



# THE WORLD THROUGH HUNGARIAN EYES

## FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES IN HUNGARY IN 2023

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Policy Solutions' comprehensive survey of foreign policy attitudes reveals how Hungarian public opinion sees the world in 2023. This study aims to present the Hungarian public's perception of their nation's place in the world and the Hungarians' assessment of crucial international issues, conflicts, and players. We asked respondents about the goals that should define Hungarian foreign policy and which countries we should closely cooperate with. We further looked at the Hungarian public's awareness of leading international politicians and public figures and wanted to know how popular they are. We also analysed the public's view of the United States and the People's Republic of China in detail. In addition to asking citizens about Hungary's NATO membership, we also sought to gauge the public's support for Finland and Sweden joining NATO.

The survey of attitudes towards the Russia-Ukraine war was a major focal issue. We asked respondents about the support for Ukraine by the EU and Hungary, the sanctions against Russia, and their expectations concerning the outcome of the war. Drawing on the results of three distinct data collections, we also examined how the public's views of the respective credibility of Western/Ukrainian and the Kremlin's narratives changed over time.

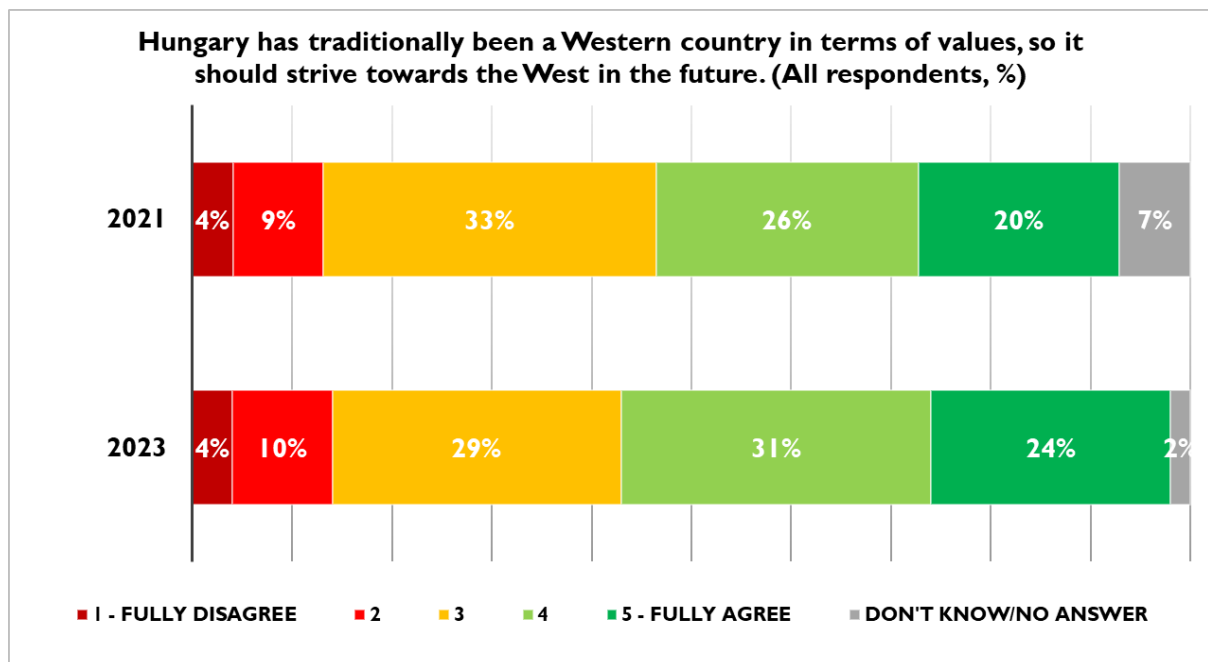
As a foundation for the analysis, we performed a public opinion survey between 27 March and 4 April 2023; our partner in conducting the survey was Závecz Research. The survey was administered in the

form of personal interviews, and the questions were presented to 1,000 persons who were representative of Hungary's adult population in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, and the type of municipality they reside in. A new feature in our study was that we analysed the distribution of foreign policy views based on media consumption patterns as well. The study was realised with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest.

**Although the majority believe that Hungary's place is in the West, over the past two years the share of those who would prefer closer ties with Russia has doubled**

**A majority of Hungarians (55%) assessed that in terms of the values we hold, our country belongs with the West and should thus strive to deepen the ties with our western partners** (Figure 1). Only 13% of respondents disagreed with this. As compared to 2021, the share of those who were neutral or had no opinion on this question declined, while the proportion of those who supported a pro-Western view increased by nine percentage points. A plurality of government party voters (46%) also supported the idea of Hungary belonging with the West and sharing Western values, but a fifth (21%) of Fidesz-KDNP voters disagreed with this assessment. Two-thirds (67%) of those who support either of the six parties that were part of the opposition alliance in the 2022 election also shared the belief that Hungary is traditionally aligned with the West in terms of its values, while only 9% disagreed.

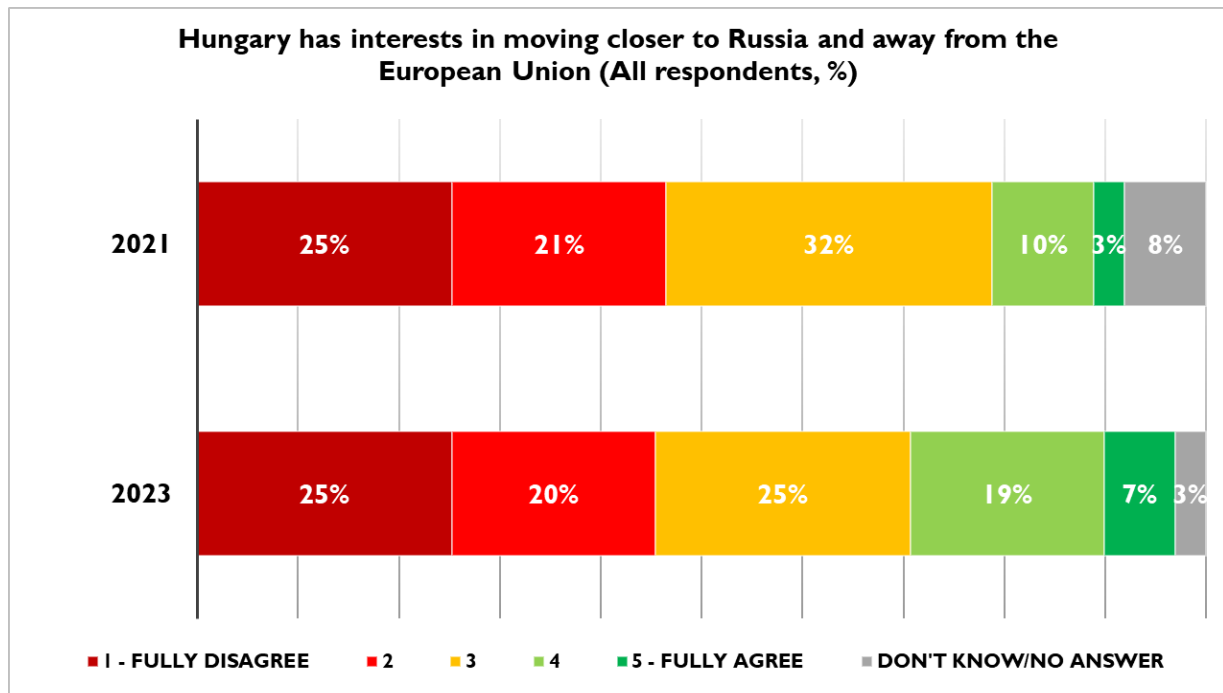
Figure 1.



A quarter of Hungarians (26%) said it would be in Hungary's interest to intensify ties with Russia and move away from the EU (Figure 2). Still, a plurality of Hungarians (45%) continue to be against closer ties with Russia. **While the share of those who are opposed to cooperating with Russia has not changed over the past two years (it was 46% in 2021 and 45% in 2023), the proportion of respondents who think Hungary should seek closer relations with Russia has doubled during this time, from 13% to 26%.** A narrow plurality (35%) of government party supporters said that Hungary should intensify its relations with Russia, while the share of Fidesz-KDNP voters who reject this foreign policy stance was six percentage points (29%) lower. By contrast, only a quarter of the six-party opposition's supporters (24%) favour closer ties with Russia, with an overwhelming majority (60%) rejecting this. The voters of the far-right Our Homeland party broadly share the

assessment of other opposition voters: while 22% of them would support closer ties with Russia, 51% are opposed to this.

Figure 2.



### The majority do not believe that Hungary could emerge as the leading power of the Central European region

In addition to looking at Western and Eastern orientations, we also examined the public's opinions concerning Hungary's situation in Central Europe. **Fifty-six percent of respondents said that we should accept the fact that ours is a small nation and that hence we will not be the ones to determine the future of our region.** On the other hand, a fifth of Hungarians (21%) believe that if we pursue the right strategy, we could emerge as the leaders of this region. **When we asked respondents whether Hungary could become the economic engine of Central Europe, 39% agreed that it could, while a quarter of respondents (24%) did not see this as a realistic aspiration.** As far as the military is concerned, although 30% of Hungarians said that **Hungary should become the leading power in the region in terms of military power, an even higher proportion (40%) opposed such an ambition.**

### The two most important objectives of Hungarian foreign policy: defending national sovereignty and cooperating with the Western allies

We also asked respondents what considerations and objectives Hungarian policy should be based on. **The answers revealed two major camps in terms of thinking about the priorities of foreign policy: one emphasised the defence of national sovereignty (40%), while the other highlighted the role of the importance of cooperating with our Western allies (37%).** The third most popular idea was fostering diplomatic and economic relations with the countries of the Central European region (31%). It is also interesting to see which foreign policy considerations and objectives seem less important to the Hungarian public. Fifteen percent of respondents said that Hungary should treat the protection of Christian values and communities as a priority of international politics. The wider dissemination and promotion of Hungarian culture ranked second to last (14%).

Finally, assistance to less developed countries and active assistance in crisis regions was mentioned least often (10%).

**Roughly half of the government party's voters (48%) believe that defending independence and sovereignty are the most important goals.** Twenty-nine percent of Fidesz-KDNP voters said that deepening the ties with our Western allies should be a key foreign policy objective; this figure is eight points lower than the average of the overall population. **By contrast, among the voters of the six-party opposition bloc, a plurality (44%) believe that Hungary should primarily focus on intensifying our relations with the country's Western allies and bolstering the cooperation and trust between Hungary and the West.** Among these voters, strengthening diplomatic and economic cooperation with neighbouring countries came in second (38%). Furthermore, a third of opposition voters (33%) also believe that the defence of independence and solidarity ought to be among the top three foreign policy priorities. Hence, among opposition voters, the last figure is 15 percentage points lower than among Fidesz voters, although defending sovereignty still made it into the top three foreign policy objectives.

### **Hungarians are most likely to call for closer partnerships with Austria and Germany and least likely to want a more intense relationship with Ukraine and Russia**

We also surveyed which countries the respondents believe Hungary should nurture closer ties with. **Among respondents who answered without being given specific examples, close to half (47%) said that building and maintaining close ties with Germany is a priority. Among the neighbouring countries, Austria (30%) was mentioned most frequently as a country which it would be essential to have a close relationship with. The United States (27%) was third in the frequency of unprompted mentions.**

In our survey, we also named 17 countries specifically and asked respondents how they felt about Hungary's relationship with them. **Among the countries listed, our neighbour, Austria (90%), and Germany (87%) were most frequently chosen as countries with which the respondents wanted Hungary to have deeper ties.** Another neighbouring country, Croatia (86%), also received a very high level of support. On the whole, Hungarians would primarily deepen ties with Western countries, followed by the Visegrad Four and Slovenia. China, South Korea, Ukraine and Russia were the least likely to be selected. **Among Fidesz and Our Homeland voters, Ukraine was the least likely to be chosen as a preferred partner, while Russia ranked last among opposition voters.**

**Government party voters are far more likely (67%) to support a close partnership with Russia than the supporters of the six-party opposition bloc (34%).** Even voters of Our Homeland are more likely (54%) to want to cooperate with Ukraine than Fidesz-KDNP voters (46%). Cooperation with other Visegrad countries proved popular across the board, however. **The United States was least preferred among government party supporters; among them, the US came in third from last after Ukraine and South Korea among the countries that the given respondents want Hungary to nurture closer ties with.** Sixty-four percent of Fidesz-KDNP voters support closer ties with the United States, while slightly more want intense ties with Russia (67%) and China (73%). **Among all political segments, the most popular ally was Austria,** while our Eastern neighbour Romania was always among the least popular five or six countries, also irrespective of the respondent's political preferences.





## **Nearly half of Fidesz supporters believe that Ukraine is a threat to Hungary, while two-thirds of opposition voters hold the same about Russia**

In addition to looking at Hungary's partnerships, we also examined which countries respondents believe pose a threat to Hungary. Of the countries we asked respondents about, Hungarians are most likely to consider Russia (47%) a threat, followed by Ukraine (35%), China (27%), and the US (26%). **A plurality of respondents did not consider the United States or China to be a threat to Hungary, whereas more people were likely to consider either Russia or Ukraine as threatening than not.**

**Government party supporters are most likely to see Ukraine as a major threat to Hungary (46%),** while 36% feel the same about the United States, and 35% consider Russia to be in that category too. **Over half of Fidesz-KDNP supporters (56%) do not look at China as a threat to Hungarians,** and only 18% disagree with that assessment. **The vast majority of the six-party opposition bloc's supporters (64%) see Russia as a threat.** Only 26% of opposition voters feel this way about Ukraine, while 39% do not see it as a threat. **A plurality (47%) of opposition supporters consider China a threat to Hungary. At the same time, over half do not think of the United States as a threat to our country (54%).** Forty percent of Our Homeland voters believe that Russia is a threat to Hungary, and 33% said the same about Ukraine. **Very few supporters of the far-right party are wary of China (14%), and half (50%) do not think of it as a threat to Hungary.** With regard to the US, the perception of threat is higher (30% said that it is a threat to Hungary, 48% said no).

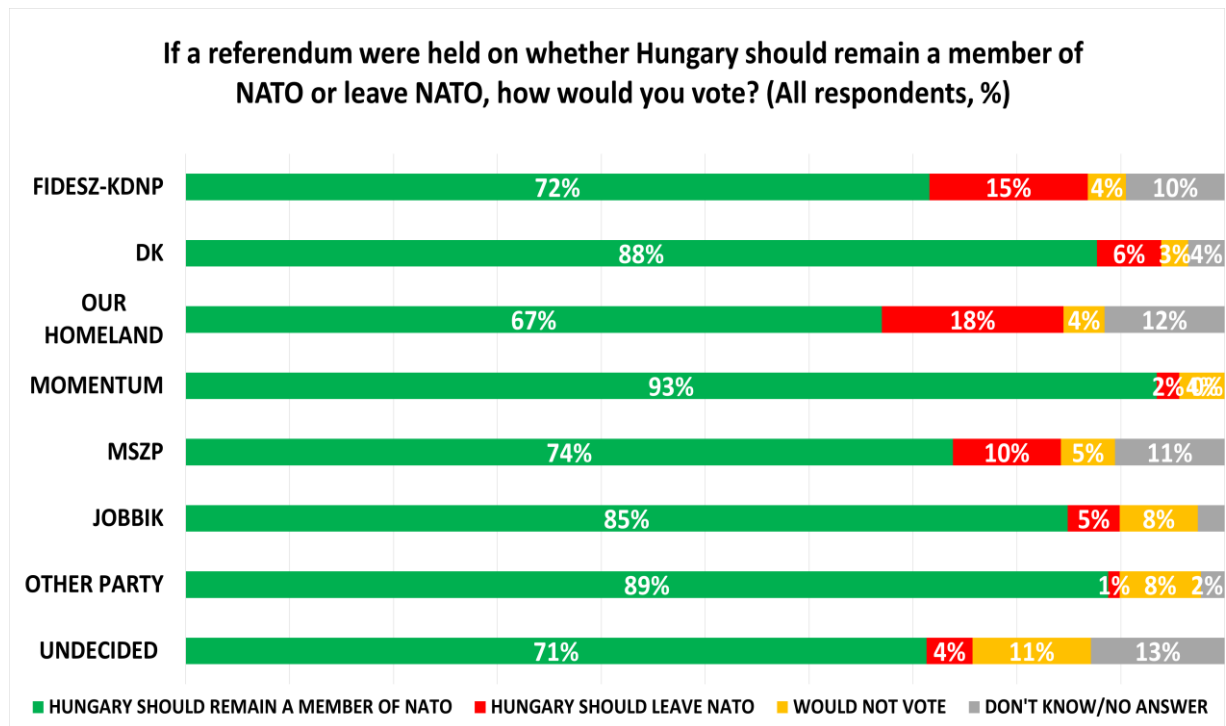
## **Respondents are most likely to think of Hungary's NATO and EU memberships as beneficial, while they are least to believe that being on Turkic Council is an advantage**

**Hungarians fundamentally believe that it is to our benefit to be part of the international communities that we have joined as members.** A substantial majority of respondents (68%) said that NATO membership was an advantage, 64% said the same about European Union, and 61% about the United Nations. Over half of the Hungarian public also takes a positive view of our membership in the Visegrad Cooperation (55%) and the International Monetary Fund (53%). The odd one out in terms of the broad positive view of international memberships: a mere 27% of respondents believe that our membership in the Turkic Council benefits Hungary, while 21% said that it is a disadvantage. At the same time, as compared to many of the other examples, high ratios of respondents either had no opinion (22%) about the Turkic Council or were neutral on it (32%).

## **Three-quarters of Hungarians support our country's NATO membership**

**An overwhelming majority of Hungarians (76%) said they would reaffirm Hungary's NATO membership if a referendum were held on the issue** (Figure 3). A mere 9% said they would vote to leave the organisation. **The supporters of NATO membership make up at least two-thirds among the voters of all Hungarian parties.** The voters of Momentum (93%), the Democratic Coalition (88%), and Jobbik (85%) are the most committed to NATO. At the same time, the supporters of MSZP (74%), Fidesz-KDNP (72%), and Our Homeland (67%) are also predominantly in favour. With 18% and 15%, respectively, Our Homeland and Fidesz-KDNP voters have the highest share of supporters who favour Hungary leaving NATO.

Figure 3.

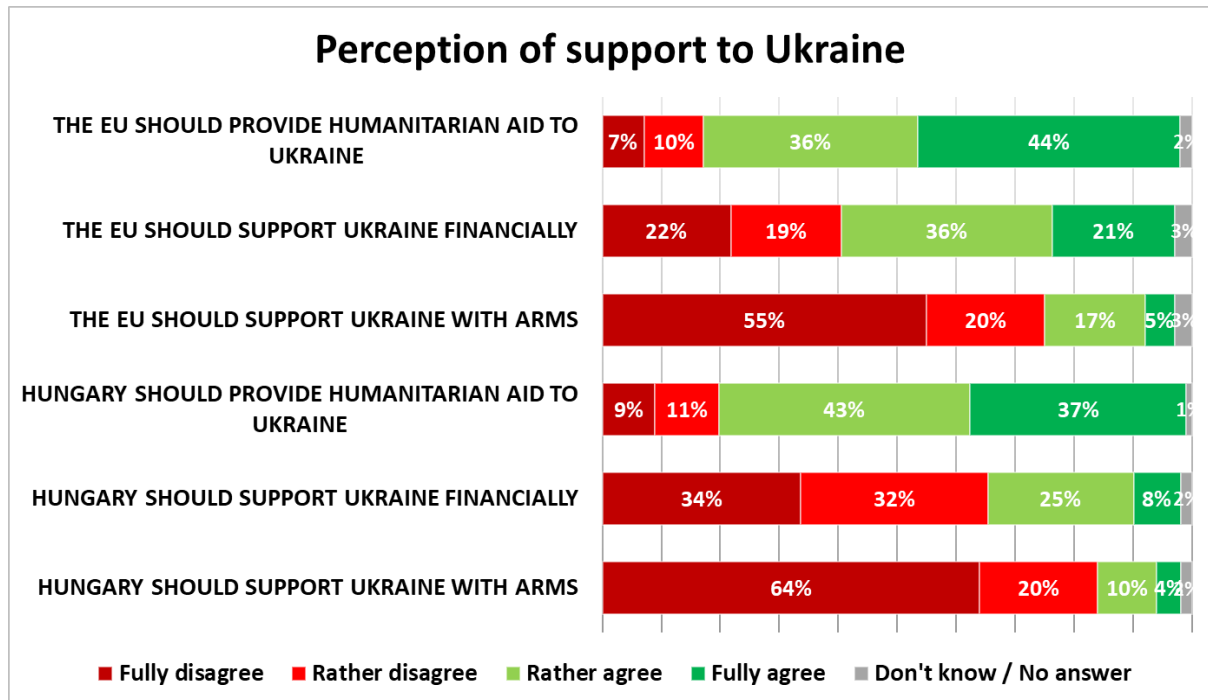


**Two-thirds of Hungarians (68%) believe that Finland and Sweden belong in NATO.** Twelve percent of respondents are opposed to the idea of the two countries joining the military alliance, while 20% could or would not answer the question. A decisive majority (62%) of government party voters also support the idea of the two Scandinavian countries joining the military alliance, but every fifth Fidesz voter (19%) is opposed. Among the voters of Our Homeland, support for the NATO accession of Finland and Sweden was even lower at 57%, while every fifth (21%) of the party's voters are opposed to it. The voters of Momentum (87%) and the Democratic Coalition (86%) are most likely to support Finland and Sweden joining NATO.

### **Support for Ukraine: The majority is in favour of humanitarian aid and EU financial support but opposed to military assistance**

Our study also takes a detailed look at the social attitudes concerning the Russia-Ukraine war. An overwhelming majority of Hungarians support humanitarian assistance by the EU (80% for and 17% against) and Hungary (80% for and 20% against) alike (Figure 4). **While the majority of Hungarians agree that the EU should support Ukraine financially (57% for and 41% against), two-thirds are opposed to the idea of Hungary extending financial support to our embattled neighbour (33% for and 66% against).** With respect to military assistance, the pro position is in the minority regarding both, EU or Hungarian engagement (EU: 23% for and 75% against; Hungary: 14% for and 84% against).

Figure 4.



We used multivariate analyses to examine the respective impacts on the attitudes towards support for Ukraine of demographic factors, party preferences, and media consumption. As opposed to those without partisan preferences, **Fidesz voters are significantly less likely to agree with EU support for Ukraine. Opposition voters are significantly more likely to endorse both EU and Hungarian support for Ukraine.** Those over the age of 60 were substantially less likely to agree with either EU or Hungarian support for Ukraine than adults under 30. In examining different segments by media consumption, only one group stood out: **the consumers of media that are typically critical of the government were significantly more likely to endorse support for Ukraine by both the EU and Hungary.**

**There has been a significant deterioration in the favourable attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees, but they are still viewed more positively than Middle Eastern refugees**

How we relate to those who have fled the war is also a dimension of support. **Based on our data, there has been a substantial deterioration in the Hungarian public's attitude towards Ukrainian refugees. In the spring of 2023, a mere 16% of respondents indicated that they would feel good about Ukrainian refugees moving next door, while 43% said it would make them uncomfortable.** A year earlier, 25% had taken a positive view of Ukrainian refugees moving in next door (marking a nine-percentage point decline), while 30% had taken a negative view (a 13 percentage point increase).

Hungarians' perception of Ukrainian refugees is similar to how they relate to Chinese families and individuals (16% expressed a welcoming attitude, while 44% said they would feel uncomfortable with Chinese neighbours). The government party's yearslong communication campaign also had a discernible impact: Hungarians harbour the most negative attitude towards Middle Eastern refugees. Over half of the respondents (56%) said they would be discomforted by Middle Eastern refugees moving in next door, while a mere 8% said they would be comfortable with that. These are far more negative values than the attitudes concerning Ukrainian refugees.

## The fear that the other side might push Hungary into a war is more widespread among government supporters

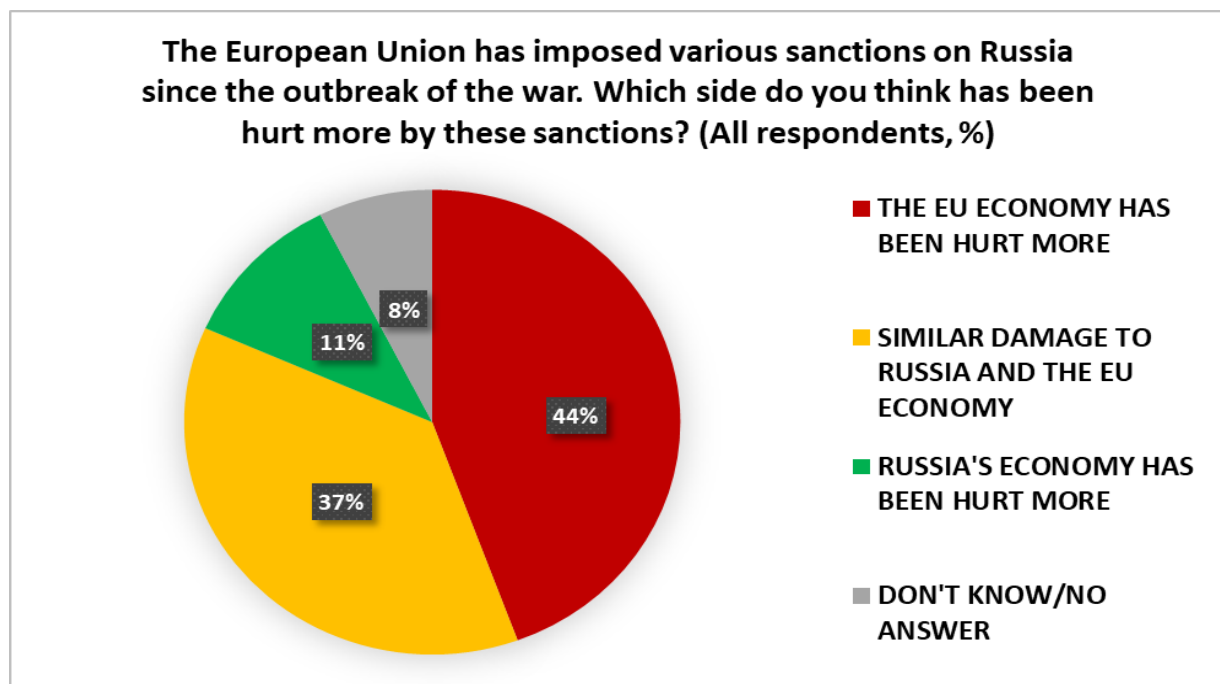
The vast majority of respondents (79%) agree with the officially declared position that the Hungarian government's objective is to stay out of the war (18% hold the opposing view). **At the same time, a majority of Hungarians (59%) feel that there is a danger of Hungary sliding into the war (37% said that there was no real danger of that happening).** Among those who exclusively consume media that are critical of the government, the majority said they are not afraid of Hungary being dragged into the war (54% vs 44%). Among the other segments based on media consumption, the majority are seriously concerned about the danger of Hungary sliding into war (54-64%). **Four out of ten respondents (40%) accept the claim spread by the government during the 2022 election campaign – but denied by the opposition – that the opposition would send soldiers into Ukraine to fight Russians.** However, the majority of respondents (55%) disagree with the claim. A quarter of the public (24%) believe that the government is poised to annex Transcarpathia with military means, while two-thirds reject this claim.

On the whole, government party voters are more likely to share the fear that the opposing side would drag Hungary into the war. **While the majority of Fidesz supporters (57%) believe that the opposition would send Hungarian troops into Ukraine, only a minority among the voters of the six-party opposition bloc harbour doubts about the government's commitment to peace (28%) or see irredentist goals (36%) behind the government's cold attitude towards Ukraine.**

## The voters of Fidesz and Our Homeland believe that the sanctions have hurt the EU economy more than Russia, while a plurality of the six-party opposition bloc say that they have hurt both parties to a similar extent

**44% of respondents think that the EU economy has been hurt more by EU sanctions against Russia (Figure 5). Slightly fewer (37%) say that the EU and Russia's economies have suffered to a similar extent from sanctions. Only a tenth of the Hungarian public (11%) believe the sanctions damage the Russian economy more.**

Figure 5.







The assessment of the sanctions reflects the underlying political fault lines. An absolute majority of respondents among the voters of the governing party (56%) and Our Homeland (52%) said that the EU sanctions had backfired. Roughly a third of the supporters of these parties (32% and 30%, respectively) said that the sanctions hurt the EU and Russia to a similar extent. Among the supporters of the six-party opposition bloc, a plurality (43%) assess that the sanctions hurt everyone. However, even among the opposition supporters many believe that the EU suffers more from the sanctions. **Respondents who mostly or exclusively consume pro-government media are more likely to share the government's narrative (namely that the EU suffers more from the impact of sanctions).** The proportion of respondents who have adopted what could be called a neutral stance (that is, those who believe that the sanctions have hurt the EU and Russia to a similar extent) was above average among those with a balanced media consumption (42%), while it was below average among those who predominantly consume pro-government media (30%).

### **Hungarians assess that the Russians are either going to gain more territory or freeze the frontlines; few expect the Ukrainians to break through**

We also asked respondents about their opinions on the future trajectory of the war. **Four out of ten respondents (39%) expect Russia to gain more territory. The same proportion (39%) said the frontlines are not going to change, while a mere 7% believe that the Ukrainians will be more successful in shifting the tide in their favour over the next year.** The distribution of answers by political preferences presented a similar pattern to the one we observed concerning the sanctions questions. **Half of the government party voters (50%) think that the Russians will gain further ground.** The share of those who agree that Russia will gain territory is discernibly smaller among the supporters of Our Homeland (38%), the six-party opposition bloc (32%), and those without partisan preferences (33%). **Opposition voters are most likely to believe that the conflict will become frozen (45%),** while those without a party preference and pro-government voters are the least likely to expect that (35% and 36%). Those who expect a Ukrainian breakthrough are a minority in all political groups (4-11%).

### **Those who consume only pro-government media tend to blame the Ukrainians, while those who predominantly consume media that are critical of the government are more likely to agree that Putin is a war criminal**

The spring of 2023 marks the third time that we have looked at the acceptance of the respective Russian and Western/Ukrainian explanations of the war, which has also allowed us to track the changes in the acceptance of the individual narratives. **In the spring of 2023, a majority of Hungarians (53%) agreed with the claim that "Vladimir Putin is a war criminal because he has ordered massacres in Ukraine."** At the same time, four out of ten respondents disagreed with the statement condemning the Russian president (40%). Looking at the time series data overall, we can assert that **in the first six months of the war there was a significant decline in the support for the position condemning the Russian aggression. Then, a year after the start of the war, it was back at the level we saw back when the fighting began, and as a result, the opinions blaming Putin are in the majority once again.** In the fall of 2022, when the rejection of Western narratives peaked, there was no major gap between the views of those without partisan preferences and Fidesz voters. However, in the months immediately following the outbreak of the war and then again in the spring of 2023, the perception of the Western narratives concerning the war among those without partisan preferences tended to be similar to that of the six-party opposition bloc's supporters.

We also surveyed the level of agreement in Hungary with the narrative disseminated by the Kremlin. The claim that we asked the respondents to react to was the following: *"The Russians attacked Ukraine because the Ukrainians were engaged in a genocide against Russian speakers in Ukraine."* At the start of the war, the proportions of those who accepted and rejected the Kremlin's narrative, respectively, were

roughly balanced. Then, following the first stage of the war, a majority did not give credence to these charges levelled against Ukraine, and that has persisted up to the present day.

Our 2023 data collection also allowed us to examine if there is any connection between the acceptance of the Russian narrative and the respondents' media consumption. We found two significant differences between the attitudes on this question between the various groups based on media consumption patterns. **As compared to those who consume a balance of pro-government and critical media, those who exclusively consume pro-government media tend to be more likely to agree with the narrative that casts the Ukrainians as the guilty party. Those who predominantly consume critical media were more likely to agree that Putin is a war criminal.**

### **The United States through Hungarian eyes: A military and political superpower that is losing ground but remains the land of liberty and prosperity**

We used the next set of questions to examine how Hungarians view the United States and China. **Without being given specific prompts, respondents were most likely (38%) to say that the US is a military and political superpower and the leading NATO country.** Furthermore, a fifth of respondents (21%) emphasised that the United States frequently launches wars or participates in them and asserts its interest aggressively. The rise of China also appears in the answers mentioned in the context of the US: 7% of respondents highlighted the US losing ground. Several answers alluded to a sense of the US becoming weaker in general and entering a phase of decline, but many respondents also specifically referred to a loss of economic influence.

In the next step, we listed several attributes and asked the respondents whether they thought these were typical of the United States. **Hungarians primarily identify the US with prosperity (66%) and liberty (63%). At the same time, over half of the respondents (52%) also said that the superpower is expanding aggressively.** Furthermore, over half of the respondents (51%) said that the United States is a dangerous place. Although a significant majority associate the US with prosperity, only 37% said that the United States tends to take care of those in need. Among the attributes listed, respondents were least likely to identify the US with the repression of its minorities (33%).

There were significant differences between answers based on the respondents' political affiliation: while 62% of Fidesz-KDNP voters identify the United States with prosperity, the corresponding figure is 69% among the supporters of the six-party opposition bloc and 71% among Our Homeland voters. While 68% of opposition voters said liberty is typical of the US, only 60% of the governing party's supporters agreed, and only 52% of Our Homeland voters share this sentiment. Forty-three percent of the six-party opposition bloc's voters said that the US provides for the poor, while 33% of government party supporters and 29% of Our Homeland voters agree. Furthermore, 42% of Fidesz-KDNP voters, 38% of far-right voters, and 31% of the sympathisers of the six-party opposition bloc said that the Western superpower represses its minorities.

### **Hungarians' image of China: A country that is expanding its economic and political clout but is not characterised by prosperity and oppresses its minorities**

**When asked about China, a fifth of Hungarians (21%) spontaneously mentioned the country's role in the world economy and global commerce as the first thing that came to mind. The same percentage also mentioned expansion as the first concept associated with China,** that is, the notion that in recent years China has launched into a massive global expansion spree, which extends to the political, economic, and cultural spheres alike. The third most often mentioned (13%) observation was that China strives to be a military and political superpower on par with the United States. The cheap and low-quality mass products made in China were also highlighted by 8% of respondents.

**Among the attributes we listed, respondents were most likely to agree with aggressive expansion (50%) and the repression of minorities (39%),** as well as with the notion that China is a dangerous place (37%). The share of respondents who think that the United States is expanding aggressively is roughly the same as the proportion of those who feel the same about China. Moreover, respondents were far more likely to say (51%) that the US is a dangerous place than that China is a dangerous place (37%). Only 31% of Hungarians said that prosperity is typical of China, 26% identify it with liberty, and a mere 23% said that China takes care of those in need.

Opinions about China also tend to reflect divisions along party lines. While 42% of Hungarian government party voters said that China is characterised by prosperity, few of the six-party opposition bloc and Our Homeland supporters share this assessment. A plurality in the ruling party's electorate also believe that liberty is typical of China. By contrast, the majority of the six-party opposition bloc and 40% of Our Homeland voters do not believe that the Far Eastern country is free. Forty-eight percent of the six-party opposition voters and 54% of Our Homeland voters believe that minorities are subject to repression in China. While well over half of Our Homeland (63%) and Fidesz-KDNP voters (64%) believe that the US is expanding aggressively, when it comes to China, only half of Our Homeland voters (50%) and a plurality of Fidesz-KDNP voters (43%) thought the same. Among the supporters of the six-party opposition bloc, China's expansion was more likely to be perceived as threatening than that of the US (59% vs. 46%).

### **Fidesz supporters are more negative towards the US and positive towards China, while the views of opposition voters are just the reverse**

We used a multivariate analysis to determine which factors determine the "sympathy index" of the US and China. **The impact of party preferences was evident, with Fidesz voters and the voters of the six-party opposition bloc apparently being each other's mirror images with respect to their support for the two superpowers.** As compared to those without a party preference, Fidesz-KDNP voters are significantly more negative in their attitude towards the US and more positive towards China. By contrast, opposition supporters are more positive towards the US and negative towards China when compared to those without partisan preferences. The image of the US is worse among the older generations than among those under 30. Those with higher educational attainment tend to take a dimmer view of China than those with no more than elementary education.

### **Hungarians are divided on the question of whether the EU should impose sanctions in the event of a Chinese attack on Taiwan, and they would not support dispatching NATO soldiers to defend Taiwan**

The issue of Taiwan is a key area of conflict between China and the United States. We used two questions to assess what measures Hungarians think we should potentially take if China were to attack Taiwan. **Hungarians are divided on whether the EU should impose sanctions in the event of a Chinese attack on Taiwan: 43% would be opposed, while 42% would support sanctions.** Government party supporters were most inclined against sanctions (56% against, with only 33% in favour), while a majority of the voters of the six-party opposition bloc would support it (among the voters of the Democratic Coalition and Momentum, this share exceeded 60%). Half of Our Homeland voters (50%) would also support imposing sanctions on China in the event of an attack on Taiwan. **Over half of all respondents (55%) rejected dispatching NATO soldiers** in such a scenario, with 63% of government party voters, 58% of Our Homeland voters, and 50% of the voters of the six-party opposition bloc disagreeing with this proposition.

## **The most well-known international public figures in Hungary: Vladimir Putin, Pope Francis, Donald Trump**

Our survey asked respondents to reflect on 23 international politicians and other public figures and to tell us whether they perceive them as negative or positive – if they recognise their names, that is. **Among Hungarians, the most recognised international politicians/public figures were Vladimir Putin (95%), Pope Francis (91%), and Donald Trump (90%). The names of the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, and the president of the United States, Joe Biden (83%), were also recognised by over four out of five respondents.** Another clear pattern was that the majority of Hungarians did not know the leaders of other Central European countries: Aleksandar Vučić (45%), Andrzej Duda (44%), Zuzana Čaputová (38%) and Klaus Johannis (39%) were all recognised by fewer than half of all the respondents.

## **Pope Francis is the most popular, while Vladimir Putin is the least popular among international public figures**

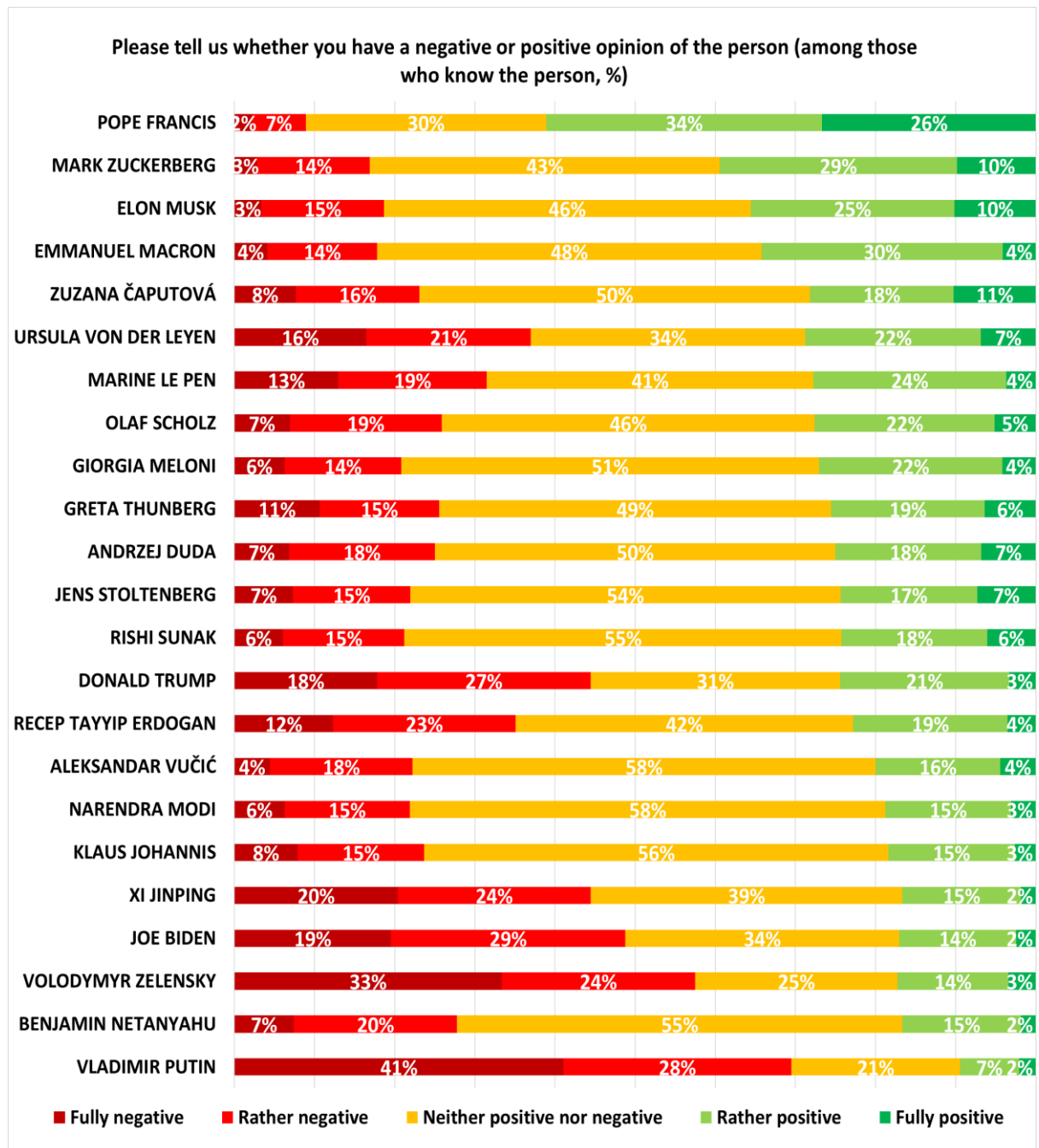
We asked about popularity only concerning those public figures whose names the respondents actually recognised (Figure 6). **Of the 23 persons we surveyed, the most positively and most negatively viewed figures both stand out: Pope Francis is the most positively viewed international public figure (60% of respondents had a favourable opinion about him), while the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, was clearly viewed the most negatively (69% had a negative view of him).**

Those government party voters who know the Russian president tend to have a predominantly (54%) negative view of him. At the same time, Our Homeland viewers lean even more heavily against Putin, by 12 percentage points (for a total of 66%) as compared to Fidesz-KDNP voters. Among the supporters of the six-party opposition bloc, the share of those who view Putin unfavourably is 33 percentage points higher (87%). When it comes to Volodymyr Zelensky, the attitudes are once again different among the various political camps. Thus, while Fidesz-KDNP (74%) and Our Homeland (78%) voters are overwhelmingly likely to view him critically, only 37% of the six-party opposition bloc's supporters share this assessment.

Hungarians with varying political preferences also view US President Joe Biden differently. Among Fidesz supporters, the current US president is viewed overwhelmingly (63%) negatively, and the share of those who take a Biden-friendly view is negligible (11%) in this segment. Among opposition voters, negative views of the US president enjoy a slim plurality (37%), while the share of those who recognise Joe Biden's name *and* have a favourable assessment of him is nine percentage points lower (28%). The voters of the six-party opposition bloc tend to view the Chinese President Xi Jinping negatively (60%), as do – albeit by a slimmer margin – the voters of Our Homeland (51%), while only 30% of government party voters shared that critical perception.

The voters of the government party and Our Homeland think very differently about European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen than the supporters of the six-party opposition bloc. Majorities of Fidesz-KDNP (55%) and Our Homeland voters (52%) share a negative view of von der Leyen, and the proportion of those in these political segments with a positive view of the EC President is negligible (12% and 20%, respectively). The view of von der Leyen is the diametrical opposite among the voters of the six-party opposition bloc: 52% assess her positively, while only 6% in this segment said they view her unfavourably.

Figure 6.





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Hungarian study: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/20385.pdf>

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