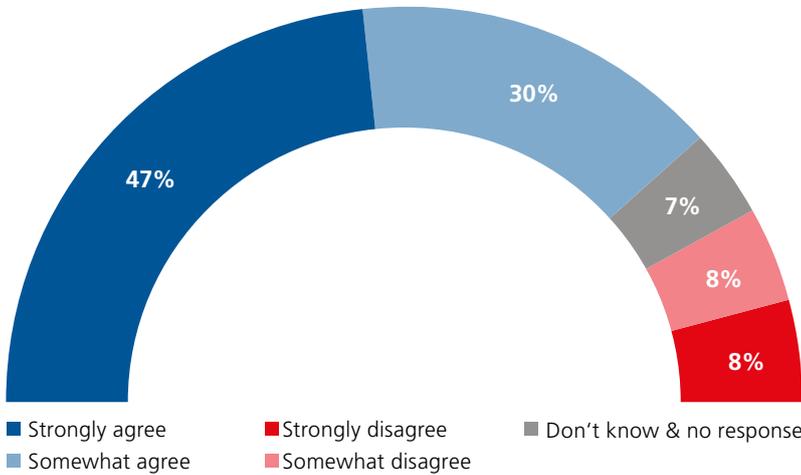
## Perception of European security

Quite understandably, most Ukrainians consider the resolution of the conflict in their own country a prerequisite for improving security in Europe more generally (81%). Those figures mirror a consensus in the expert group that Ukrainian security and European security are inextricably linked. Compared with other polled countries, Ukrainian respondents are most convinced

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



**Previous efforts (e.g. Minsk agreements) have had little success. A new framework of conflict resolution should be created.**



**95%**  
of Ukrainians – more than anywhere else – are concerned about wars and conflicts

**Trust** in the government, the police and the courts is lower than in most other European countries

that Russia is responsible for the escalation (74%), while 40% also blame the separatists. Remarkably, 28% believe that Ukraine itself is responsible for the escalation. A large majority of 71% subscribe to the idea that Russia is a threat to peace and security in Europe and 85% consider the annexation of Crimea illegal. Relatedly, Ukrainians show little support for the right of ethnic groups or parts of the country to separate.

About two-thirds consider that Russia and many European states have incompatible values, and that Russian and EU interests are contradictory. Respondents consider Russia-West relations in Europe to be predominantly affected by the Ukrainian conflict, the resulting sanctions and Russia's interference in the internal affairs of European states. In contrast, and more confidently than most other European states, many Ukrainians (62%) do not think that the EU's enlargement towards the East poses a threat to European security. They are, however, relatively concerned about a potential direct military confrontation between Russia and the West, and about one-third express worries about the developments in Belarus since August 2020.

While experts share this preoccupation with Russia as a major threat to European security, they highlight that such external threats must not overshadow internal ones. Among those,

they name radicalisation, the rise of nationalism and diminishing cohesion undermining resilience, in Ukraine as well as the European Union.

### The way forward

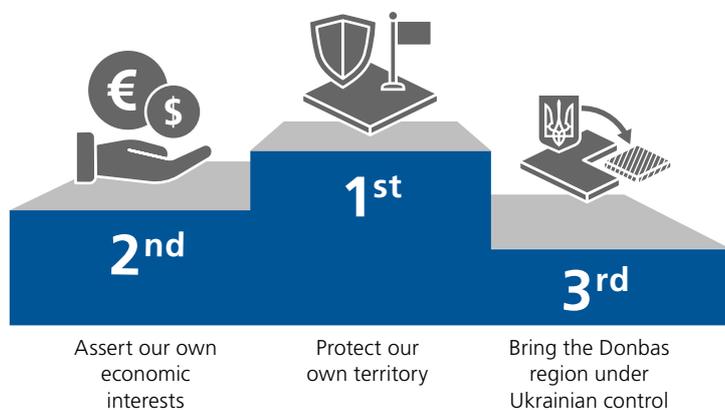
In contrast to their present concerns, a majority of Ukrainian respondents are optimistic about the future development of peace and security, be it in their own country, Europe or the world. They are also confident that the shared experience of the coronavirus pandemic will lead the international community to work more closely on other issues.

Generally speaking, Ukrainians favour a pragmatic approach to foreign policy. Just like in the 2019 survey, more than three-quarters of respondents express support for Ukraine playing a significant role in solving international crises, making the country a strong supporter of an active foreign policy. With 70%, Ukrainians overwhelmingly oppose the idea that foreign policy should first and foremost pursue the promotion of values. Accordingly, they strongly support pragmatic cooperation with countries that do not share the same values as long as it serves the promotion of peace and security in the world (72%). Strongly influenced by the ongoing conflict, respondents name as most important foreign policy objectives the protection of Ukraine's territory, asserting national economic interests and bringing the Donbas region back under Ukrainian control. In terms of foreign policy instruments, Ukrainians consider diplomatic negotiations and economic sanctions the most legitimate, while sharing most of their European peers' scepticism towards military intervention.

Ukrainians are strongly in favour of cooperation with international partners. Some 84% want their country to collaborate more with the EU, making them a frontrunner in Europe. Ukraine is also among the strongest supporters of building up a European army (56%). Accordingly, Ukraine is the country most supportive of the EU playing a bigger role in the future, and, as in 2019, more than 70% would like to see Ukraine becoming an EU member. Ukrainians

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.



are also strong supporters of closer collaboration with the US (73%), and many would like closer ties between the EU and NATO. Some 62% express support for Ukraine joining NATO – 7 percentage points more than in 2019. Indicating some of Ukraine’s divisions, it is worth highlighting, however, that about one-third of respondents (32%) also want closer collaboration with Russia. The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is supported by roughly the same share (36%).

These opinions reflect the experts’ assessment that Ukraine as a relatively ‘small’ country would benefit from international cooperation and a strong multilateral security order in Europe. This is quite a

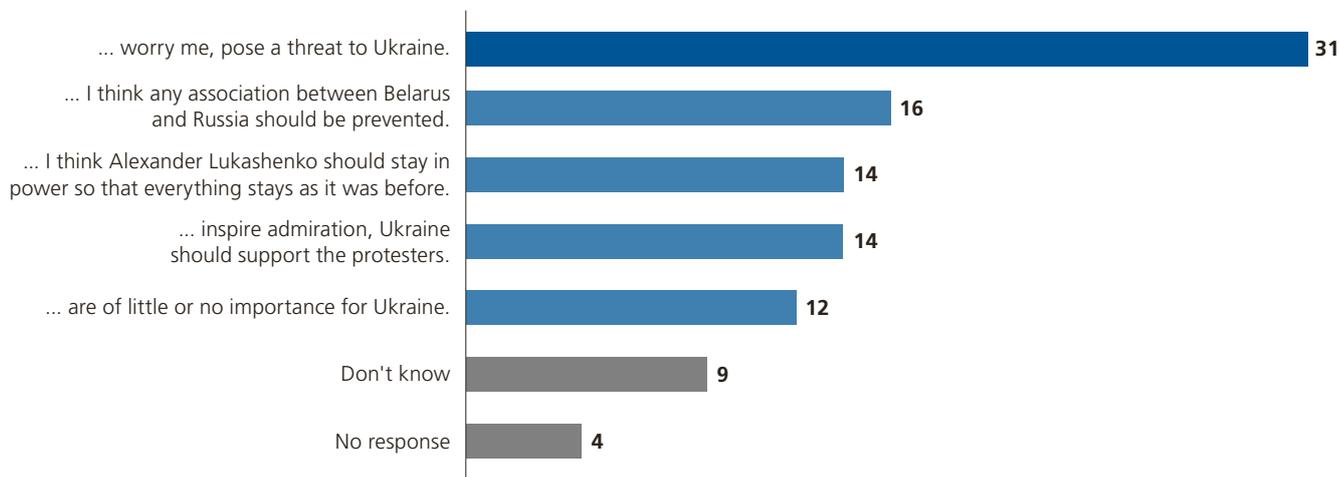
Surprisingly, while in 2019 a majority of **63%** of respondents agreed to the idea of the Ukrainian conflict being a domestic matter that should be left to Ukraine, it is now **opposed** by **57%**

remarkable view given that Ukraine is a large country of 44 million people. Rules, institutions and dialogue formats are considered especially important for the countries between the EU and NATO, on one side, and Russia, on the other. Mirroring the pragmatic attitude to foreign policy expressed in the poll, Ukrainian experts highlight that the interests of all major actors must be taken into account to achieve sustainable progress in matters of European security.

Surprisingly, while in 2019 a majority of 63% of respondents agreed that the Ukrainian conflict was a domestic matter that should be left to Ukraine, this is now opposed by 57%. Accordingly, most Ukrainian respondents support the involvement of third countries and would overwhelmingly welcome a widening of sanctions against Russia (67%). In comparison to other countries, Ukrainians give by far the most pessimistic assessment of the Minsk agreements, calling for a new framework of conflict resolution instead. Experts share a pessimistic outlook on the conflict’s short- and medium-term development. While they regard Russia as primarily responsible for the current stalemate, it is acknowledged that better relations between Russia and the West would also benefit Ukraine.

**Since August 2020, there have been nationwide protests in Belarus against Alexander Lukashenko. The security forces have suppressed the protests multiple times. The events in Belarus...**

All figures in %



# United Kingdom

[Independent and aspiring]

The United Kingdom is a nuclear power with a host of overseas territories and global ambitions. It is a founding member of NATO and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. The country joined the European Economic Community only in 1973, much later than many of its large European neighbours. This was partly due to internal disunity and differences with France. After EU accession, the United Kingdom was experiencing a series of internal and external conflicts (for instance, the Falkland Islands and the IRA bombing campaign) and profound economic restructuring under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Internationally, the country has tended to take on a fair amount of responsibility, for example, in Kosovo, Iraq and Libya. Since 2016, Brexit has dominated UK domestic and foreign policy. As of 2021, the country is no longer a member of the EU, which will continue to have major repercussions.

## Self-perception

Overall, Britons are satisfied with their status in the world (49%; only Norwegians are more satisfied). The majority views the United Kingdom as part of the European cultural sphere (57%), but this figure is low compared with polled EU peers and, perhaps surprisingly, even lower than in Russia (65%) or Turkey (70%).

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

British respondents do not seem to be noticeably more worried than their Western European peers about current events and crises. Some 60% of Britons are concerned about their personal future – a worry that may be due to the uncertainties of Brexit. Issues generating most concern are climate change (77%), terrorism (72%), economic crises (73%) and the coronavirus pandemic (69%).

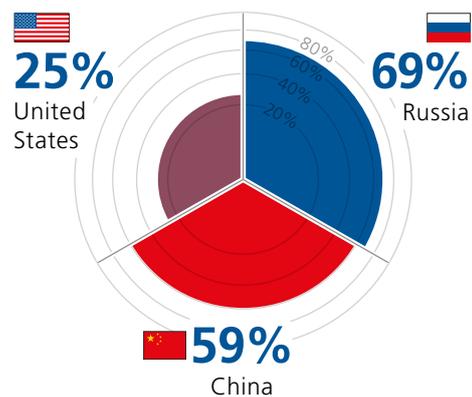
Britons put terrorism first among global security policy problems. International migration, an issue that played a major role in the Brexit referendum, does not seem to be a priority for most Britons (29%). More important are climate change (60%), pandemics (44%) and human rights violations (33%).

At the national level, British priorities include protecting their own territory, strengthening international institutions such

as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, and asserting their own economic interests.

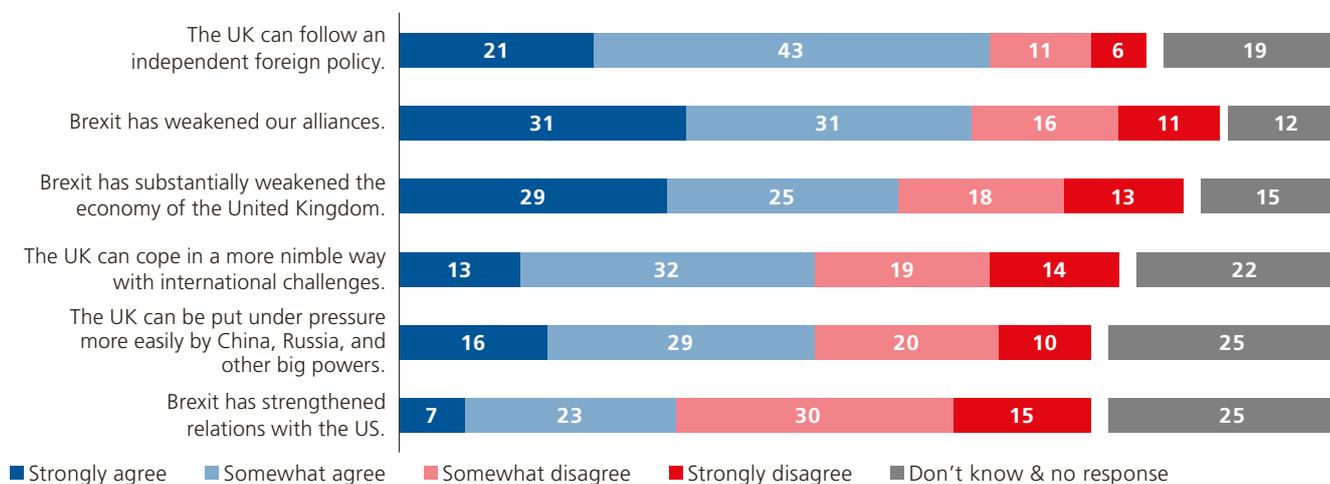
As a country with a history of military and colonial power, the United Kingdom does not exhibit as strong a preference for active foreign policy and military interventionism as one might expect. A majority of respondents want the United Kingdom to play a significant role in solving international problems, crises and conflicts (56%), but support is lower than in most other countries. Opinion on military intervention in conflicts is almost evenly split (40% in favour, 39% against). Furthermore, 54% of respondents want UK foreign policy to represent its interests without restrictions, similar to polled EU peers. Increases in military spending are supported by 45%. This is more than in Germany, less than in Poland and the same as in France. Almost half of the respondents believe the country could carry out military operations in other countries to ward off threats to Britain.

### Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?



### How has Brexit affected the international role of the United Kingdom?

All figures in %



### Perception of European security

British respondents perceive current threats somewhat differently from their EU neighbours. Despite being a member of NATO, Britons are considerably more worried than their Western European peers that wars and other conflicts will affect their country in the future (70%). This level of worry is similar to that of NATO ‘frontier’ states Poland and Latvia. As for the likelihood of conflict between Russia and the West leading to new wars in Europe, British respondents are somewhere between surveyed Western European and Eastern European EU members.

Britons strongly fear both Russia and China. Almost 70% think that Russia is a threat to peace and security in Europe – a level of worry topped only by Ukraine and Poland. The ongoing tensions between the United Kingdom and Russia in the aftermath of the 2018 Novichok poisoning in Salisbury have probably left their mark.

Almost 60% consider China a threat, the highest figure in the poll, even higher than in the United States (56%). Experts noted that China and Russia will continue to be major challenges because their regimes are cultivating authoritarian populism. Navigating this competitive co-existence will not be easy. Having said that, Britain still needs to cooperate with these countries in or-

der to tackle global challenges. Public opinion indicates support for such pragmatism: 59% are in favour of cooperating with non-likeminded states for the sake of promoting peace and security.

While most Britons do not see the United States as a threat, a quarter of respondents disagree. This figure is slightly higher than in other Western European countries, such as Germany or France. This is remarkable, as the United Kingdom has traditionally had good relations with the United States, and aspires to intensify them after Brexit. Experts see Donald Trump as a possible factor. His presidency exposed many assumptions underlying the liberal political order that were previously taken for granted.

### The way forward

Britons are as pessimistic about the future as respondents in the other polled countries. Experts see a strengthening of social cohesion at home as a particular priority for the country’s future. Above all, the economy must be restructured to become more resilient, greener and more sustainable if prosperity is to be ensured.

Many Britons do not necessarily expect more international cooperation from the experience

Almost **60%** of Britons consider **China a threat** – the highest figure in the poll

**54%** express the view that **EU policies are in conflict with British interests**

**Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\***

\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.



gained during the pandemic; only 31% of respondents believe that the experience gained will lead to more cooperation between states on international political issues. The majority (39%) assume that the situation will remain unchanged.

The British are sceptical about cooperation with China (only 32% want it to intensify). Experts noted, however, that because Chinese GDP is seven times greater than the UK's (they were equal only twenty years ago), future cooperation with this economic and technological superpower will be crucial. At the same time, experts warned of securitisation of economic issues because it may intensify competition with China.

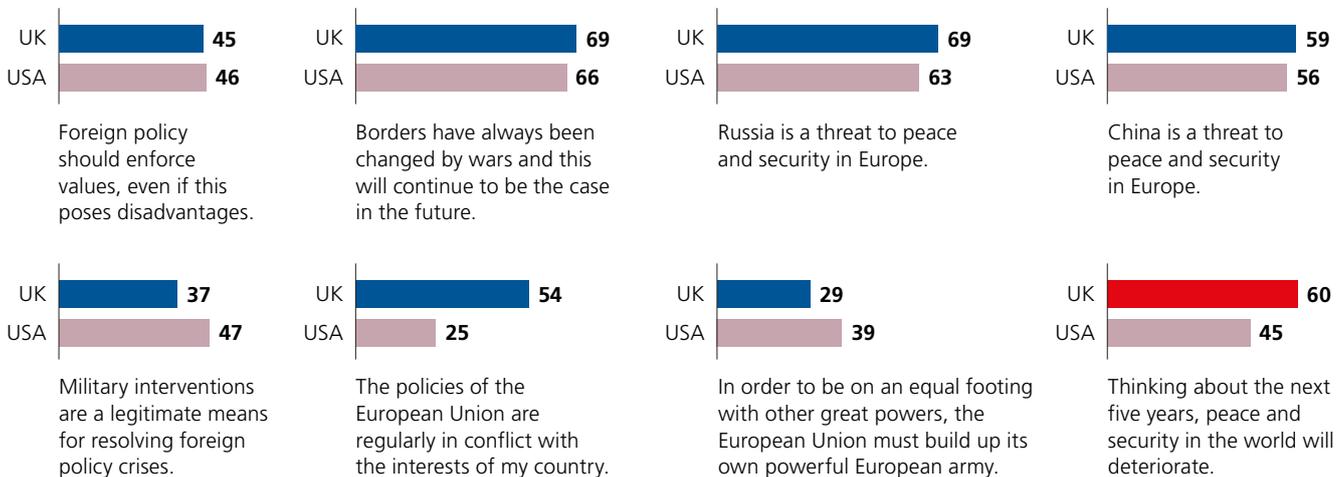
Perhaps symptomatically, Britons exhibit contradictory opinions towards the EU. On one hand, a clear majority of 54% express the view that EU policies are in conflict with British interests. On the other hand, as many as 57% think that Britain should cooperate more with the EU. As few as 39% declare that the EU should play a greater role in the future – only Norwegians exhibit weaker enthusiasm for the EU (37%). Experts believe that relations between the UK and the EU will recover in the coming years, as both sides regain confidence about their roles and trajectories.

Perhaps connected to its departure from the EU, UK respondents stand out as most sceptical regarding EU strategic autonomy. Only 9% think that the EU should act increasingly or fully independent of NATO. On the other hand, 64% want EU-NATO cooperation to deepen or continue as in past years. Experts noted that in order to respond to the rise of China or new forms of warfare, the EU needs to become a substantial foreign policy actor. Majority voting in the Council was named as one possible solution. When integrating European defence capabilities, experts suggested a focus on human security (defending people, for instance, in case of emergencies) and not classical territorial defence (defeat the enemy).

British opinion of Brexit is mixed. For example, 64% of respondents expressed the view that, thanks to Brexit, the United Kingdom can now pursue an independent foreign policy. At the same time, 62% say Brexit has weakened British alliances. Only 30% think Brexit has strengthened relations with the United States.

**Comparison of perceptions in the UK and the United States**

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree", all figures in %



# United States

[Isolationist and self-reliant]

The United States is a crucial actor in European security. This relationship is embodied in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and, specifically, Article V of the Washington Treaty, which stipulates that the United States will provide European signatories with assistance should they come under armed attack. Furthermore, the United States interacts with its European counterparts within the framework of the OSCE and cultivates strong bilateral relations with a number of European states. Transatlantic security cooperation was long taken for granted, but came under strain under the presidency of Donald Trump. In the context of his 'America First' approach, Trump expressed hostility towards multilateral organisations, including NATO. While his successor President Joe Biden has been able to mend some of the damage, the rather uncoordinated US withdrawal from Afghanistan once again made Europeans question the reliability of the transatlantic ally.

## Self-perception

American respondents are generally satisfied with their country's international standing, with only 37% of respondents claiming that the United States does not have the status it deserves. As regards threats faced by their country, survey respondents are most worried about economic crisis (75%), international terrorism (72%) and cyber-attacks (71%), followed by wars and conflicts (70%), and the pandemic (69%). It is evident that internal problems, such as social cohesion, nationalism and economic recovery are key in both the EU and the United States.

Among top global problems, US respondents rank terrorism first (61%), followed by pandemics (50%) and climate change (44%). Asked about the foreign policy priorities of their own country, Americans name protection of its own territory, a strong military and technological supremacy as the three most important areas. The latter may reflect an increasing technological competition with China and the standoff surrounding 5G hardware.

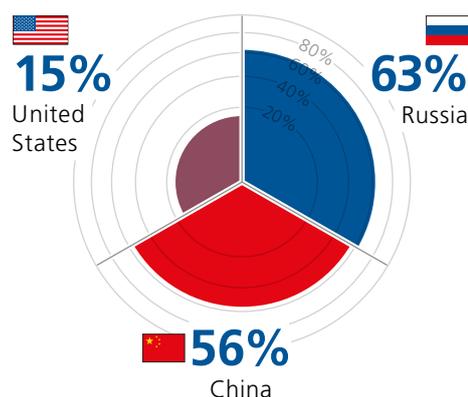
The spirit of isolationism that was brought to the fore during Donald Trump's tenure as president is evident in the survey results as well. Only 38% of respondents support the United States taking more international responsibility and helping other states, in the absence of direct benefits for their country. Only the French and Latvian publics show similar isolationist sentiments.

### Status in the world



*"In my opinion my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries."*

Do you believe that China, the USA or Russia represent a threat to peace and security in Europe?

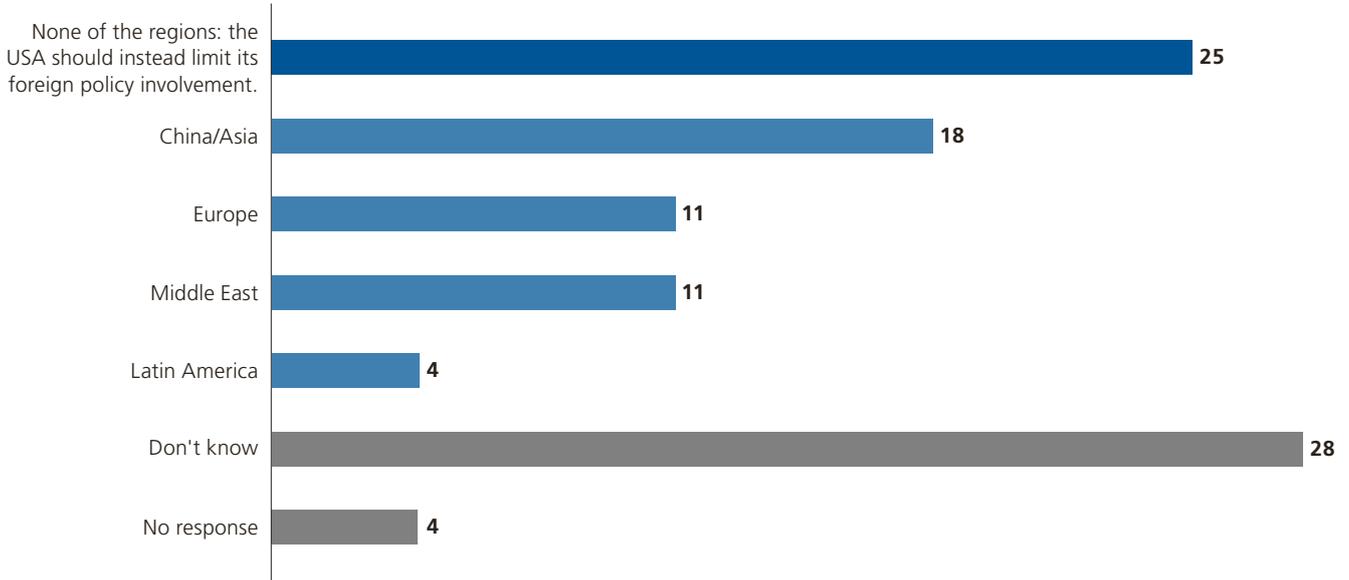


In slight contrast to President Biden's strong emphasis on values, only 46% of American respondents think that foreign policy should enforce values, even if it poses disadvantages. Only a slight majority of US respondents (52%) support cooperation with countries that do not share American values. These results are on a par with public attitudes in Germany and Austria, but are in remarkable contrast with NATO peers Italy, France, Latvia or Norway, where overwhelming majorities support enforcement of values but also support cooperation with non-like-minded states.

As regards satisfaction with the management of the coronavirus pandemic by the government and the international community, the majority of respondents are dissatisfied (53–55%). While as many as 69% of American respondents believe that rich countries should make the vaccines available to the rest of the world, American support is the weakest of all countries polled, on a par with Latvia. The public appears to be split on

**Where should be the main focus of US foreign policy involvement?**

All figures in %



Only **38%** of respondents support the United States taking more international responsibility

*“Mutual distrust makes the prospects for less tense US-Russian relations seem bleak”*

whether the shared experience of the coronavirus will generate closer international cooperation on other political issues.

**Perception of European security**

As many as 79% of respondents are concerned that wars and conflicts will affect their country in the future. This degree of worry is markedly higher than in all other polled NATO members bar Turkey.

Some 63% of surveyed Americans consider Russia to constitute a threat to peace and security in Europe. Among polled NATO states, Russia is seen as a greater threat only by Poland (75%) and the United Kingdom (69%). According to the expert group, mutual resentment and distrust make the prospects for an easing of conflicts and less tense US-Russian relations seem bleak. At the heart of the problem, experts believe, is the fact that the current generation of decision-makers is not aware of the immense potential for escalation in relations with Russia because it does not have the post-Second World War mindset, nor a direct memory of the escalation that was prevented during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

China is perceived as a threat to European peace and security by 56% of American respondents and ranks rather close to Russia in this respect. This is very much in line with the threat perception of China in the United Kingdom. The expert group underlined that the United States would like to forge a common EU-US policy towards China. For the time being, however, the Biden administration continues to struggle to unite European allies against China.

Of all countries polled, American respondents show the lowest agreement (28%) with the assumption that NATO enlargement poses a threat to European security. However, as many as 38% of respondents did not express an opinion on this matter. As regards the resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, almost half of the respondents (48%) consider it to be a prerequisite for improving security in Europe, which is the lowest result across the board, closely followed by the United Kingdom and France (both at 52%). On the whole, as poll results show, many respondents do not have any opinion on particular aspects of European security, EU and NATO enlargement, or Russia-West confrontation.

According to the experts, the United States would like its European allies to take greater responsibility for their own security. In this regard,

four years of Trump were seen as helpful in demonstrating what a world without an active American ally would look like.

### The way forward

Thinking about the next five years, Americans are pessimistic about peace and security at home and across the world. However, they show less pessimism with regard to the future of European security than their European peers. In line with isolationist sentiments described above, only 51% of respondents think that the United States should play a significant role in solving international problems, crises and conflicts. In fact, public support for an active foreign policy is lowest among all countries polled.

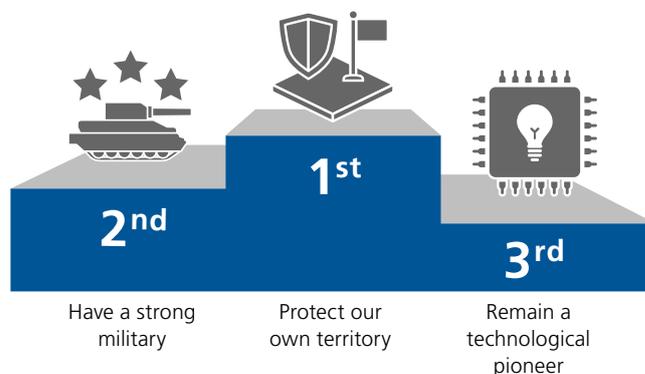
A sense of isolationism is also revealed in preferences about the future geographical focus of US foreign policy. Most respondents would prefer that the United States limit its foreign policy involvement (25%) rather than focusing on a specific region. Even more respondents did not have an opinion or gave no response (32%).

As regards trust in international organisations, the American public expresses the strongest affinity with the UN (54%). It is noteworthy that Americans endorse a stronger NATO almost on a par with a stronger EU. Nevertheless, only 60% are interested in increased cooperation with the EU. In comparison, only the United Kingdom, France and Norway are less supportive in this regard.

Of all countries polled, US respondents are the strongest

### Please give the three most important objectives that your country should pursue with its foreign policy\*

\*Respondents were asked to select from 12 items.

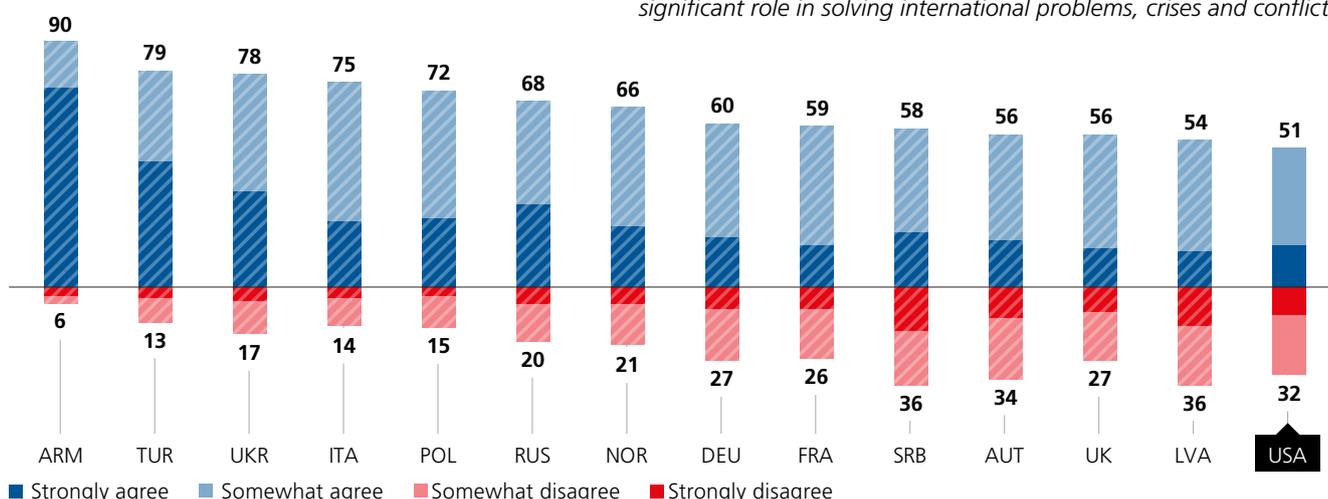


supporters of military intervention and the weakest supporters of diplomatic negotiations to solve foreign policy crises. However, when it comes to increased defence spending, the American public is split on the issue.

According to experts, the crisis in Russian-Western relations is expected to get worse in the years ahead. Rather than focusing on the ‘compartmentalisation’ of differences that enables the pursuit of shared goals while clashing on other fronts, the expert group underlined the need for the United States to seek a common set of ‘rules of the road’ with Russia. The experts also expressed the conviction that the United States will be key to shaping the future of Russian-Western relations, potentially in direct presidential negotiations.

### Attitudes to an active foreign policy

Deviations from 100% result from: “don’t know” and “no answer”. All figures in %



My country should pursue an active foreign policy and play a significant role in solving international problems, crises and conflicts





## NAVIGATING THE DISARRAY OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

*“But relaxation of tensions,  
cooperation between peoples,  
reduction of forces and arms  
control, partnership with those  
who have hitherto been the losers,  
mutual protection against the  
danger of mutual destruction –  
this must be possible, and for  
this we must work.”*

German Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt,  
acceptance speech upon receiving  
the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971

# Navigating the Disarray of European Security

## Key points

The dire state of European security calls urgently for a serious debate across ideological divisions, leading to a political process aimed at renewing European security. The Security Radar 2022 has revealed three key points, which may serve as guidelines for the pursuit for cooperative security in Europe.

- Overwhelming majorities of people in the 14 polled countries want peace and cooperation to be a political priority. Political decision-makers need to provide ideas and initiatives for a more stable international framework. The situation in Europe is grave and complex, but that should not entail inaction, complacency or fatalism. There are major stumbling blocks in the way of progress and it would seem to be a Herculean task to overcome them, but the poll makes clear that citizens do understand the various difficulties and dilemmas.
- Pragmatism is the way forward to break the current deadlock. A pragmatic approach could build on a diverse set of instruments, avoiding TINA (there is no alternative) thinking. Our poll shows that the public does not perceive a contradiction between interest-based and value-based foreign policy. Concerning the instruments of choice, military,

economic and diplomatic means are accepted, with a clear preference for diplomacy over the use of force or sanctions. According to the survey, the respondents do not perceive ideology or values as an impediment to dialogue and negotiation. A broad majority are in favour of cooperating with other countries, even if they do not share the same values. This public pragmatism gives governments room and impetus to shape bold policies aimed at cooperative security.

- A renewed debate on European security needs to take place on the basis of the existing frameworks. The Security Radar 2022 offers several indications of public support for serious negotiations aimed at renewing European security through multilateral institutions. Respondents are willing to cooperate, realising a sense of belonging to Europe and the mutual dependence of their respective countries. Multilateral institutions are viewed positively and still broadly garner high levels of trust, especially the United Nations and the OSCE. The challenges identified also require a cooperative approach and could thus serve as islands of cooperation. Starting from these islands, a sense of successful and effective cooperation in Europe can be revived.

## The precarious state of European security

The wake-up call of the first Security Radar 2019 has still not been heard. European security is more endangered than ever. As of early February 2022, Russia had amassed troops at the Ukrainian border, feeding fears of an imminent attack. The exchange of mutual threats between Russia and NATO, as well as the European Union dominates the headlines. Arguably never since the break-up of the Soviet Union has the possibility of a war with Russia been closer than today. The Russian government is demanding the fundamental reorganisation of European security, including a guarantee that NATO halts enlargement. This is a dangerous undertaking with very high stakes and a high risk of escalation.

The past three years have seen other disquieting develop-

ments. With the Ukraine conflict deteriorating, the European continent recently experienced another war. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh erupted into a full-fledged war in summer 2020.

The bleak picture is exacerbated by the weakened institutional framework of European security, which has been undermined in various ways and not only by Russia. The network of agreements, treaties and organisations has been perforated continuously in recent years. The INF Treaty and the Treaty on Open Skies are the latest examples of agreements that have been set aside, shaking trust and allowing for uncontrolled military build-up. The OSCE, the organisation embodying the idea that security in Europe is indivisible and can be realised only

through a common approach, is in crisis and deadlocked even when it comes to decisions about the budget. The European Union with its aspirations of becoming not only an economic, but also a political actor in its own right, faces familiar obstacles. The finalisation of Brexit, when the UK government withdrew the country from the European Union at the end of 2020, has further weakened the Union with the loss of an important international player with considerable capabilities.

The poor performance of Europeans in security matters was exemplified during the chaotic withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, where poor intelligence, as well as a series of political misjudgements led to days of turbulence in Kabul and the undeservedly disgraceful end of a mission that had been ongoing for almost 20 years. It became clear that, even though the experience of the Trump administration was still fresh in people's minds, the goal of European strategic autonomy is still far off, laying bare European dependence on American military capabilities.

The coronavirus pandemic added an unprecedented layer of uncertainty and a new dimension of insecurity to the daily life of people. Many citizens have for the first time in their lifetime experienced a major disruption of their daily routines, caused by an imminent yet invisible danger to their life and health. The virus reminds decision-makers, as well as citizens, that pandemics are a probable risk for interdependent societies.

Adding to these threats and partly amplifying them further, the climate crisis overshadows the political agenda, especially for the younger generation, and demands immediate action. The necessity of urgent measures is already a political controversy, which will dominate political debates in the foreseeable future. On a positive note, the most recent climate summit in Glasgow showed small hopeful signs of international cooperation, because the United States and China reached an agreement, despite growing geopolitical tensions.

Amid this disorder and disarray, the Security

Radar tracks public perceptions and clearly shows that citizens are worried. Fear of war is on the rise again everywhere, even if at a much lower level in the West than in the East of Europe. There is a sense of danger coming from various directions. Shared concerns include international terrorism, obviously the current pandemic, climate change, but also wars and conflicts. The future outlook seems bleak and negative expectations are flourishing.

One message, however, pervades the survey: overwhelming majorities across the 14 polled countries want peace and cooperation and expect them to be a political priority. That sets a daunting task for political decision-makers to provide ideas and initiatives for a more stable international framework. There is an acknowledgment of the difficulty and complexity of the situation, but expectations are clear. The survey shows that the public have a realistic picture of the challenges, risks and major stumbling blocks ahead. However, people also show some understanding of the application of different instruments and approaches, allowing for a diverse foreign policy toolbox.

## **Stumbling blocks**

What are the major obstacles in the way of improving the situation?

### **Belligerent Russia**

The Russian Federation has become more assertive and of late even openly aggressive. The country has amassed troops in the vicinity of the Ukrainian border and issued a list of demands concerning a new European security architecture. For the countries dealing with this aggravating situation, there is uncertainty about the domestic support within Russia for this kind of foreign policy. Just like in 2019, the 2022 poll reveals a sense of unachieved entitlement among the Russian public, a feeling that the country has not achieved the international status it deserves and that other countries are actively preventing Russia from achieving true greatness. Moreover, among the three most important foreign policy

*The Security Radar tracks public perceptions and clearly shows that citizens are worried*

## Spotlight on the Ukraine conflict

The annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a turning point in security policy. What is almost unthinkable in European security policy, namely the violent shifting of national borders through military intervention from outside, became a reality. As one of the experts put it during the discussion in Ukraine: “2014 reminded us that there is no real limit to escalation in the military sphere”.

Ukraine is, according to some experts, caught between an internal conflict for power in Kyiv and an external armed conflict that has been going on for eight years. Thus the country is not really moving forward, in either respect. Both challenges are mutually dependent and are connected to Moscow’s activism in recent months.

The escalation of the conflict towards the end of 2021 has primarily to do with Russian concerns about the aforementioned conflicts in Ukraine and societal developments in Ukraine. These can be observed in the Security Radar 2022.

In Ukraine the data shows that there has been a steady decline in pro-Russian sentiment since 2019. When asked about the actor responsible for the escalation of the Ukraine conflict, 54% of Ukrainian respondents named their own country in 2019, but three years later the figure has shrunk to just 28%. The same tendency is also visible concerning the question about people’s willingness to join NATO, a crucial issue to Russia: in 2019 56% were in favour, while now it is 62%.

The changes with regard to security policy attitudes can also be seen in the new question about the framework for conflict resolution (Minsk Agreement). A clear 77% of

Ukrainians are in favour of a new framework for dealing with the conflict. This represents clear public support for the government’s official course, namely the replacement of the current roadmap for conflict resolution and internationalisation of the conflict.

Against the backdrop of an atrophied Minsk process, in which neither the government in Kyiv, nor the so-called separatists in the Donbas are offering any concessions, the situation in Ukraine is escalating again.

Although the Ukraine conflict does not attract the same attention in Russian public opinion as in 2019, the positions are fairly clear. In Russia, the rejection of Ukraine’s NATO membership has been persistent for years and is congruent with the Kremlin’s view. In both 2019 and 2022 consistently small minorities of respondents – around 6% – endorsed Ukraine’s NATO membership. The rejection of NATO enlargement to the East, a question covering the same ground, is at an equally high level.

This creates an explosive mixture. We observe a consistent rejection in Russia both of NATO and of any internationalisation of the Ukrainian conflict, which the Ukrainian government yearns for, against the backdrop of growing anti-Russian sentiment in Ukraine. If we add to these developments the supply of modern weapons systems to the Ukrainian armed forces, as well as the current superiority of Russian armed forces, we observe a combination of factors that risks the development of further tensions in the Ukrainian–Russian border area.

goals respondents list the desire to be seen as an equal partner and recognition of Russia’s interests. This provides an impetus to challenge the current state of affairs and illustrates that there is discernible public support for a more assertive security policy.

The disquieting news adding to Russian status anxiety is that, in relation to the Security Radar 2019, now just 49% of Russians believe that their prosperity depends on other countries, compared with 62% in 2019. That allows the regime to pursue a more unrestrained foreign policy, apparently supported by a considerable part of society. Russians deem their country’s status as so important that they would like it to become a foreign policy priority of their government. This public perception of its international status helps us to understand Russia’s current fairly assertive foreign policy. Against the back-

ground of a Russian perspective that perceives and even might hope for growing American indifference towards Europe, we should expect an increasing interest on Russia’s part in establishing itself at the centre of the reorganisation of European security, but on its own terms.

### Status dissatisfaction

As already illustrated on the example of Russia, there are a disquieting number of countries where a majority of citizens are dissatisfied with their country’s status in the world. There is no clear pattern concerning why some countries are more content with their status. In the expert discussion in Russia, for example, it was remarked that China sees Russia as an equal partner and that this respect and the resulting generation of status is very

important for Russia. The growing emphasis on the new dichotomy between democracies and autocracies, used frequently by the new US government, might also be fuelling the perception of loss of status.

But it is the countries that are strongly dissatisfied with their status that give most cause for concern, however, because they also possess strong power resources and lack a functioning system of checks and balances. Their governments have ample room to exploit this sense of dissatisfaction to pursue an assertive foreign policy.

Turkey and Russia fall in this category of rather powerful status-seeking countries, which makes for a fairly uncomfortable European neighbourhood. With these two influential actors ready to change, it is clear that Europe's security architecture is unstable and needs recalibration. Russia has already expressed its aim of renegotiating the pillars of European security by defining red lines and demanding concessions from NATO, thus trying to rectify its perceived lack of status through a revision of the post-Cold War order. Turkey, though a distinctly different case, has also exhibited a rather assertive foreign policy in its immediate neighbourhood, for instance in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but there is still a reservoir of discontent with its place in the world, which could thus pose a future challenge for European security.

### Persisting East–West divisions

Whether it be threat perception, people's understanding of their own status or even trust in government institutions, the divisions in countries that were on different sides of the Iron Curtain are still visible in our survey. Countries that used to be on the Eastern side seem to feel less safe and more concerned than their Western peers. The division is even visible within the EU, where the Eastern member states are more concerned than the Western members. This is disquieting 30 years after the end of the Cold War. The 'fearful three' – Ukraine, Armenia and Turkey – stand out. Citizens of these countries exhibit the highest level of threat perception,

want to increase military expenditure and in general perceive dangers more imminently and pressing than other countries. That might have to do with their recent involvement in conflicts.

These three countries exemplify the risks connected with the European neighbourhood. The countries, geographically located in-between Russia and the European Union, which were once described as a ring of friends and later as a ring of fire, show that the risk of war in Europe's immediate vicinity is still high and has a direct impact on people's perceptions. Societies are becoming more prone to military spending and the use of force. In combination with a perceived undeserved lack of international status, these countries are profoundly affected by decisions taken in Brussels, Washington or Moscow and are rather sensitive towards them. Any EU initiative to shape its neighbourhood towards lasting peace and prosperity therefore needs to take its immediate neighbours' preoccupations and perspectives into account.

### The return of the nation-state

The broad feeling of insecurity and growing dangers has redirected focus on the nation-state. An emphasis on national interests and heightened expectations of national governments can be observed. Here the pandemic plays a major role. People across all polled countries share the feeling that their respective governments have handled the coronavirus pandemic better than the EU overall or the international community of states. Nonetheless, there is a more general expectation that the common experience of the pandemic might lead to closer international cooperation.

The focus on the nation-state also affects foreign policy, in relation to which a clear majority in most of the polled countries support national interest representation without restrictions. Especially the most vulnerable countries, such as Armenia and Ukraine, but also Turkey, show a clear preference for an unrestricted foreign policy. The observation is underlined by the trend that in most countries respondents choose 'bread and butter topics', such as protection of a

*The OSCE and the European Union are trusted by a considerable part of polled citizens, not only among EU members, and thus still have a substantial reputation that should be used to revitalise European security structures*

*European security is at stake and could find itself in an even more dire situation, if political actors continue to muddle through and do not take the initiative*

*We need a pragmatic, honest approach without blinders to start restoring European security*

country's own territory and assurance of its own economic interests as desired priorities for their country's foreign policy.

Additionally, they systematically put their trust in security institutions, such as the military, secret service and the police rather than institutions connected to democratic processes and the rule of law, such as parties, governments or courts. Notably, this trend applies to all of the surveyed countries, regardless of their governmental system.

The good news on an international level is that there remains an expectation of closer cooperation despite the focus on domestic issues. The trust in international institutions is still fairly high, with the UN at the forefront. But the OSCE and the European Union are also trusted by a considerable part of those polled, not only among EU members, and thus still have a substantial reputation that can and should be used to revitalise European security structures.

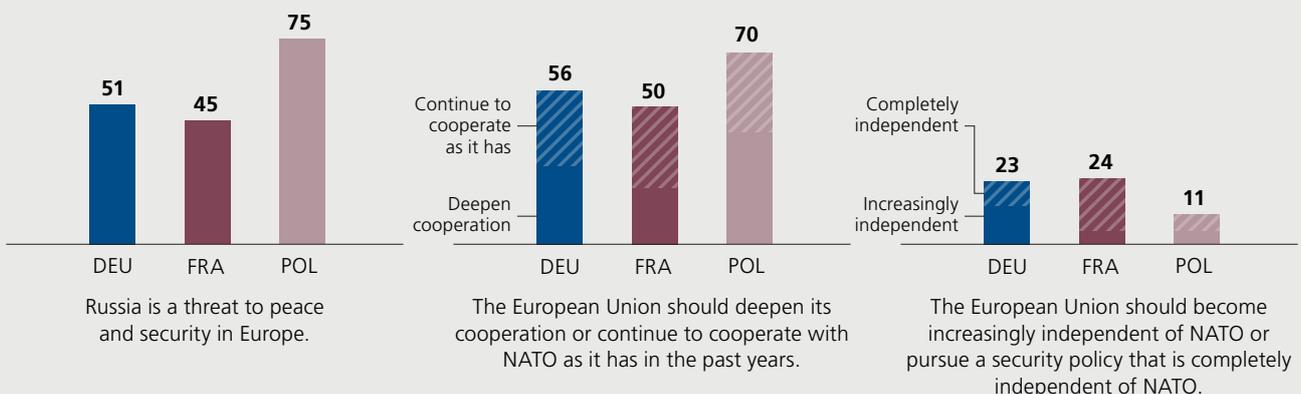
### The United States is wavering

There is much talk about the changing priorities of US foreign policy and a widespread assumption that Washington is losing interest in European affairs. The current series of events, however, in which talks between Russia and the United States on European security dominate the headlines, seems to indicate a different emphasis. But the withdrawal from the joint mission in Afghanistan, poorly coordinated and commu-

nicated, has been a public reminder for Europe that the transatlantic superpower is in the process of reorientation, directed first and foremost to the perceived priorities of the domestic audience. And the focus and predominant concerns of this audience lie at home. The data clearly shows an isolationist tendency in the United States, with many respondents either supporting a limitation of US foreign involvement or focusing on matters such as the protection of American territory, a strong military and technological supremacy.

The European perspective shows that the Trump administration, with its 'America first' agenda, has left deep scars in many, but surely not all of the allies. The poll reveals that expectations of the new government under Joe Biden are fairly high and that there is a widespread conviction that relations have already become much better. This might be the effect of a new language and mutual transatlantic respect, but more unwelcome surprises might be awaiting Europe. Just half of Americans think that the United States should play an active role in solving international problems and support there for an active foreign policy is lowest among all the countries in the poll. The reliability of the United States as the security guarantor for Europe, once called into question by former German chancellor Angela Merkel in a Bavarian beer tent, might be an issue once again.

Comparison of perceptions in the Weimar Triangle



## European Union missing in action

The EU, the aspiring actor to fill the potential gap left by a US focused on domestic matters or the growing Sino-American differences, is still nowhere to be seen. The absence of a so-called *Weltpolitikfähigkeit* – EU's viability as a global foreign policy actor – is illustrated somewhat harshly by the US-Russian talks on European security, while the EU awaits the outcome. Much of EU security policy is shaped by intergovernmental procedures and still decided on by unanimity. The EU's three key states after Brexit – France, Germany and Poland, the so-called Weimar triangle – disagree on many crucial issues, a fact that is also visible in the survey.

There are significant differences between the three countries. The first affects the perception of Russia and the political conclusions drawn from it. Whereas three-quarters in Poland believe Russia to be a threat to European security, only half of Germans and even fewer in France believe this to be the case. This has repercussions for the crucial strategic choices to be made. The views of France and Germany, on one hand, and Poland on the other differ considerably when it comes to the question of EU–NATO cooperation. The Polish emphasis is on even deeper cooperation instead of independent approaches. That shapes the issue of strategic autonomy, a second significant cleavage in the Weimar triangle. The new Strategic Compass of the European Union, which will be adopted in the first half of 2022, will try to find common ground, but the crux lies mostly in the implementation of these decisions rather than in getting something on paper.

In France and Germany the Radar shows public support for strategic autonomy to some degree, understood as a more independent ability of the EU to act on the international scene. In Poland the public positions itself as pro-US and pro-NATO, leav-

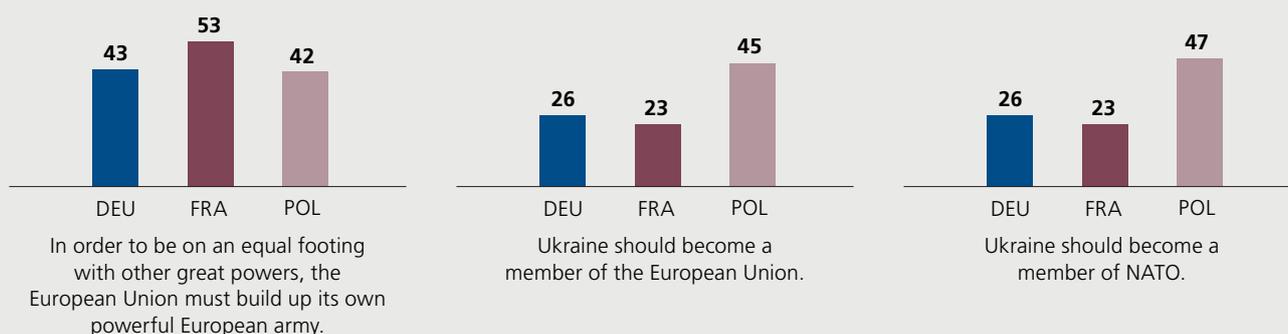
ing the EU to play second fiddle. Given these opposing visions, the EU strategic autonomy will be hard to achieve. There remains a fundamental difference in the understanding of this concept in Europe's centre, affecting not only EU–NATO cooperation, but also questions regarding a European army. Both the opinion polls and the expert group discussions show a lack of ambition for increased strategic autonomy, let alone complete independence. In our expert debates a risk to Europe was identified connected to the pro-European stance of the new US administration. The Biden government might ease the pressure on Europe to get its act together and thus allow Europeans to fall back on the only consensual common denominator of strategic thinking among member states, the hope of a return of the 'benevolent hegemon'.

The third difference in the Weimar triangle, closely related to the previous ones, is the question of integrating Ukraine in the EU or in NATO. Whereas in Poland both proposals are clearly supported, in the other two countries the approach to this question is far more cautious.

## Recommendations

These different trends show that there are reasons for uncertainty and insecurity, visible throughout our sample. European security is at stake and could find itself in an even more dire situation, if political actors continue to muddle through and do not take the initiative, based on an honest analysis of their own strengths and weaknesses. But what can be done and where might there be a way forward?

Combined responses "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree". All figures in %



## Pragmatism as a political guide

Rather than reaching for the stars and failing, we need a pragmatic, honest approach without blinders to start restoring European security. There are two main reasons for tempering ambitions to a realistic level. First, the current focus on great power competition or the return of geopolitics occupies increasing space in international relations and accelerates the trend to the securitisation of a broad range of foreign policy topics, thus limiting the room for cooperative approaches. Second, the complex and interdependent nature of international relations, in which diplomacy in the shadow of the virus has become ever more difficult, does not allow for a 'great leap'. The climate of distrust and the awareness of a variety of risks and dangers necessitate small but achievable steps.

This pragmatic step-by-step approach should be premised on the recognition of status and respect as central categories of international relations, irrespective of regime type and not only in theory but also in practical terms. Both history and current events have repeatedly shown that a sense of unfulfilled entitlement or wounded pride can lead to dangerous situations that can be avoided or tackled only when anticipating these issues with due consideration.

Substantively, a pragmatic approach could be built on a diverse set of instruments, while trying to avert TINA (there is no alternative) thinking. Our poll shows that an interest-based and value-based foreign policy do not contradict each other and can (and in fact should) both constitute integral parts of a responsible policy. Additionally, the survey reveals a general openness towards the toolbox of foreign policy, taking into account military, economic and diplomatic instruments, with a clear preference for diplomacy over the use of force or sanctions. A disquieting aspect in this picture is the fact that, in three of the four surveyed permanent members of the UN Security Council – the United Kingdom, the United States and France – respondents put less trust in the effectiveness of diplomatic negotiations than those in other countries.

Deterrence alone, as important as it is, cannot help us to come out of the current deadlock: this policy can be successful only if accompanied by détente, in other words, offers of cooperation and dialogue. According to the survey, the respondents do not perceive ideology or values as an impediment to dialogue and negotiation. A broad majority are in favour of talking to other countries, even if they do not share the same values.

Our pragmatism matrix (see Figure on p. 103) combines people's opinions on two topics: status and pragmatism, the latter being regarded as a propensity to cooperate with countries even if they do not share the same values. The matrix re-

veals three groups of countries based on popular perceptions. First, relatively pragmatic countries satisfied with their international status, namely Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany. These are potential leaders of a pragmatic political approach because they can negotiate without having to take into account a public fear of losing or being outmanoeuvred. They can be joined by less status satisfied but nonetheless pragmatic Latvia, Austria and France, followed by Russia, Poland and Italy. The third group comprises Armenia, Ukraine, Turkey and Serbia. These countries are dissatisfied with their status but rank high on pragmatism. The latter disposition harbours the risk that the public in these countries would support a rather pragmatic approach aimed at re-establishing themselves on the international scene. That could result in antagonistic or even revisionist policies.

The matrix reveals that key actors such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and France are confident and capable of leadership, but less pragmatic than the other polled countries. This can be an obstacle in the political process towards cooperative European security. To use their leadership potential to the fullest, status-satisfied countries should act out of a sense of confidence and endorse cooperation with countries that do not necessarily share their values. This will allow agents of change to shape policy in a constructive manner without applying their own moral benchmarks to actors that do not share their values and aim for a change in the status quo.

## Update and upgrade multilateral institutions

The Security Radar 2022 offers several indications of public support for a political process directed towards renewing European security. First, respondents are willing to cooperate, exhibiting a sense of belonging to Europe and the mutual dependence of their respective countries.

Second, multilateral institutions are viewed positively and still garner trust among a majority in all polled countries. The United Nations and the OSCE in particular are frameworks that are trusted almost throughout our sample and could serve as starting points for a renewed debate on security in Europe. As recent developments show, agreements are only as strong as the commitment of the participating actors. But the main actors have changed course from the central points of reference in European security, such as the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, and thus confer different meanings and importance on the set of rules shaping Europe. Therefore, a renewed debate on European Security needs to take place on the basis of the existing framework.

Third, overwhelming majorities of polled citizens prioritise



This analysis illustrates the extent to which the 14 countries polled for the Security Radar 2022 survey could be drivers of a **pragmatic policy towards cooperative security in Europe**.

The perceived status of the respondents' country was contrasted with the popular support for cooperation with states that do not share the same values if this approach is conducive to peace and security in the world.

The concept of 'status' was assessed through the item "In my opinion, my country does not have the status in the world it deserves in comparison with other countries." The value of 1 corresponds with strong agreement and therefore indicates a low perceived status. Accordingly, the value of 4 corresponds to a high perceived status.

The concept of 'pragmatism' was assessed through the item "My country should cooperate with every country, even those that do not share our values, if it promotes peace and security in the world."

The value of 1 corresponds to strong agreement and therefore indicates a high level of pragmatism. Accordingly, the value of 4 corresponds to a low level of pragmatism. Therefore, this scale was inverted for the purpose, so that 1 signifies low values of pragmatism and 4 high values of pragmatism according to the underlying concept.

In the coordinate system, the points are defined as the combination of the respective arithmetic means of the two items for each country.

*Pragmatic step-by-step approach should be premised on the recognition of status and respect as central categories of international relations, irrespective of regime type*

*Respondents do not perceive ideology or values as an impediment to dialogue and negotiation. A broad majority are in favour of talking to other countries, even if they do not share the same values*

*Overwhelming majorities of polled citizens prioritise peace and security*

*An EU foreign policy modelled along the lines of a commonly agreed agenda of the three key states of the Weimar triangle would probably be acceptable for most other member states*

*If the European Union wants to avoid being sidelined further, the latest developments should serve as a stark reminder of the need to achieve strategic autonomy*

*The aim should be to strengthen German leverage to enable a European Union that is capable of action*

*Berlin is uniquely equipped to lead a pragmatic process to overcome some of the current deadlock*

peace and security. The global problems that people identify as most pressing – terrorism, climate change and pandemics – can be dealt with only internationally. They can thus serve as islands of cooperation in a fairly competitive environment and can help to revitalise a sense of successful and effective cooperation in Europe. Starting from topics like these, more congruent interests can be identified in the process of negotiation.

Europe has a rich legacy of institutions and agreements to secure peace and security. They are now under pressure, however. But the perspective of the 50-year anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act and the current tensions in Europe should serve as a reminder of the need for continuous building and reviving of trust within the framework of existing institutions. Notwithstanding the current political impasses among OSCE participating states, the undoubted advantage of the OSCE as an inclusive organisation is that every country has a voice and can be heard. Co-operative security, the guiding concept of the OSCE, should thus be centre-stage in the strategic debates currently taking place in Europe, not only by guiding the talks between adversaries, but also by informing the strategic documents of EU and NATO that will shape these institutions for the foreseeable future.

### **Strengthen the EU as a foreign policy actor**

The current situation in Europe has an anachronistic feel to it. The two nuclear superpowers – Russia and the United States – negotiate central pillars of European Security and the European Union remains a bystander, dependent on being included by Washington. The crises around Europe necessitate a strong and united EU, but there is still a long way to go towards that aim. The problem does not lie exclusively in Brussels, but rather with the member states. Much of the security policy of the EU is shaped by intergovernmental procedures and still decided by unanimity.

An EU foreign policy modelled along the lines of a commonly agreed agenda of the three

key states of the Weimar triangle would probably be acceptable for most other member states, thereby breaking the deadlock of unanimity. But there is both good and bad news. Respondents in the three countries share the threat analysis, more or less – with the perception of Russia being the notable exception – and also agree on use of the toolbox of military, diplomatic and economic instruments. Notably France, the former colonial power and member of the UN Security Council, regards military means as more effective and legitimate than its European peers. A more capable and less dependent EU finds support not only in some member states, but in the United States itself. In fact, the current US administration is supporting Europe as a foreign and security policy actor, a dynamic that might help change perceptions in Poland.

The bad news is that, as long as the EU is unclear about policy priorities and divided, especially when it comes to relations with assertive powers, it will remain an observer rather than an active participant. Strengthening the EU as a foreign policy actor is a crucial precondition for being able to shape relations with Russia, China or the United States.

The European Union in theory possesses the means necessary to play an active role in shaping security on the European continent, but only on rare occasions has it managed to bring all its capabilities onto the pitch. A combination of its economic, regulatory and security instruments could change the EU's relationship with Russia and pave the way for genuine negotiations about the main pillars of a stable European security architecture. Such a European approach would also fit the preferences of the polled citizens, because the main focus would not be military means, but rather framing relations by economic means and diplomacy.

The need for Europe to get its act together becomes even more obvious when we widen the scope and look at the global stage. The rise of China is further complicating the situation, and a similar dynamic to the current situation with Russia could be looming in the Far East.

Although China is not (yet?) perceived as a

direct threat to European security by many respondents, there is an awareness of conflicting interests. This awareness is – as in the Russian case – not shared at a similar level throughout Europe. In this case the Eastern European countries are more relaxed than the Western ones, again risking a disunited Europe. Nonetheless, the possibility of a new kind of bipolarity – as mentioned many times in our expert discussions – can be observed in the survey. The new bipolarity would have, on one side, the European Union and the United States, and on the other side China and Russia. There is a clear perception among the people in the polled countries, and with relatively small variance, that the interests of the EU and China are as contradictory as those of China and the United States. On the other hand, the interests of Russia and China are perceived as far less contradictory. If the European Union wants to avoid being sidelined further, the latest developments should serve as a stark reminder of the need to achieve strategic autonomy.

## **The German role in European security**

Germany is uniquely placed in this geopolitical conundrum to facilitate and enable positive change. It has a close and reliable alliance with France and the United States, and in recent history also fairly close relations with Russia, even if that raises suspicions in partner countries. With the first change at Germany's helm for 16 years, the end of the Angela Merkel era makes possible a thoughtful re-evaluation of the country's foreign policy. Although Germany's international relations are characterised by strong continuity, there is a window of opportunity for change. The new coalition government unites domestically a broad alliance of progressive forces with the common aim of establishing the European Union as a strong actor on the global scene.

But the survey shows that the German public is rather hesitant when it comes to foreign policy. There is a widespread feeling of safety and disbelief that the country might be affected by wars and conflicts. A majority supports an active foreign policy and a significant German role in solving international problems and conflicts, but only a third of Germans would agree with the pursuit of military interventions abroad. That fits with the opinion on military spending, according to which increases are opposed by a majority.

On this rather hesitant basis, the new government has decided to adopt a new National Security Strategy in 2022. This opportunity should be seized to honestly define German ambitions, as well as contributions in the EU and NATO. The aim should be to strengthen German leverage to enable a European

Union that is capable of action.

The current crisis might help us to focus the debate at the European level to determine clearly what the EU's priorities and main aims should be in the coming years, and what kinds of capabilities or decision-making processes are needed. As the survey shows, there is general agreement on the nature of the threats, but cleavages about where they come from and how to deal with them.

The new National Security Strategy is also a chance to start an internal German debate about foreign and security policy. It needs to tackle the inherent contradictions in the German public sphere exhibited by the survey: on one hand, expecting an active and influential foreign policy, and on the other hand shying away from anything that has to do with military instruments. The international partners expect more German investment and leadership also in this realm.

The lack of German leadership is an issue that has been more often on the agenda than not, however. The Security Radar shows that public perceptions are still formed by a culture of restraint. Germans also feel rather safe in their surroundings and deem the risk of war to be relatively low. Furthermore, German foreign policy has historically focused on embedding or even self-binding the country into multilateral frameworks. Taken together this creates an environment that makes German leadership heavily dependent on the support of partners, as well as a functioning institutional framework. The crumbling of this framework and the rather divided partners make the current situation difficult to navigate for Germany.

In the current debate on relations with Russia, the lop-sidedness of the two main positions in Germany have become visible. It is solely either a value-based or an interest-based foreign policy. One side puts a clear focus on deterrence, including economic instruments, whereas the military part is left to the United States. The other side emphasises mainly détente and dialogue. While both sides present valid arguments, the debate lacks pragmatism and the innovative shaping of the common framework according to the circumstances. The historical recipe of successful German foreign policy initiatives such as the *Ostpolitik* involves the creative application of different approaches: deterrence and dialogue, a deep understanding of the priorities and expectations of allied states, as well as a clear view of the fact that European security is better with Russia instead of against Russia. That is a narrow line to walk, but Berlin is uniquely equipped and situated to steer the European Union in that direction and to lead a pragmatic process to overcome some of the current deadlocks.

# Analysis at a glance

## Challenges

**Belligerent Russia**

**Status dissatisfaction**

**Persisting East-West divisions**

**The return of the nation-state**

**United States wavering**

**European Union missing in action**

## Recommendations



**Pragmatism as a political guideline**

A pragmatic approach premised on recognition of status and respect could pave the way for restoring European security. It should build on a diverse set of foreign policy instruments, with a clear focus on diplomacy, and commit to interest-based negotiations across ideological divisions.



**Update and upgrade multilateral institutions for a political process**

The multitude of challenges to European security require a cooperative approach. Multilateral institutions such as the OSCE enjoy a high level of public support and could serve as fora for serious negotiations to renew European security.



**Strengthen the EU as a foreign policy actor**

The Weimar Triangle could be the key to European strategic autonomy. The EU possesses a range of instruments, but needs to apply them strategically. As long as the Union is unclear about priorities and divided, it will remain an observer, even in questions of European security.

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