

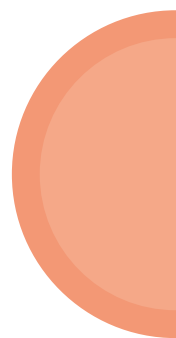
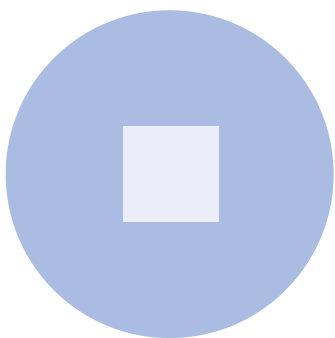
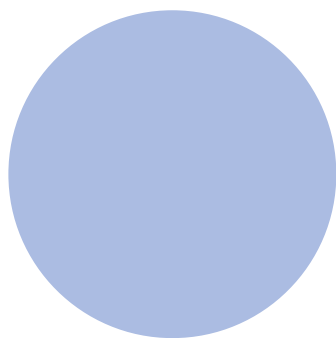
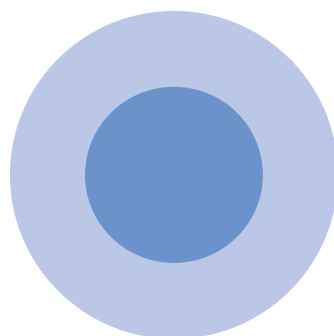
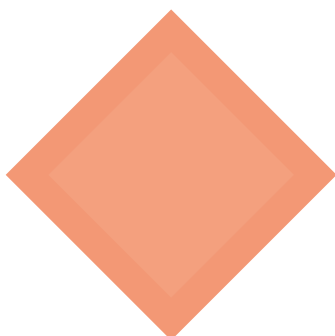
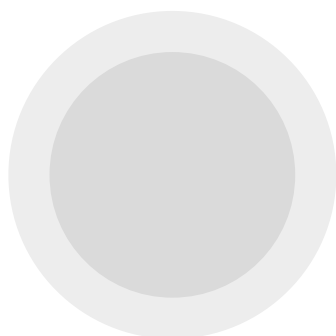
POLAND AND POLES

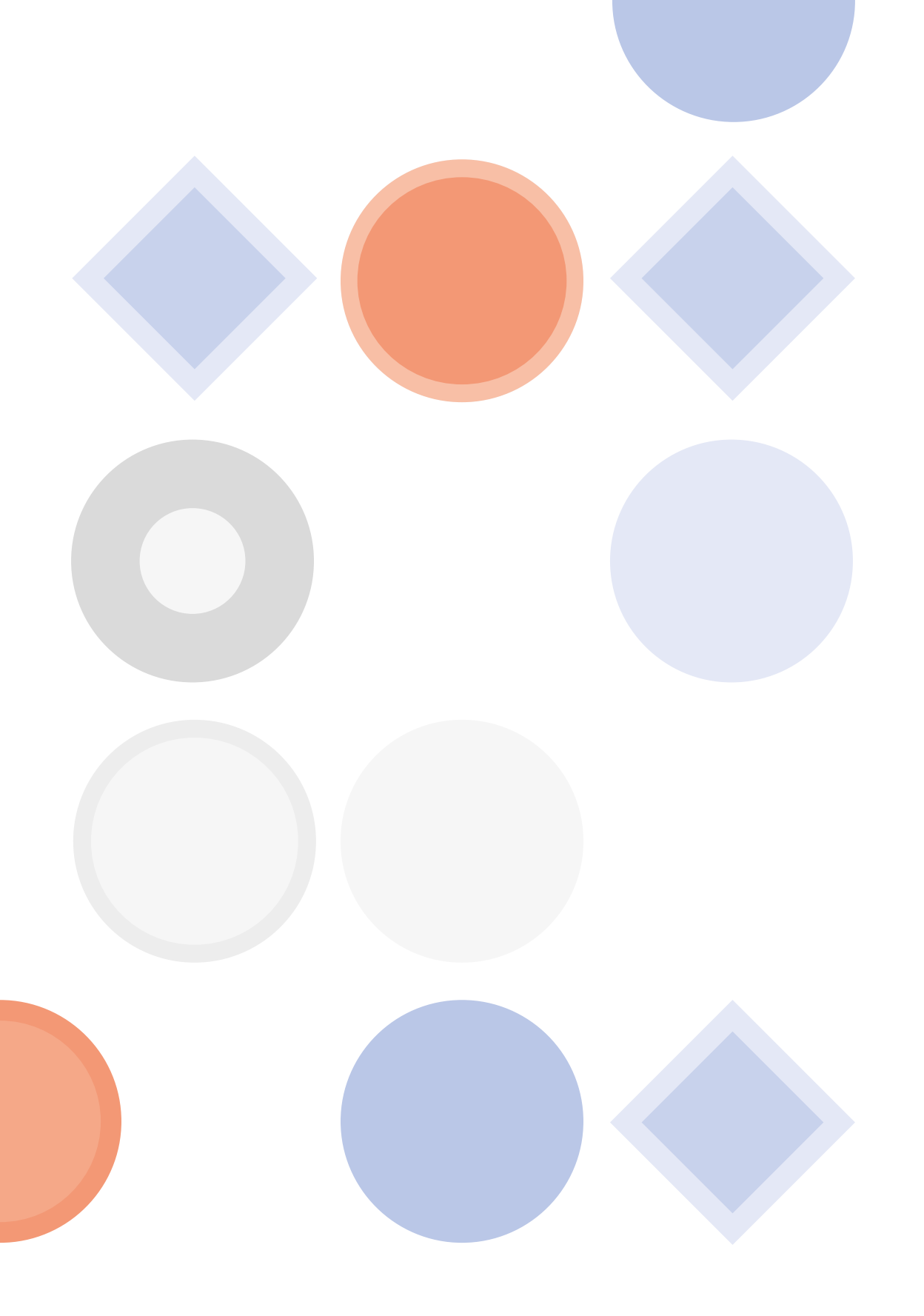


Warsaw 2023

Findings from a public opinion poll
conducted in Ukraine

AS SEEN BY UKRAINIANS 2023







POLAND AND POLES AS SEEN BY UKRAINIANS 2023

Findings from a public opinion poll conducted in Ukraine

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Info Sapiens

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Introduction

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1. Introduction

The report we are presenting to our readers contains the findings from a Ukrainian public opinion survey focused on attitudes towards Poland and Poles. The survey was carried out from 9 to 15 October 2023. It is already the third survey conducted by Info Sapiens, the Ukrainian social research institute, for the Mieroszewski Centre. Some of the questions answered by Ukrainian respondents had been already included in the joint survey carried out in August 2022. We asked these questions again based on the understanding that public opinion sentiments may change, especially in the conditions of war, when Ukraine is defending its independence following the Russian aggression, with a huge effort of the whole Ukrainian nation and at the price of dozens of thousands of fallen soldiers. In addition, we were also aware that, unlike in 2022, which saw enormous, emotionally-charged Polonophilia in Ukrainian society, 2023 was a year when, alongside solidarity and assistance to victims of aggression, various disagreements between Poland and Ukraine increasingly surfaced in public life. They peaked during the much-publicised 'grain crisis' between the two countries, where Poland blocked the sale of selected Ukrainian agricultural products on the Polish market. All this prompted us to repeat part of the 2022 survey, clarify some of the earlier questions and add new ones, reflecting the context of autumn 2023.

We invite you to immerse yourself in the report prepared by our Ukrainian partners from Info Sapiens, together with their comments. In addition, we would like to share our own conclusions based on the analysis of specific survey results. While our conclusions are based on detailed data provided by Info Sapiens, we drew them independently of the work performed by Ukrainian sociologists. In part, our reflections fully confirm the opinions presented by Ukrainian researchers, while also supplementing them with new information or conclusions.

Undoubtedly, the Ukrainian society still demonstrates a high degree of liking for Poland and Poles. A total of 67% of Ukrainians say they have a good opinion of Poles, of which 19% report a very good opinion (in 2022, the corresponding figure reached 83%), while 1.5% have a bad opinion. At the same time, 39% of Ukrainians declared that their opinion about Poles changed for the better after the outbreak of the war, while 3% said it changed for the worse. The greatest liking for Poles prevails in the west (73%) and the north of the country (72%) as well as in Kyiv (71%), whereas the least favourable views were reported in the east, with 50% of respondents speaking positively and 45% neutrally about Poles.

However, it is also apparent that the level of positive emotions towards Poland and Poles has decreased compared to the similar survey conducted in 2022, while the percentage of those who see Poland more neutrally, i.e. simply as a good neighbour, has gone up. Moreover, a sizeable group of Ukrainians have noticed issues in Polish-Ukrainian relations. For example, emotional terms such as 'brothers and sisters' (13% of mentions) and 'friends' (35%) were less commonly chosen to describe Poles in the present survey (33% and 49% respectively in 2022), while the terms 'allies' and 'neighbours' were chosen by 39% and 55% respectively (with 52% and 54% in 2022). Notably, the respondents could choose more than one option from the list. The highest percentage of emotionally charged phrases was recorded in Volhynia, Podolia and Kyiv (55%) and in the east of the country (50%) compared to 42% in Galicia and 41% in southern Ukraine.

What is the reason behind this decline? In part, this can be explained by the gradual psychological adaptation to the war in Ukrainian society and the resulting decline in emotions in general (including positive ones, which were so clearly noticeable one year earlier). However, it is very likely that the results were also influenced by the 'grain conflict', which received intense media attention and—let us hypothesise—probably alerted some Ukrainians to the existence of multiple problems in relations with Poland. Nevertheless, this issue did not significantly affect the overall positive perception of Poland and Poles because, as the survey demonstrates, the Ukrainian public opinion does not unilaterally blame Poland for the conflict, and most Ukrainians have not heard about this issue at all. It should be noted that only 22% of Ukrainians declared that they noticed some significant contentious issues in relations with Poland. In this group, more than a half spontaneously pointed to the 'grain conflict' (54%), one in six to problems related to the Volhynia Massacre, and 5% (1% of the total sample) mentioned territorial issues. When the question about the grain issue was asked directly by the interviewers, 28% of Ukrainians said they had heard a lot about it, 56% had heard something while 16% had not heard anything.

Notably, while the aversion to Poles remains below the threshold of statistical error in Ukraine, 11% of Ukrainians believe that Poland treats some Ukrainian lands as its own (12% in Galicia, 5% in Volhynia, Podolia and Kyiv region, and 13% in other regions). It is difficult to determine whether this belief results from a vision petrified by school textbooks presenting Poland as the 'historical

partitioner', the indirect influence of Russian propaganda, or perhaps the effect of encounters with those Poles who like to emphasise (also in conversations with Ukrainians) the Polish history of Lviv or other Ukrainian regions.

This more realistic picture or, let us say, the end to the idealistic perspective in attitudes towards Poland and Poles has also influenced Ukrainians' expectations regarding the future nature of Polish-Ukrainian relations. In 2023, a total of 45% of Ukrainians saw the future relations between the two countries as a confederation or a permanent alliance (compared to 58% in 2022), while 51% would simply prefer good neighbourly relations (40% in 2022). Undoubtedly, this is still a very high percentage. At the same time, 86% of Ukrainians believe that Poland will continue to support Ukraine in its efforts to integrate with the EU (of which 39% believe that Poland will absolutely do it and 47% think it will probably do it), while 7% think that Poland will absolutely or probably not do it. Most sceptics (10%) are found in the east of the country. At the same time, as many as 91% of Ukrainians believe that Poland will continue to support their country in its fight against the Russian aggressor (57% – 'absolutely' and 34% – 'probably'), while 5% are absolutely or fairly certain that Poland will not do it. A slightly higher proportion of sceptics can be found in the east and south of the country (8% and 7% respectively).

While such a high degree of confidence in Poland and in the constancy of its foreign policy may flatter Poles, it also entails the risk of emotional disillusionment in case the evolution of Poland's internal political situation undermines the willingness of the political elites to push for EU and NATO enlargement.

Finally, it should be noted that, compared to the 2022 survey, there is now a higher share of Ukrainians (18%) who understand that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) is responsible for the murders of Poles in 1943–1945, and the greatest awareness of the truth about the perpetrators of the Volhynia Massacre is recorded among the young generation (25%). While we realise that this result is far from the expectations in Poland, it may nevertheless signal an emergence of a positive trend. At present, as our survey shows, a fairly high degree of ignorance about the 1943–1945 murders persists. Only 21% of Ukrainians said

that they had heard a lot about the Volhynia Massacre, while 51% said that had heard something but were not sure. Among the answers given in different regions, the voice of Kyivans stands out: 37% of the residents of the capital city said they had heard a lot about the Massacre (for the sake of comparison: the corresponding percentage in Western Ukraine was 19%).

It is noteworthy that 71% of Ukrainians are in favour of giving permission for the exhumations of the victims of the Volhynia Massacre. Of this figure, 30% are in favour of unconditional consent while the remainder would first like the Polish authorities to restore the original plaque (vandalised in 2015) on the grave of Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) members killed in battles with the NKVD on the Monasterz hill. The demand is that the list of those buried should be placed there, with a restored inscription 'Fallen for free Ukraine.' In terms of regional variety, the highest number of such responses came from Kyiv and Central Ukraine: 25% and 20% respectively, compared to 12% in the west of the country. In contrast, 7% of Galicia's residents are in favour of Ukraine maintaining its ban on exhumations, with 12% in Volhynia, Podolia and Kyiv, and 15% in other regions. These findings can be used as an argument in negotiations with the Ukrainian authorities on granting a general permission for Polish institutions to carry out search and exhumation works on the territory of Ukraine and to organise cemeteries for the victims of the Volhynia Massacre.

Apart from the declared liking for Poles, the relatively widespread knowledge of the Polish language in Ukraine can certainly inspire optimism. Overall, 11% of Ukrainians claim to be able to communicate in Polish in simple matters and 2.5% declare a fluent command of Polish (with the corresponding figures of 24% and 7% for Galicia). Thus, a total of 13.5% of Ukrainians (31% in Galicia) are able to communicate in Polish to some degree. This should be viewed as important capital that can, and should, be leveraged in the interest of Poland as a country and in the name of friendly and good neighbourly relations between Poland and Ukraine.

Łukasz Adamski, PhD

Deputy Director of the Mioszowski Centre

2. Information about the study

Methodology



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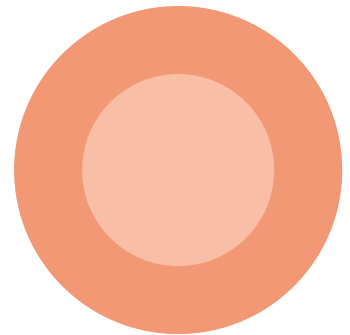
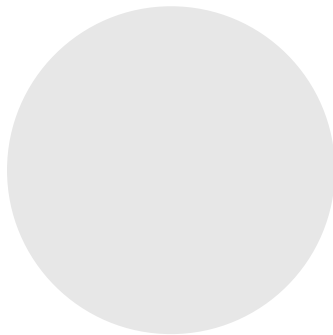
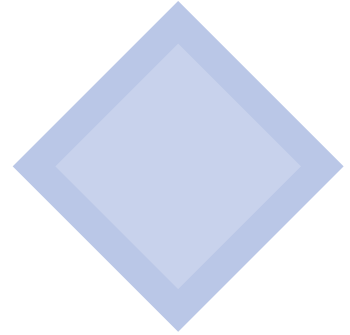
1001

INTERVIEWS

- **Respondents:**
Adult Ukrainians (over 18 years of age).
- **Method:**
Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) based on mobile phone numbers.
- **Timing:**
The survey was conducted on 9–15 October 2023.
- **Geographic coverage:**
Ukraine. Please note: The survey was not conducted in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol and other Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by Russia, where Ukrainian mobile operators do not provide mobile telephone services. Also, the survey did not cover Ukrainians who have left Ukraine for other countries.
For this study, we singled out regions with historical ties to Poland: Galicia and Right-Bank Ukraine (excluding Galicia, Carpathian Ruthenia and Bukovina).
- **Additional information:**
Please note that the data on some of the graphs do not add up to 100% for multiple choice questions. With single-code questions, there are small deviations from 100% when percentage values are rounded off.



Connections with Poland



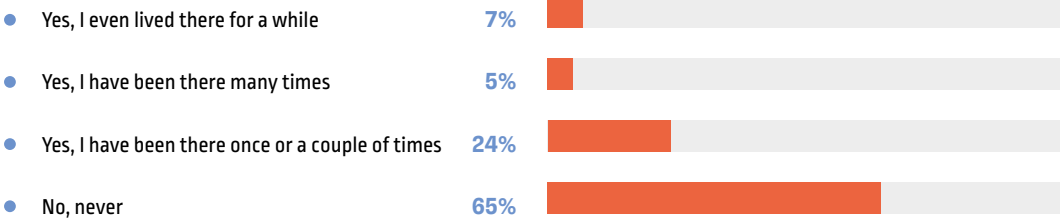
Ukraine and Poland are linked by cultural ties.

Ukrainians often travel to Poland. Overall, **29%** of the respondents said they had visited Poland at least once in their lives, and another **7%** had lived there for some time. Almost

a half of Galicia residents (**47%**) visited Poland and another **11%** lived there for some time. One in five Ukrainians who have been to Poland (**21%**) visited the neighbouring country during the preceding year. A further **44%** travelled to Poland in the last five years.

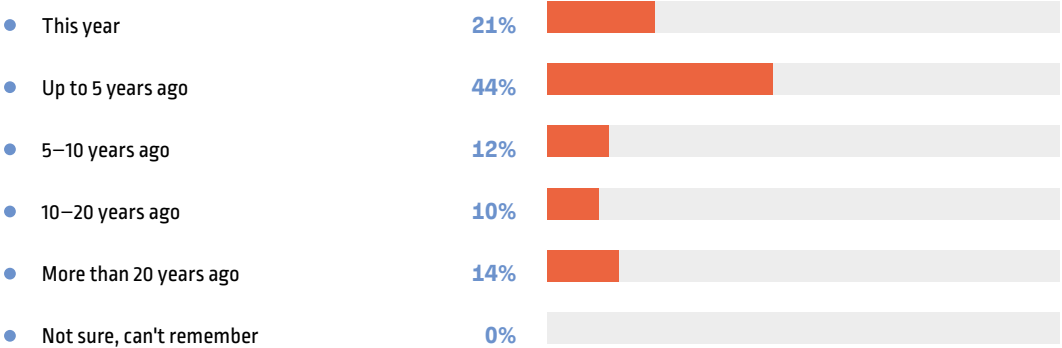
↓ QUESTION:

Have you ever been to Poland?



↓ QUESTION:

When was the last time you were in Poland?

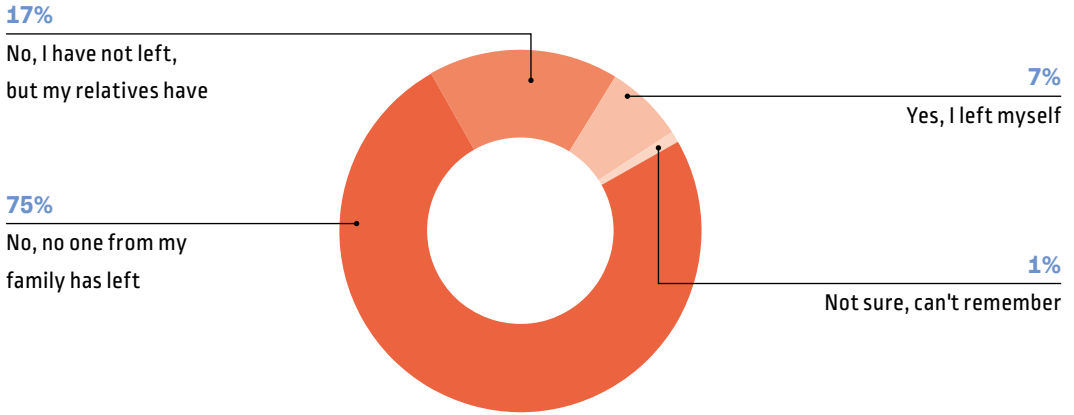


25% of Ukrainians either have relatives who left for Poland after 24 February 2022 or they themselves went there. At the same time, compared to the previous year, there has been an increase in the share of those who visited Poland personally (**3%** in 2022 vs. **7%** in 2023), while the proportion of those who only have relatives travelling to Poland has decreased (**23%** in 2022 vs. **17%** in 2023).

Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who did not travel to Poland after the start of the full-scale invasion and have no relatives who went there remained the same as in the previous survey (**73%** and **75%** in 2022 and 2023 respectively).

↓ QUESTION:

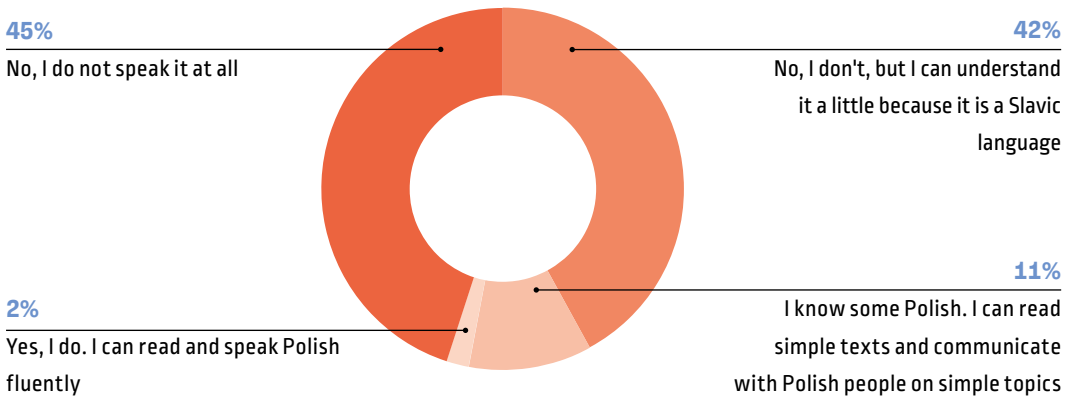
Are there any people in your family who left for Poland after 24 February 2022?



53% of Ukrainians know or at least understand the Polish language to some extent. A further 2% claim to be fluent in it.

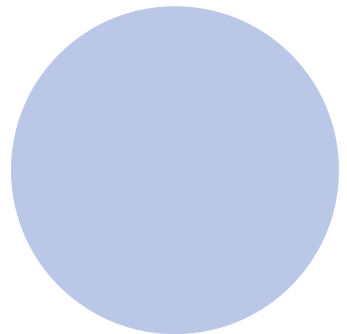
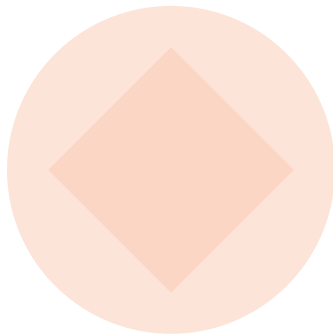
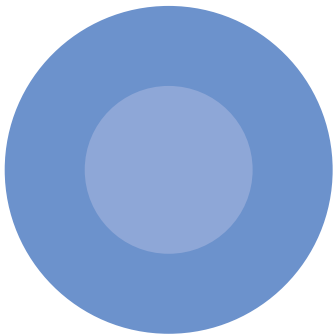
↓ QUESTION:

Do you speak Polish?





Attitudes towards Poland and Poles

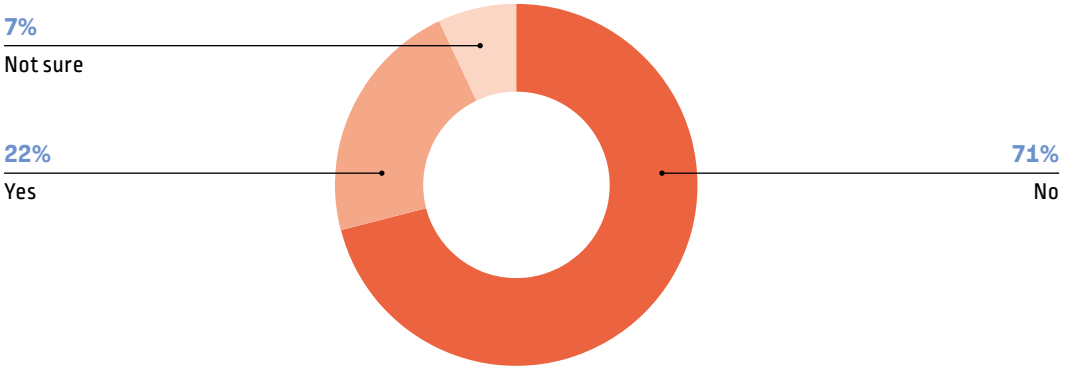


The results of the present survey indicate that Ukrainians' attitudes towards Poles have become clearly more pragmatic, and one of the factors at play may have been the so-called 'grain crisis', widely discussed in the media and society since the first half of 2023 until now.

22% of Ukrainians said they noticed significant disputes in current Polish-Ukrainian relations. Among them, more than a half (55%) mentioned conflicts in the agricultural sector, in particular the issue of Ukrainian grain exports. The respondents also mentioned disputes related to the impact of the war in Ukraine on Poland's economy (20%), historical conflicts such as attitudes towards the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Volhynia Massacre (16%), as well as reduced support for Ukrainian refugees in Poland (10%).

↓ QUESTION:

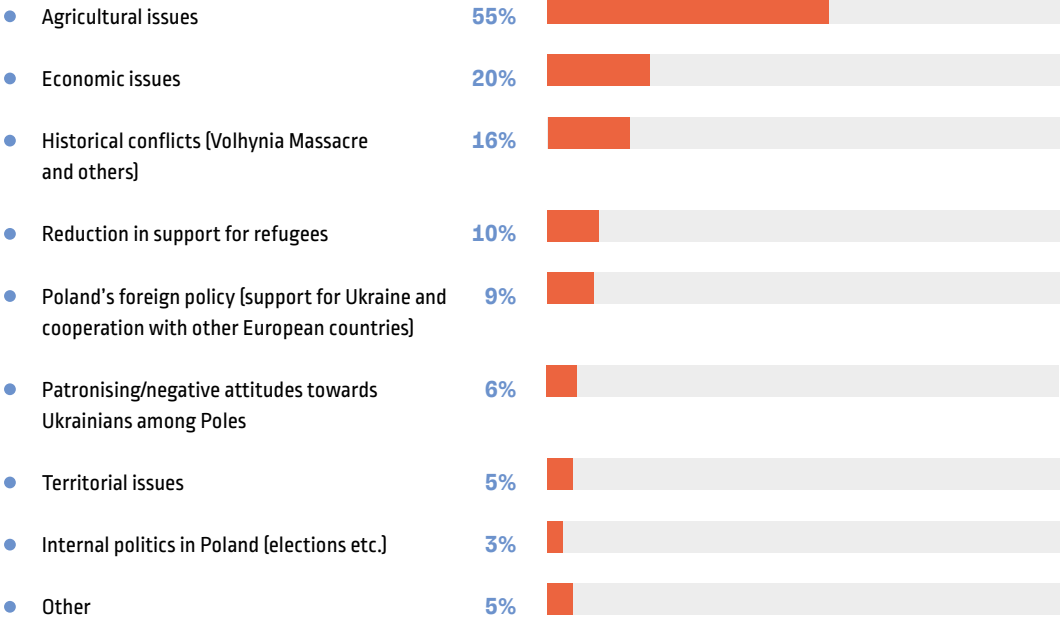
*Do you see any important disputes in Ukrainian-Polish relations?
If so, what are they?*



↓ QUESTION:

Do you see any important disputes in Ukrainian-Polish relations?

If so, what are they? Please select from the options below

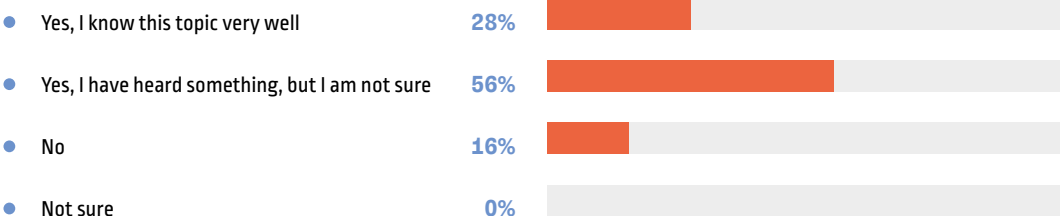


The 'grain crisis' is a widely discussed topic among Ukrainians: almost three quarters of the population [72%] know a lot or have heard something about it. In Galicia, the most commonly cited reasons behind this crisis include the parliamentary elections in Poland [37%] and the impact of third parties

interested in undermining Polish-Ukrainian relations [36%]. In contrast, an objective conflict between the two countries' economic interests is most often cited as the cause in Right-Bank Ukraine and the rest of the country [43% in Right-Bank Ukraine and 36% in the other regions].

↓ QUESTION:

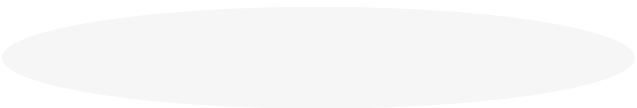
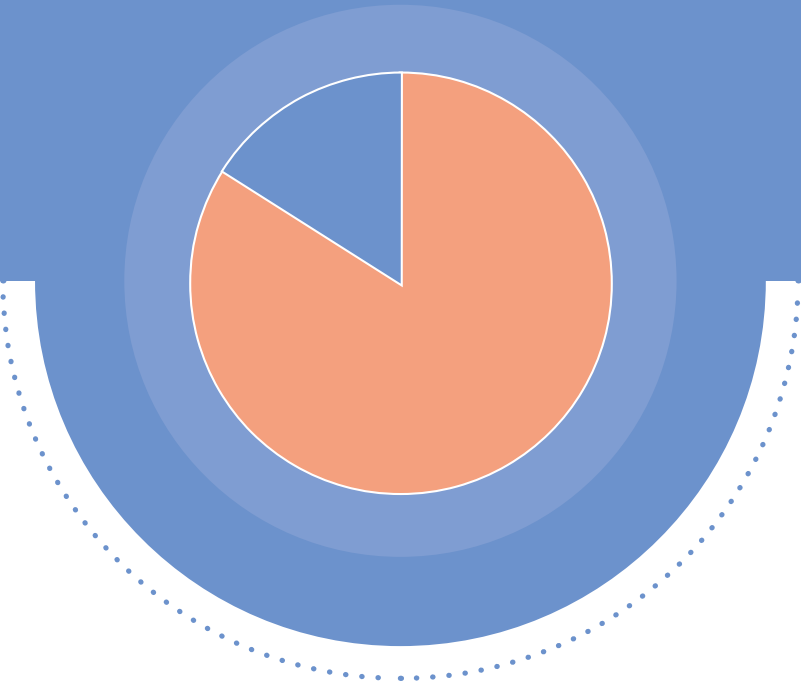
Have you heard of the 'grain crisis' in relations with Poland?



Have you heard of the 'grain crisis' in relations with Poland?

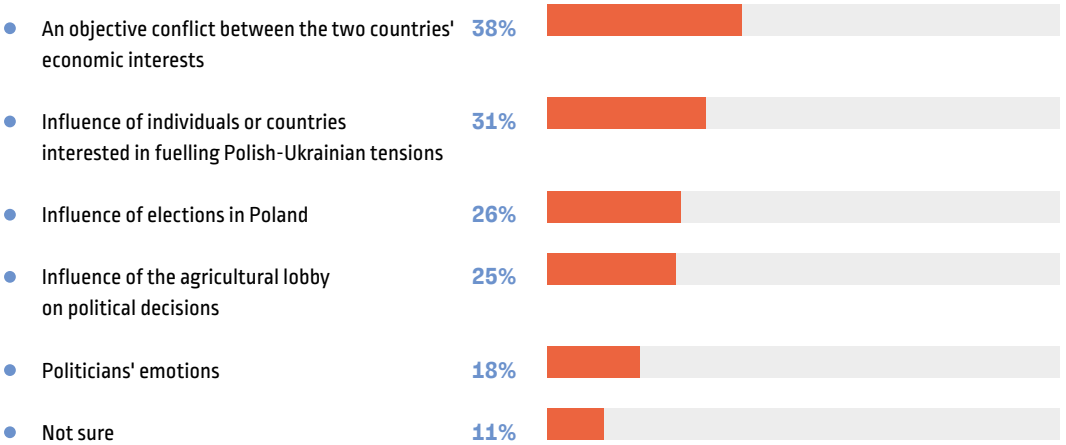
Yes, I know this topic very well/Yes, I have heard something, but I am not sure

84%



↓ QUESTION:

What do you see as the main reason behind the 'grain crisis'?

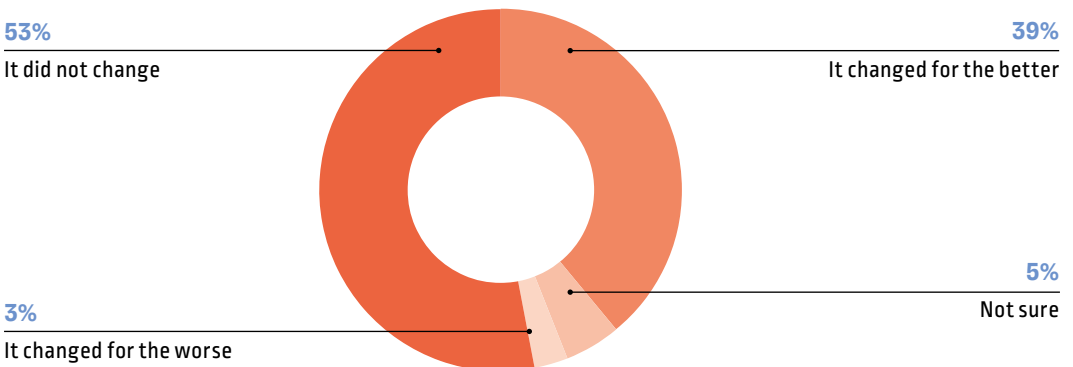


The percentage of Ukrainians who have a good or very good attitude towards Poles is lower now than in 2022 [67% compared to 83% in 2022], but positive attitudes continue to prevail among Ukrainians. The percentage of respondents who declared a neutral attitude towards their western neighbours

has also increased, from 15% in 2022 to 30% in 2023. At the same time, the share of Ukrainians who have a negative attitude towards Poles has not changed and remains negligible: as in 2022, only around 1% of respondents admit having a bad or very bad opinion of Poles.

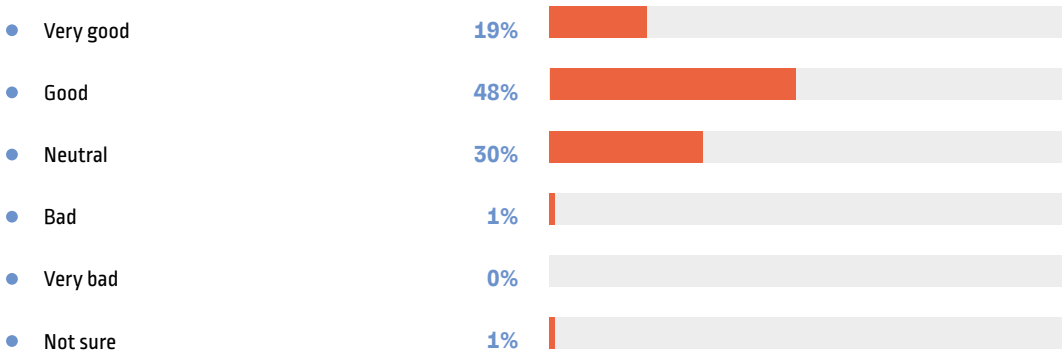
↓ QUESTION:

Did your opinion about Poles change after 24 February 2022?



↓ QUESTION:

What is your opinion about Poles now?

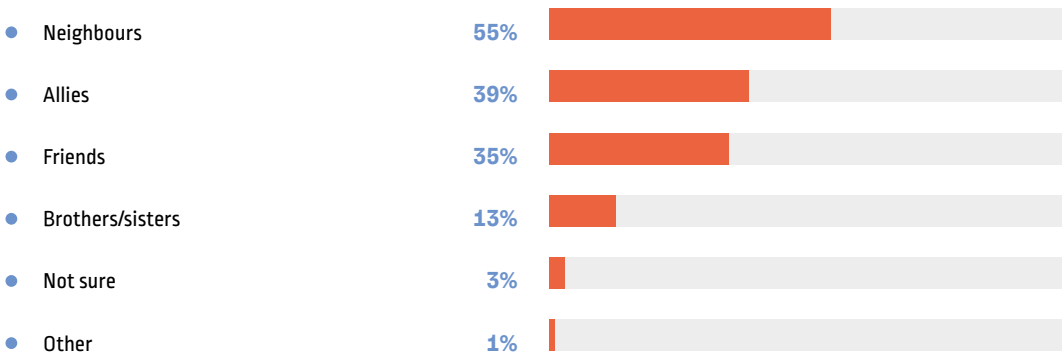


More than a third of the respondents see Poles as allies (39%) or friends of Ukrainians (35%). However, the prevailing perception is that Poles are neighbours, with 55% of respondents choosing this answer option. Ukrainians are now less inclined

to call Poles 'brothers and sisters': these terms were chosen by 13% of respondents compared to 33% last year.

↓ QUESTION:

Which of the phrases listed below best describes your attitudes towards Poles? Please select from the options provided below

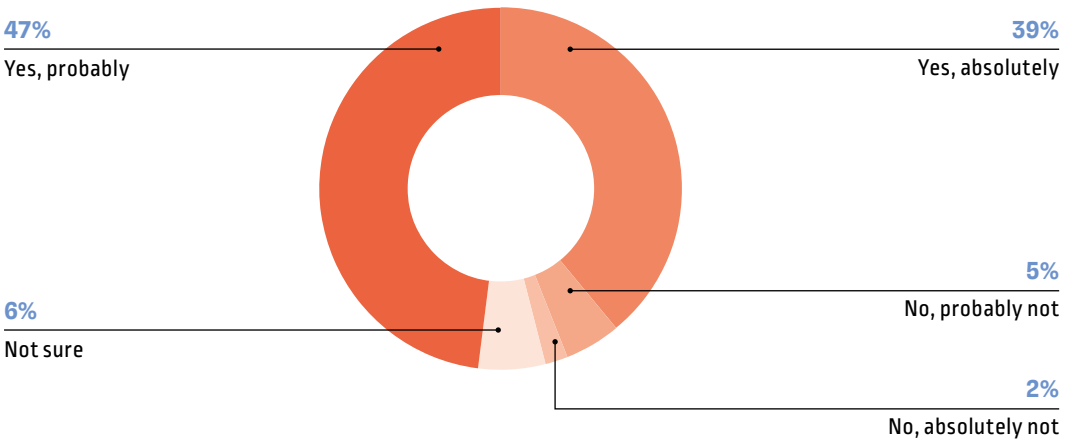


Despite the temporary crisis in relations between the two countries, Ukrainians are convinced that Polish support is steadfast. Overall, **86%** of respondents strongly agree or tend to agree that Poland will continue to support Ukraine on its

way to EU integration, and **91%** are convinced that Poland will absolutely or probably continue to support Ukrainians in their fight against Russian aggression.

↓ QUESTION:

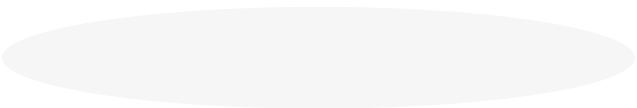
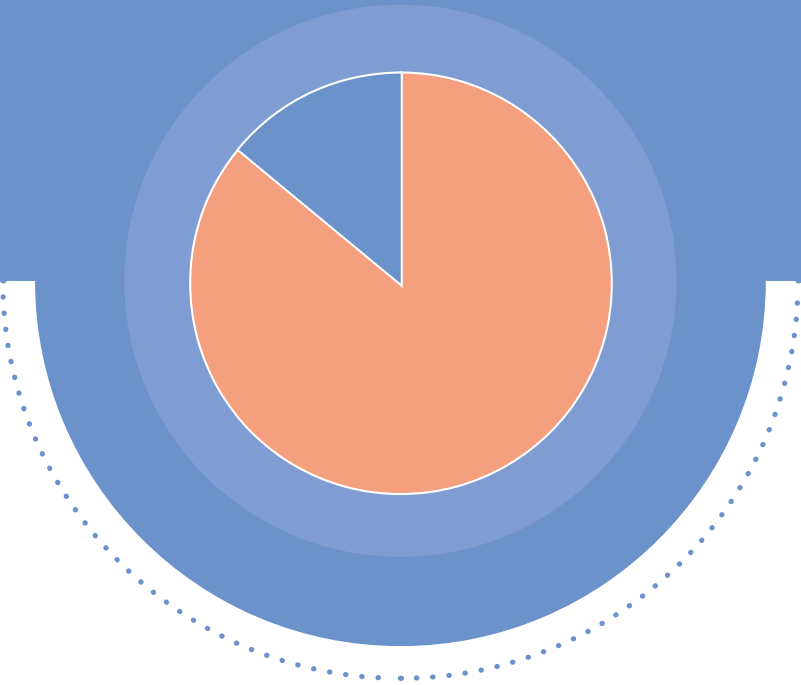
Do you think Poland is going to continue supporting Ukraine on its way to EU integration?



Do you think Poland is going to continue supporting Ukraine on its way to EU integration?

*Yes, absolutely/
Yes, probably*

86%

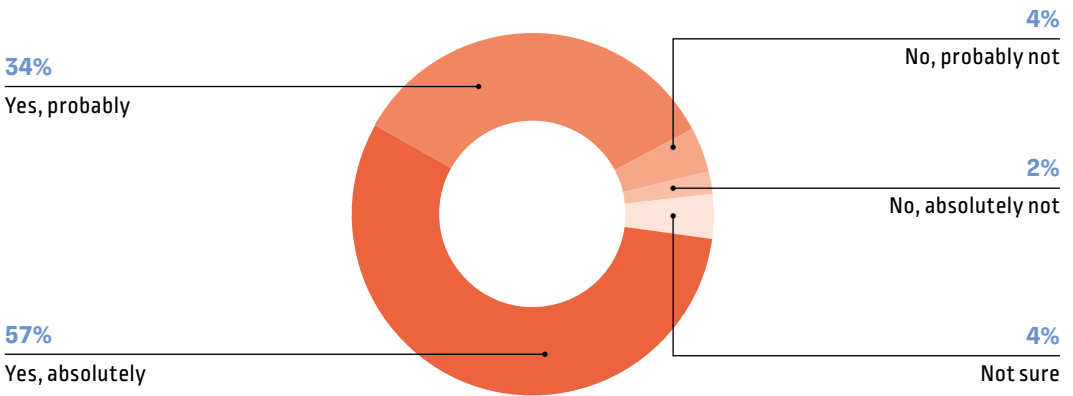


As in the previous year, the respondents believe that the main motivation behind Poland's support for Ukraine is that Poles see Russia as an enemy and feel threatened by it (63%) and

that Poles sympathise with Ukrainians and appreciate good neighbourly relations between the two countries (56%).

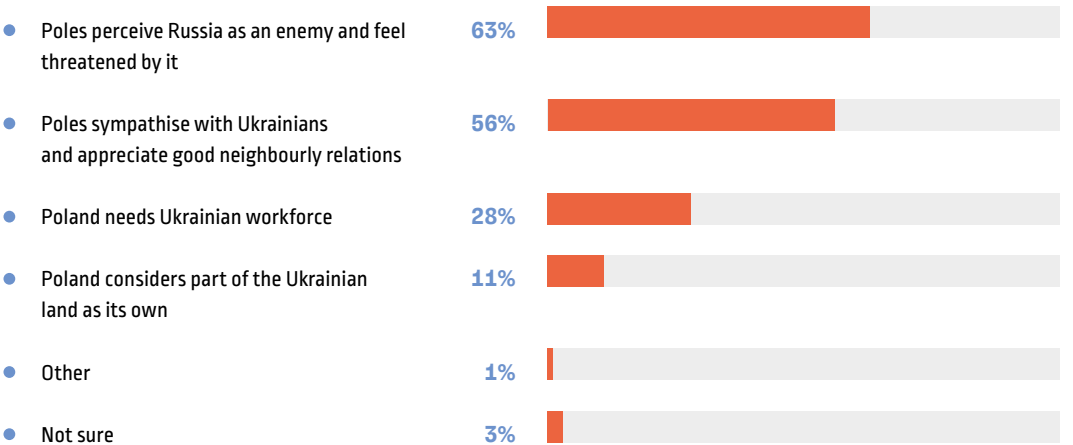
↓ QUESTION:

Do you think Poland is going to continue supporting Ukraine in its fight against the Russian aggressor?



↓ QUESTION:

In your opinion, why are Poles helping Ukraine?

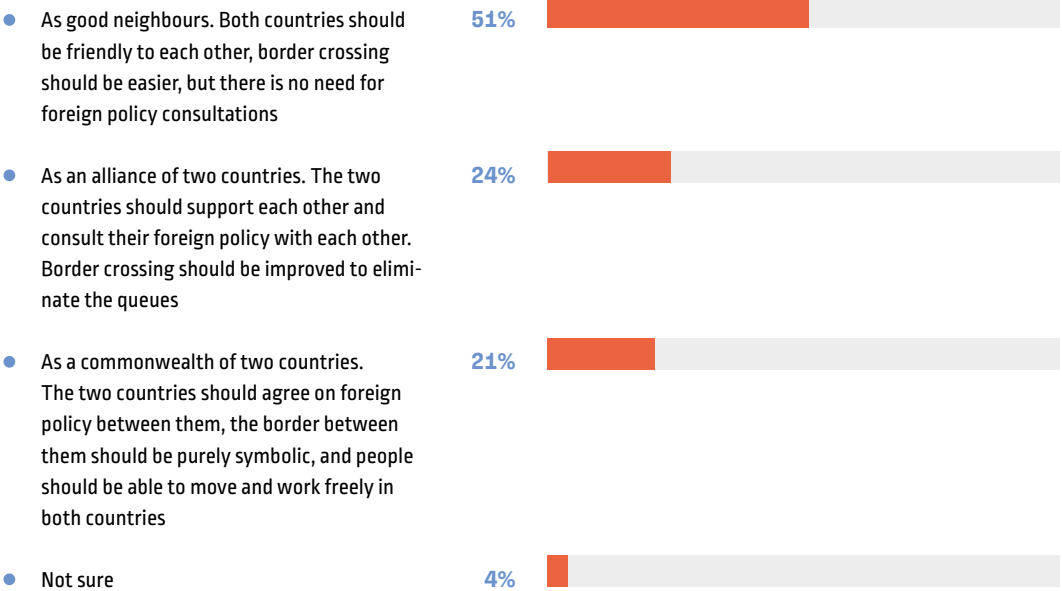


Approximately a half of Ukrainians believe that future relations between Poland and Ukraine should take the shape of good neighbourly relations (51% vs. 40% in 2022). At the same time, the format of commonwealth-like relations with a common foreign policy and free movement across the border

was less popular in the present survey: 21% compared to 29% in 2022. The change is most noticeable in Right-Bank Ukraine, where this option was chosen by only 17% of the respondents (compared to 32% in 2022).

↓ QUESTION:

In your view, what should the relations between Ukraine and Poland look like in future?





5

Attitudes towards selected aspects of Polish-Ukrainian relations



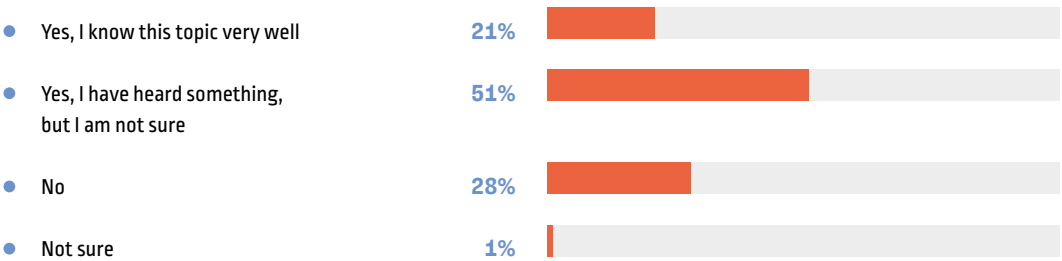
One in five Ukrainians (21%) is highly aware of the Volhynia Massacre as a tragic chapter in Ukrainian history.

A further 51% had heard something about this event. Of these, a third of the respondents (33%) were unable to describe

what the Volhynia Massacre involved (in 2022, the respective percentage was 42%). As in the previous year, a relative majority of the respondents believe that it was mutual warfare between the Polish and Ukrainian underground, which led to civilian casualties among both peoples: this answer was chosen by 28%.

↓ QUESTION:

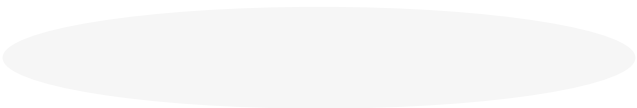
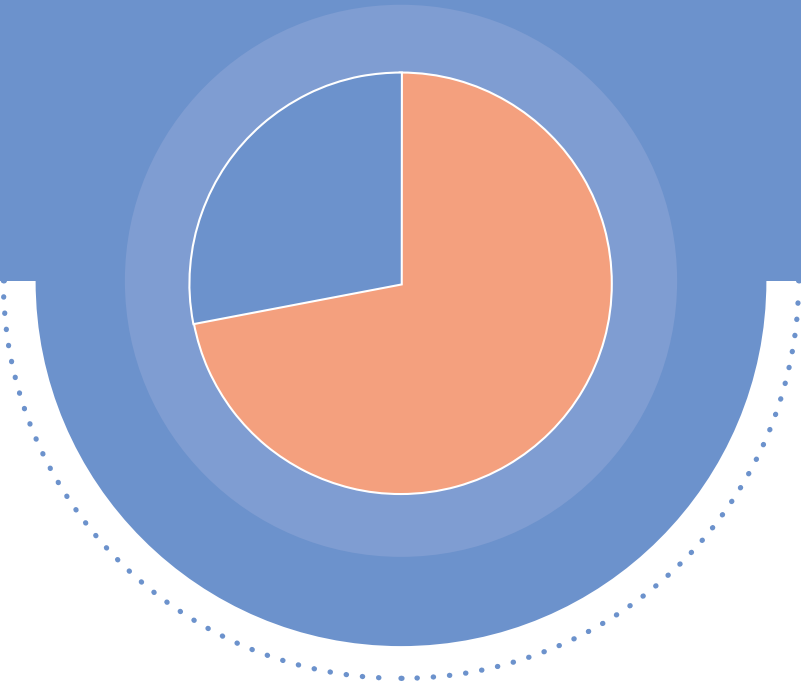
Have you heard of the World War II events known to historians as the 'Volhynian Tragedy' or the 'Volhynia Massacre'?



Have you heard of the World War II events known to historians as the 'Volhynian Tragedy' or the 'Volhynia Massacre'?

Yes, I know this topic very well/ Yes, I have heard something, but I am not sure

72%

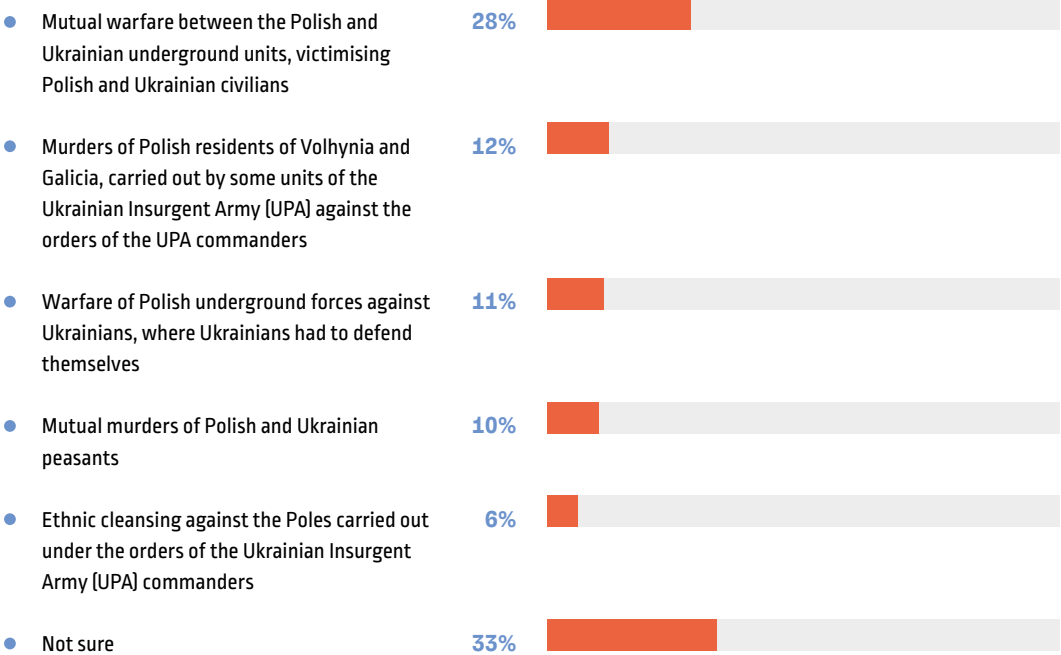


There have been noticeable changes in the understanding of the Volhynian Tragedy among Galicia residents. The percentage of Galicians who believe that it involved mutual murders between Ukrainian and Polish peasants has fallen to **6%** in 2023 [compared to **17%** in 2022]. On the other hand,

the Volhynian Tragedy is more likely to be perceived in Galicia as warfare between the Polish and Ukrainian underground [28% in 2023 compared to **21%** in 2022] or as murders of Polish villagers carried out by individual UPA units against the commanders' orders [**11%** in 2023 vs. **5%** in 2022].

↓ QUESTION:

Historians have different opinions about what the 'Volhynian tragedy' or the 'Volhynia massacre' was. And what was it in your opinion?

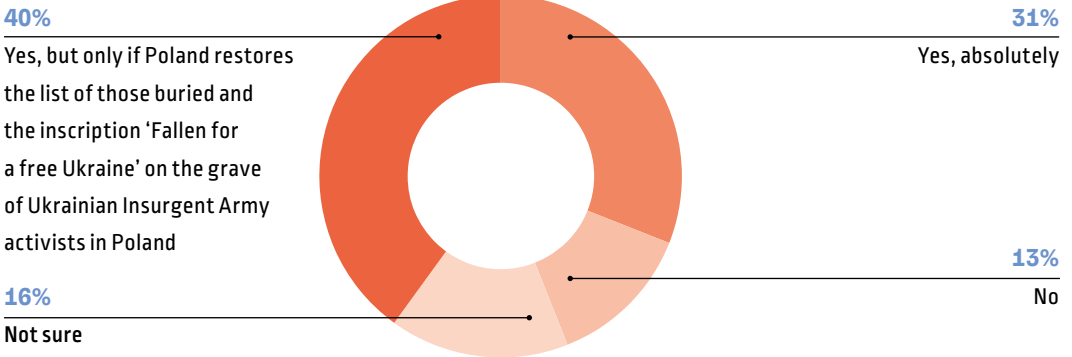


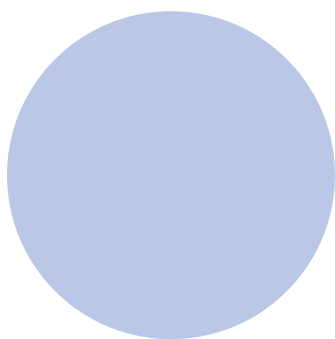
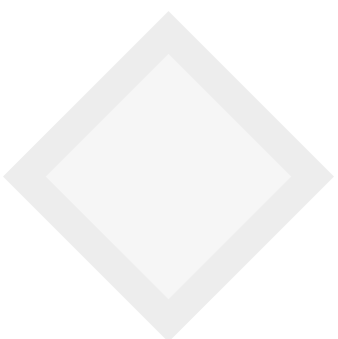
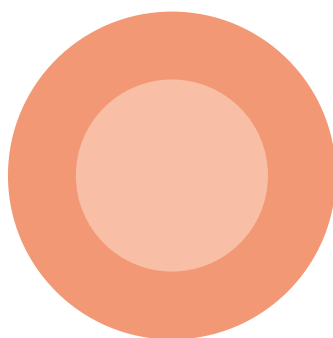
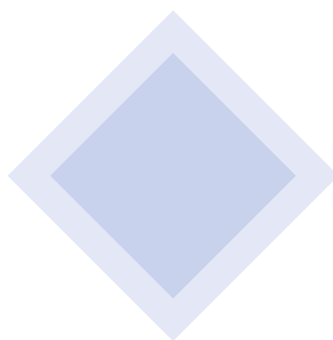
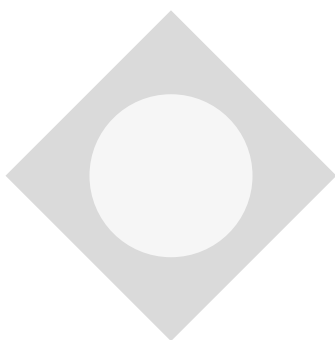
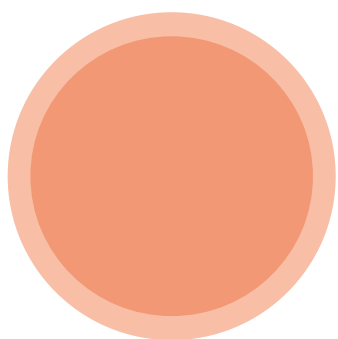
A total of **31%** of Ukrainians strongly agree with the idea of the exhumation and reburial of the remains of Poles murdered in Volhynia and Galicia in 1943–45. Another **40%** of respondents are ready to agree to this step, provided that the list of those

buried and the inscription 'Fallen for free Ukraine' is restored on the grave of UPA activists located in Poland. In contrast, **13%** of respondents do not accept the idea of taking such a step.

↓ QUESTION:

Poland demands the possibility to conduct exhumation in sites of former Polish villages in Volhynia and Galicia, and reburial of the remnants of Poles murdered there in 1943–45. Do you think Ukraine should agree to that?





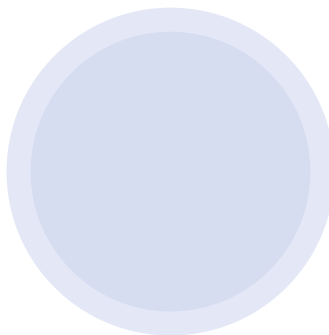
The report we are presenting to our readers contains the findings from a Ukrainian public opinion survey focused on attitudes towards Poland and Poles. The survey was carried out from 9 to 15 October 2023. It is already the third survey conducted by Info Sapiens, the Ukrainian social research institute, for the Mieroszewski Centre. Some of the questions answered by Ukrainian respondents had been already included in the joint survey carried out in August 2022. We asked these questions again based on the understanding that public opinion sentiments may change, especially in the conditions of war, when Ukraine is defending its independence following the Russian aggression, with a huge effort of the whole Ukrainian nation and at the price of dozens of thousands of fallen soldiers. In addition, we were also aware that, unlike in 2022, which saw enormous, emotionally-charged Polonophilia in Ukrainian society, 2023 was a year when, alongside solidarity and assistance to victims of aggression, various disagreements between Poland and Ukraine increasingly surfaced in public life. They peaked during the much-publicised 'grain crisis' between the two countries, where Poland blocked the sale of selected Ukrainian agricultural products on the Polish market. All this prompted us to repeat part of the 2022 survey, clarify some of the earlier questions and add new ones, reflecting the context of autumn 2023.



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The Mieroszewski Centre is a Polish state institution established by the Polish Parliament and supervised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Our mission is to run and support projects aimed at building dialogue between Poles and the nations of Eastern Europe. The Centre is named after Juliusz Mieroszewski, one of the most prominent Polish political writers of the 20th century. He championed cooperation between Poles and other nations suffering under Russian and Soviet imperialism.