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Public Opinion poll in 24 EU countries plus Switzerland

Ukraine - War: The View of Europeans

Main concerns of EU Citizens: inflation, world war, energy supply and nuclear weapons - Slight majority in favour of increasing defense expenditure - High willingness to accept refugees

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The main concerns of EU citizens in connection with the Ukraine war are inflation, energy supply, the danger of a world war and the possible use of nuclear weapons. A majority favours higher defense expenditure. Renewable energy becomes an anchor of hope against dependence on Russia. The willingness to accept refugees is high, but not unrestricted. These are the results of the first EU-wide Gallup poll on the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

More than 80 percent of respondents fear price increases and inflation, around three quarters of EU citizens are concerned about the risk of European involvement in the Ukraine conflict, a world war and the use of nuclear weapons. 70 per cent are afraid of an impairment of energy supply, 66 per cent of harmful consequences of sanctions for their own economy.

There is great appreciation for the EU as an integrating force on the continent: almost two-thirds of those surveyed see excellent cohesion between the EU member states. This attitude is strongest in Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Denmark and Ireland, and lowest in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Greece and Bulgaria.

The attitude towards sanctions was also surveyed: 42 percent of EU citizens are of the opinion that the sanctions imposed against Russia are appropriate, 43 percent are in favour of tightening them, 15 percent think they already go too far.

The strongest support for the tightening of sanctions is in Lithuania, Poland and Finland. More than a third of Bulgarians, Slovaks and Greeks, on the other hand, already consider the sanctions to be too far-reaching.

Energy dependence on Russia is ringing alarm bells all over Europe, most loudly in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia. The replacement of Russian energy supplies with renewable energy meets with undivided approval.

In the EU as a whole, every second citizen is in favour of admitting Ukraine to the EU. This attitude is most pronounced in Poland, Estonia, Lithuania as well as on the Iberian Peninsula and in Ireland. In Central Europe - Austria, Slovakia and Hungary - as well as in Greece, citizens are much more sceptical about Ukraine joining the European Community.

On average in the EU, an overwhelming majority of respondents (78 percent) are in favour of a more active role for the EU in the world. This attitude is strongest in Poland, Lithuania and the Iberian Peninsula, and weakest in Austria and Denmark.

More than half of EU Europeans are in favour of building a European army and increasing defense expenditure. Support is strongest on the Iberian Peninsula, in Belgium, Poland, Lithuania and Romania, and weakest in the neutral countries Finland, Ireland and Austria as well as in Sweden.

Only 45 percent of EU Europeans rate the equipment and operational capability of their country's armed forces as good or very good. Citizens are most aware of military weaknesses in Austria, Germany, Croatia, Slovakia as well as Ireland and Bulgaria.

Europeans are largely unanimous in their willingness to accept refugees: 50 per cent are in favour of accepting Ukrainian refugees in their country indefinitely, 44 per cent are in favour of accepting them in limited numbers.

How are the major powers perceived against the backdrop of the Ukraine war? Gallup International also asked people in Europe about this. The result: 63 percent currently see the EU as the most important stability factor in the world order. 38 percent concede this rating to the USA. Only 12 percent see China in this role. Russia is perceived as a destabilising power.

Methodology:

Representative online survey by the Gallup International Association with 23,004 respondents in 24 EU countries plus 1,000 respondents in Switzerland. From the EU member states Malta, Cyprus and Luxembourg were not included. Survey period 7 to 23 March 2022, method: computer-assisted web interviews, age 18 +.

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