

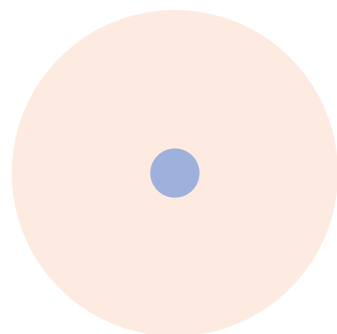
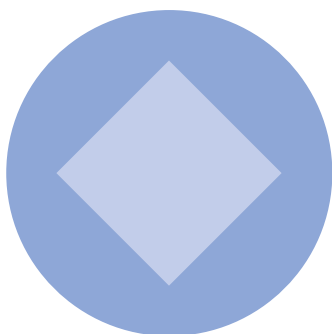
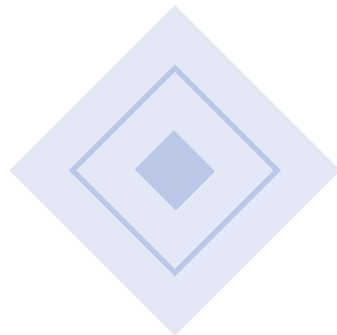
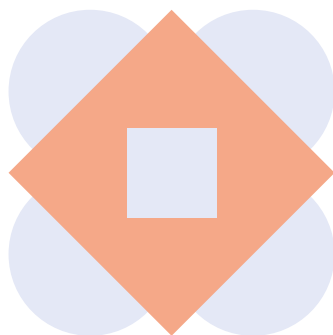
# POLAND AND POLES

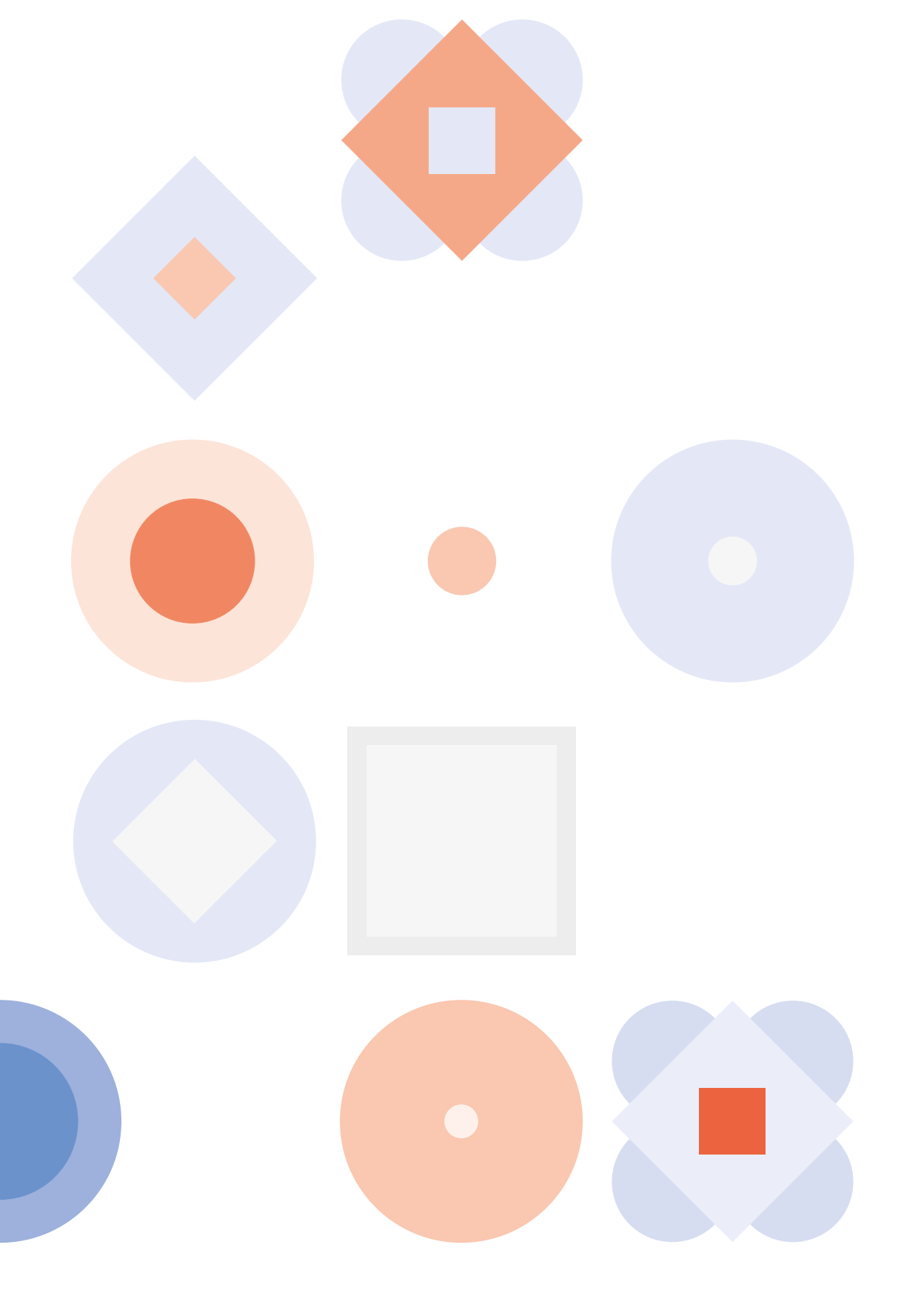


Warsaw, January 2026

Report by the Mioszowski Centre  
on public opinion research conducted in Ukraine

# AS SEEN BY UKRAINIANS 2025








# **POLAND AND POLES AS SEEN BY UKRAINIANS 2025**

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Warsaw, January 2026  
Mieroszewski Centre

**Survey provider**

Info Sapiens

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**Graphic design and layout**

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**Publisher**

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## Contents

1. Introduction	6
2. Information about the study	8
3. Connections with Poland	11
4. Attitudes towards Poland and Poles	35
5. Attitudes towards selected aspects of Polish-Ukrainian relations	80

# 1. Introduction

We are pleased to present another report on a public opinion survey in Ukraine regarding perceptions of Poland and Poles. It was commissioned by the Miosroszewski Centre and carried out by Info Sapiens, the Ukrainian social research institute. Unlike the editions dated August 2022, October 2023 and November 2024, this study also includes findings from focus group interviews. These in-depth discussions provide a better understanding of Ukrainians' attitudes towards 'Polish-related issues'.

We encourage everyone to read this publication carefully, as it addresses topics that attract considerable attention in both Polish and Ukrainian public debate. At the same time, we would like to draw readers' attention to several trends revealed in the report.

Above all, it is clear that the ties linking Ukrainians with Poland are growing ever stronger. Ukrainians perceive Poles as a nation that is particularly close to them in terms of culture. The proportion of those who have never visited Poland is declining. An increasing number of families have relatives who left for Poland after the outbreak of the full-scale war, and nearly half of respondents report some form of personal experience related to Poland. These may include family encounters and social contacts, knowledge of the language or an interest in Polish culture. Furthermore, a majority of Ukrainians have purchased Polish goods or used the services of Polish companies operating on the Ukrainian market over the past year.

In terms of the overall image of Poland and Poles, positive and neutral associations continue to outweigh the overtly negative ones. At the same time, the dynamics of changes in opinions about Poles show that the enthusiastic gratitude expressed towards Poles in the early months of the war has clearly subsided, giving way to more ambivalent views.

The proportion of Ukrainians declaring that their opinion of Poles had changed for the better since 2022 has fallen very sharply, whereas the proportion of those whose opinion has changed for the worse has gone up. The improvement in Ukrainian respondents' views of Poland and

Poles stems primarily from the enduring memory of the assistance provided: humanitarian, material as well as military assistance, and especially the welcoming reception of refugees. In turn, the deteriorated ratings are most often linked to direct experience of unfriendly treatment in Poland, or reports of such treatment experienced by other Ukrainians. This is coupled with news on economic conflicts: the so-called 'grain crisis' and the border blockade. The impact of the latter two, however, was significantly weaker versus two years ago. At that time, a short follow-up survey, conducted three months after the October 2023 study, during the period of border tensions, showed that the percentage of Ukrainians who have a positive attitude towards Poland and Poles had fallen by as much as 22.5 percentage points during that period.

It is worth noting that Ukrainians often remember such behaviour demonstrated by Poles, which they perceive as a sign of contempt or as an expression of the belief in Polish 'cultural superiority'. Nevertheless, the overall balance of attitudes remains moderately positive: 43% of Ukrainians have a positive opinion of Poles today, nearly half (49%) hold a neutral view, and only 8% are negatively disposed.

A significant yet sensitive aspect of the attitudes studied is historical memory and disputes regarding the interpretation of the past. The report indicates that there is a growing awareness that the Volhynia Massacre constitutes a problem in Polish-Ukrainian relations. However, this is not accompanied by a willingness to accept the expectations of Polish public opinion, namely a change, or at least a correction, in Ukrainians' attitudes towards the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army). Most Ukrainians, however, support the idea of conducting joint Polish-Ukrainian research into this crime, whereas also backing the position of the Ukrainian authorities and intellectuals that apologies for the past can only be offered on the basis of reciprocity. This state of mind is certainly also influenced by an asymmetry in the sense of guilt: a higher proportion of Ukrainians believe that it is the Poles who have reasons to feel

guilty towards Ukrainians, rather than vice versa. In the focus group discussions, there is a strong call to 'understand and forgive', coupled with opposition to the instrumentalisation of history in the name of current political goals.

Another important theme is the perception of Poland as a country that assists Ukraine through military and humanitarian aid and supports it on the path to European integration. Although Ukrainian respondents are more likely to cite the United Kingdom and Germany as the main providers of military aid, Poland remains one of the two most important partners in humanitarian aid and a key 'first-contact' ally, which was particularly evident at the start of the full-scale war. Moreover, most Ukrainians expect Poland to support Kyiv both in the fight against the Russian aggressor and in the process of integration with the European Union. However, the proportion of people convinced that this support is unconditional has been gradually declining.

The survey also asked Ukrainians about their attitudes towards leading Polish politicians. Prime Minister Donald Tusk enjoys the highest recognition and a majority of positive opinions, whereas the share of people expressing dislike towards President Karol Nawrocki is three times as high as towards Prime Minister Tusk, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, or the leader of Law and Justice Jarosław Kaczyński. Focus group discussions clearly show that respondents are not familiar with the details of Poland's political life, and base their judgments on reports from the Ukrainian media and isolated, often emotional messages. Sometimes this is compounded by a belief in conspiracy theories.

A significant cross-cutting trend that runs through all parts of the report is an awareness of the role of Russian information warfare and attempts to sow discord between Poland and Ukraine. It is not uncommon for respondents to interpret sudden escalations of disputes – both on history and economic topics – as a result of actions undertaken by a 'third party', particularly Russia, seeking to break the unity of the countries supporting Ukraine. The topic of Russian disinformation efforts is mentioned spontaneously both when discussing the 'Volhynia issue' and when analysing the causes of border blockades or online narratives about Poland's alleged plans to subjugate western Ukraine, although Ukrainians generally do not give credence to the latter reports.

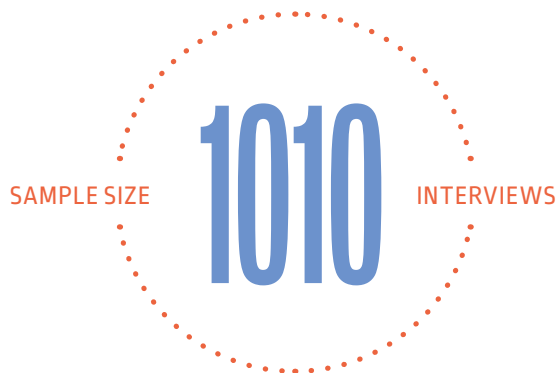
Therefore, this study confirms the observation that the emotional, positive – sometimes even euphoric – opinions about Poland and Poles which prevailed during the early stages of the war have given way to an image of Poland as a partner that is culturally close and shares a vision of security for the whole of Central and Eastern Europe, but which also has many interests of its own, with an aversion to Ukrainians growing within its territory. Ukrainians also recognise that this aversion is driven by the war fatigue among Poles, the presence of a very large number of Ukrainian refugees, as well as a selective memory of past crimes.

**Ernest Wyciszekiewicz, PhD**  
**Łukasz Adamski, PhD**

## 2. Information about the study

### Methodology

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During the full-scale war in Ukraine, Info Sapiens conducted four surveys for the Mieroszewski Centre on Ukrainians' attitudes towards Poland and Poles. The nationally representative sample for each of these surveys consisted of approximately 1,000 respondents, with an error margin of 3.1%. The surveys were conducted between 5–19 November 2025, 1–11 November 2024, 9–19 October 2023 and 11–15 August 2022.

All surveys were conducted using the CATI method (computer-assisted telephone interviews) on a random sample of mobile phone numbers. The sample structure corresponds to that of the adult population in territories controlled by the Ukrainian government in terms of gender, age, size of domicile and region of residence prior to the full-scale invasion, according to data published by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Derzhstat) as of 1 January 2022. The survey was not conducted in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol or other Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia, where Ukrainian operators

do not provide mobile phone services. The survey did not cover Ukrainians residing abroad.

For the purposes of this study, regions with historical ties to Poland were singled out and identified as Galicia and Right-Bank Ukraine (excluding Galicia, Carpathian Ruthenia and Bukovina).

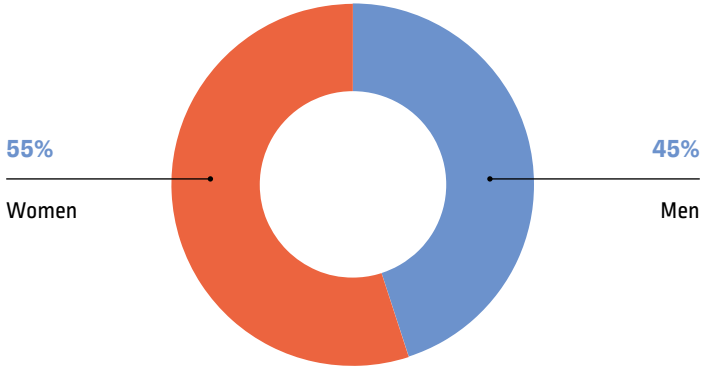
Between 24 and 26 November 2025, six focus group interviews (hereinafter: focus groups or FGIs) were also conducted. Two focus groups were held in each of the regions mentioned above: one with respondents who were 25–45 y.o. and one with a group aged 46–65. Most participants in each focus group understood Polish at least at a basic level and had experience of visiting Poland and/or had friends or relatives currently living in Poland.

In some of the charts, the figures do not add up to 100%. This occurs in multiple choice questions. For single choice questions, there are small deviations from 100% when percentage values were rounded off.

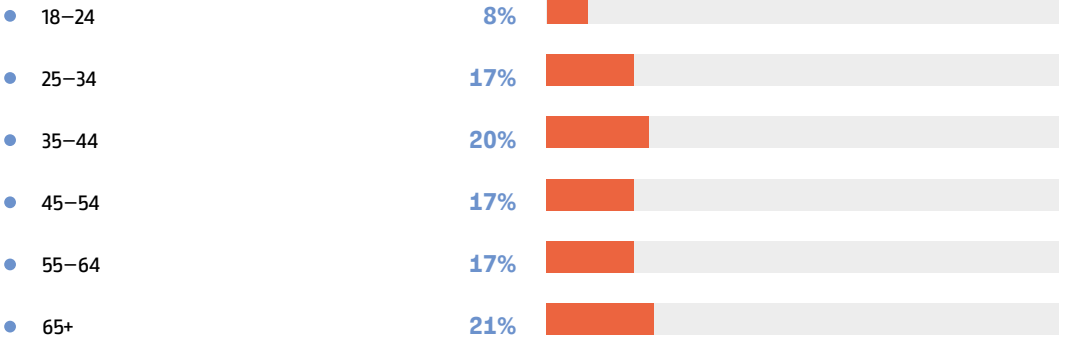
## Sample structure

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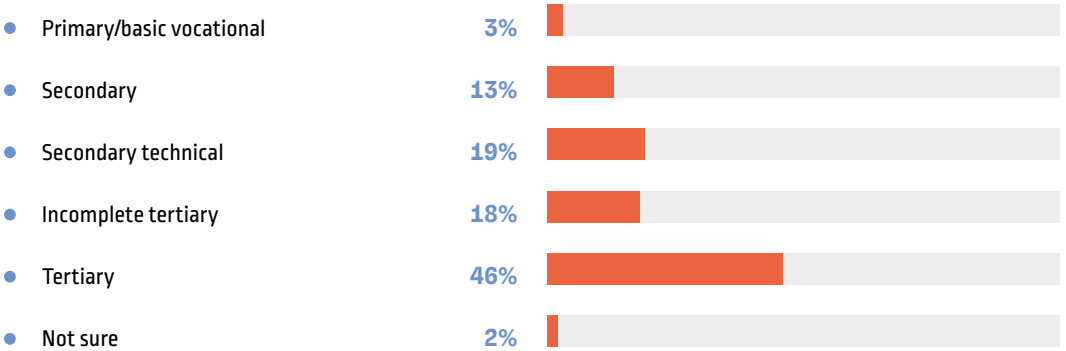
### Gender



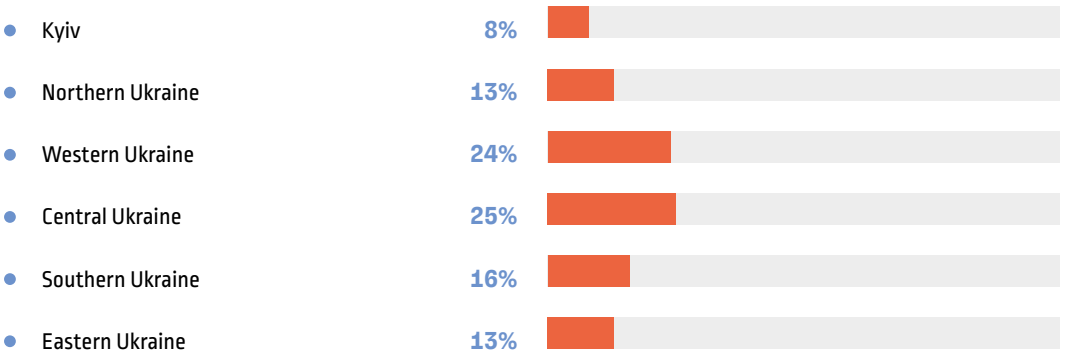
### Age



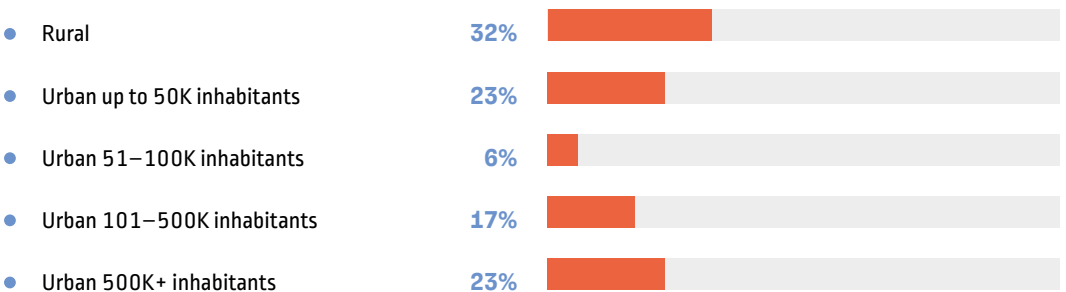
## Education

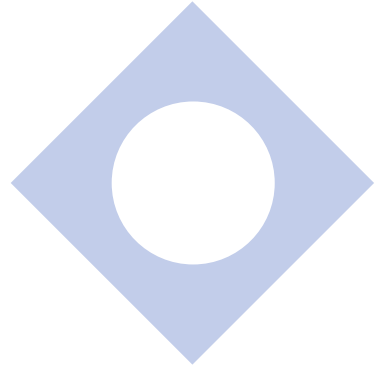


## Region

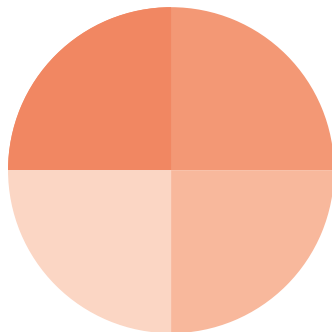
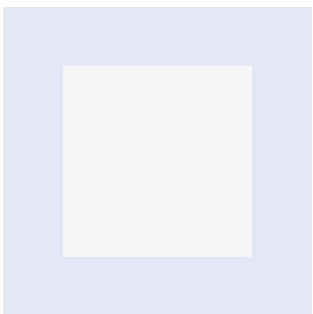
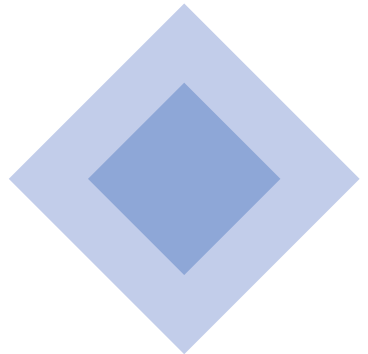
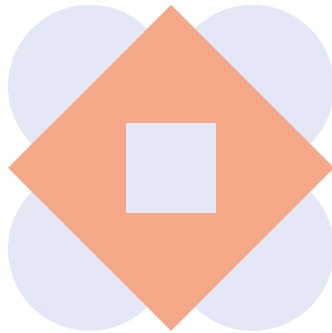


## Size of domicile





# Connections with Poland



Following the arrival of Ukrainian refugees seeking shelter in Poland from the hostilities and Poland's support for Ukraine, relations between the two countries continue to strengthen. The proportion of Ukrainians who have

never been to Poland fell from **65%** in 2022–2023 to **56%** in 2025. The proportion of Ukrainians who have visited Poland once or several times has risen from **24%** in 2022–2023 to **30%** in 2025.

↓ FIGURE 1:

### Have you ever been to Poland?

2025



2024



2023



2022



Yes, I even lived there for a while

Yes, I have been there many times

Yes, I have been there once or a couple of times

No, never

Visits to Poland are directly linked to the region's geographical proximity: **71%** of residents of Galicia, half of residents of Right-Bank Ukraine and a third of respondents from other regions have visited Poland.

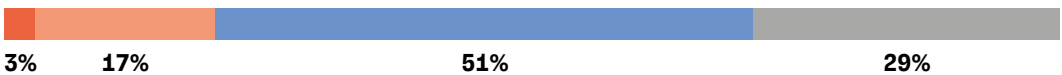
↓ FIGURE 2:

## Have you ever been to Poland? By region.

Total



Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Yes, I even lived there for a while

Yes, I have been there many times

Yes, I have been there once or a couple of times

No, never

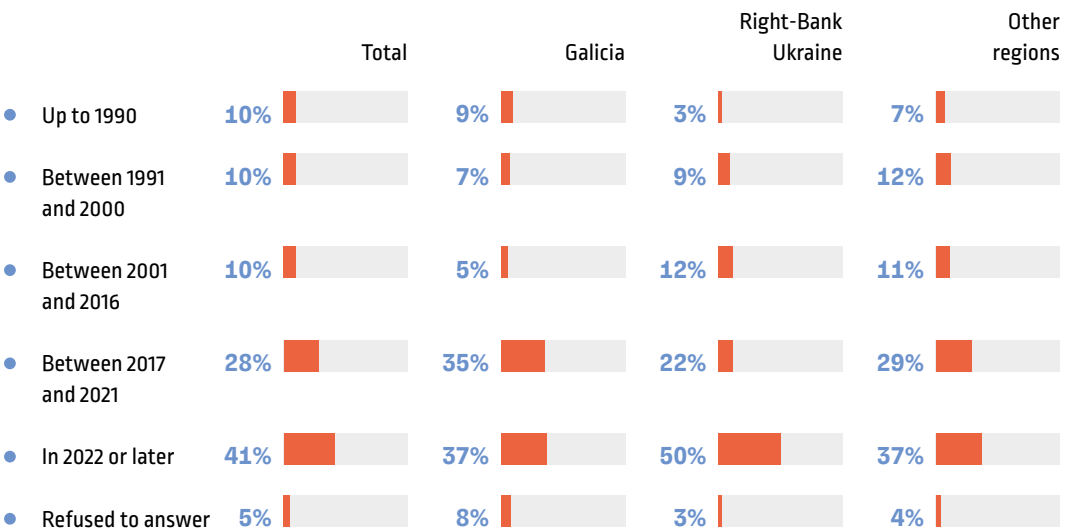
Respondents usually indicated that the last time they had visited Poland was after the outbreak of the full-scale war, a finding that applies primarily to residents of Right-Bank Ukraine. Before the war broke out, but after the visa regime had been lifted, 28% of those surveyed had visited

Poland, with this figure reaching 35% in Galicia. In contrast, 10% of respondents indicated that their last visit to Poland was before Ukraine gained independence in 1991.

↓ FIGURE 3:

## When did you last visit Poland?

### By region.



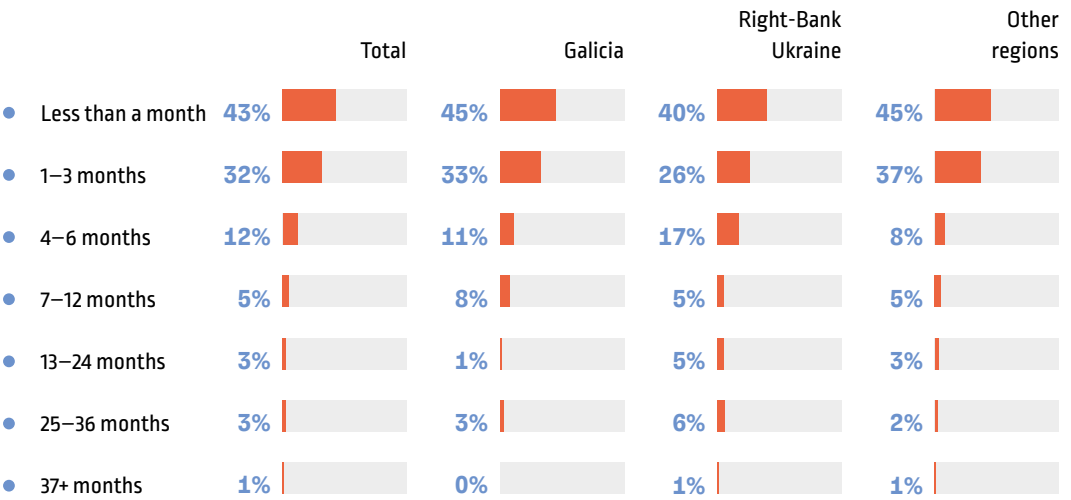
No significant geographical differences were noted in the responses to the question about time spent in Poland. Short-term visits lasting up to one month are the most common type, and this is precisely how long almost half of Ukrainian visitors (40–45%) spent in Poland. Around

one-third of respondents indicated a stay of between one and three months. 12% of Ukrainians had lived in Poland for four to six months, and the same number had stayed in Poland even longer.

↓ FIGURE 4:

## How much time in total did you spend in Poland?

### By region.

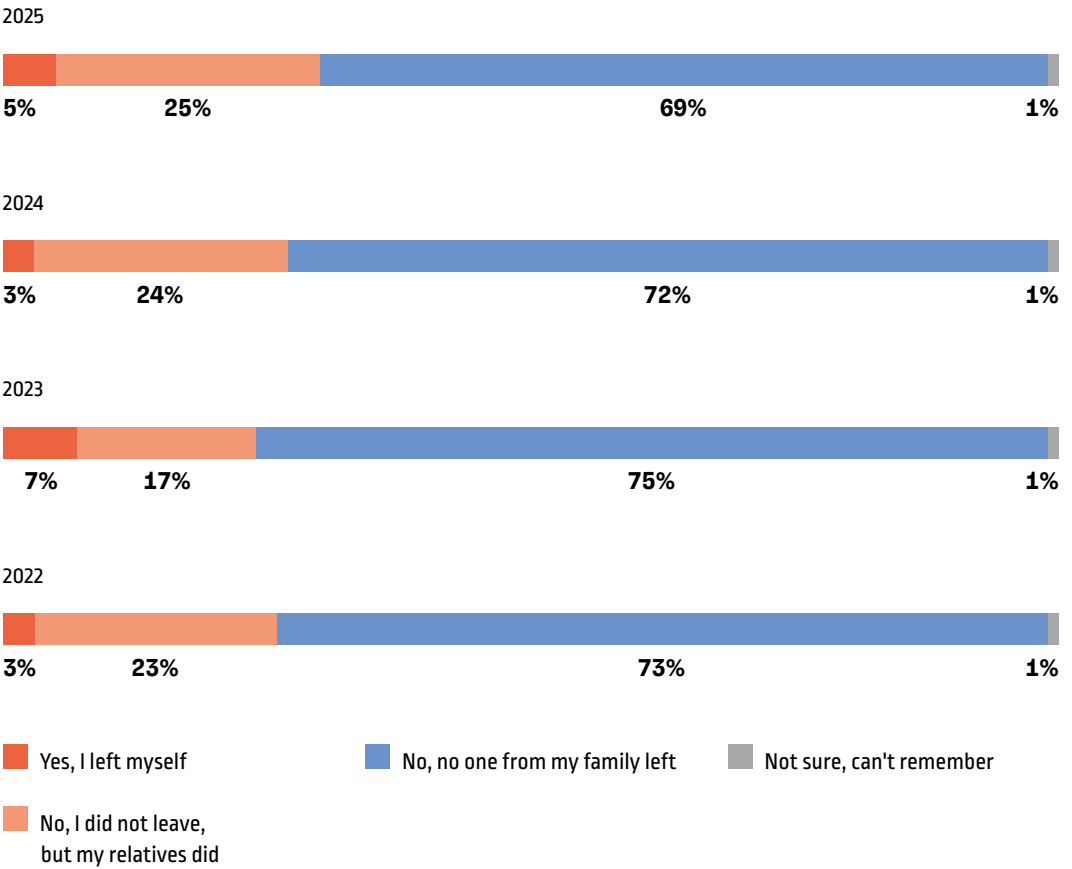


A total of **30%** of respondents said that there are people in their families who left for Poland after the full-scale war began: this figure has been rising slowly since 2023 and

reflects an awareness of the significant support provided by Poland to Ukrainian refugees.

↓ FIGURE 5:

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



In Right-Bank Ukraine, **39%** of respondents stated that they had people in their families who had left for Poland during the full-scale war. In Galicia this percentage reached **37%**, with **23%** in other regions.

↓ FIGURE 6:

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

Total



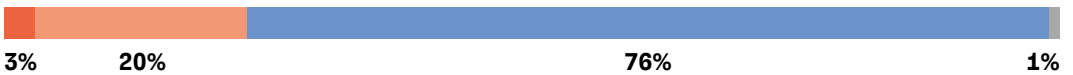
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



- Yes, I left myself
- No, no one from my family left
- Not sure, can't remember
- No, I did not leave, but my relatives did

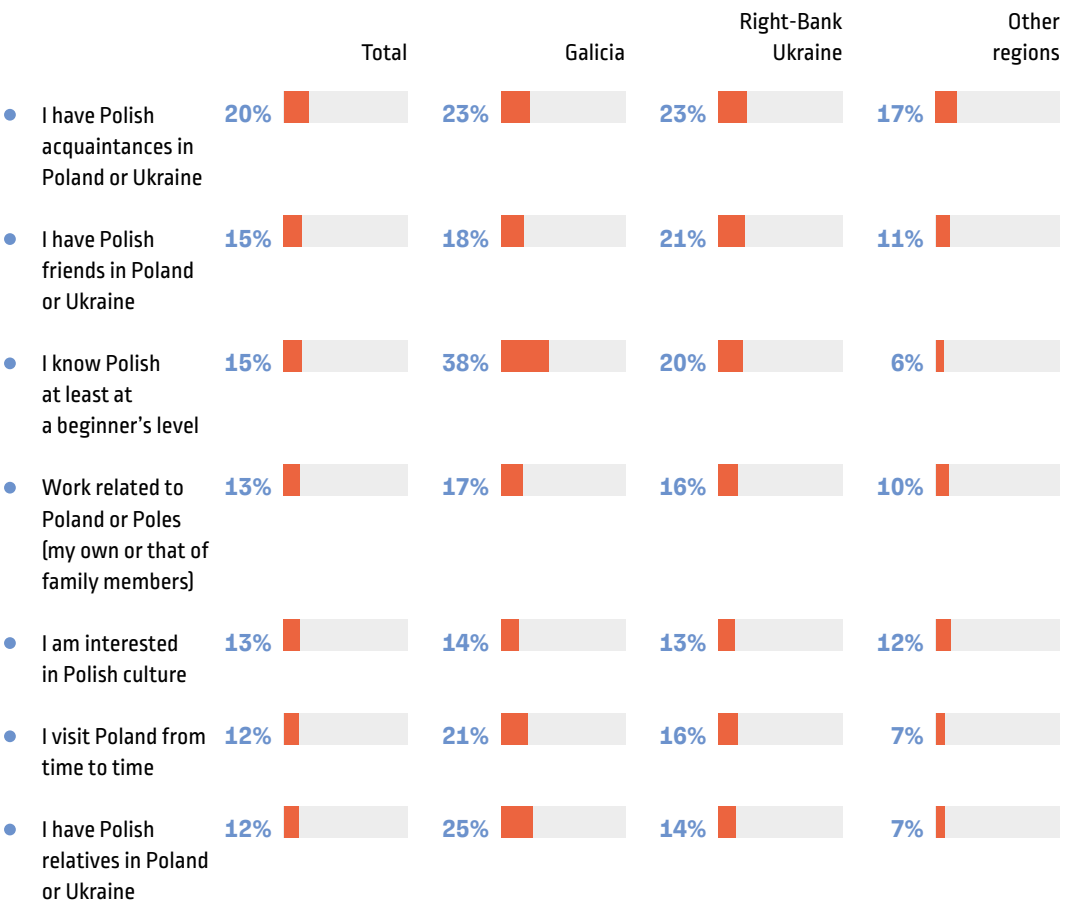
A significant proportion of Ukrainians (at least one in five) admitted that they have Polish acquaintances; 15% and 12% stated, respectively, that they have Polish friends and relatives. Overall, more than a third of Ukrainians have personal family ties or friends in Poland. 15% know Polish at

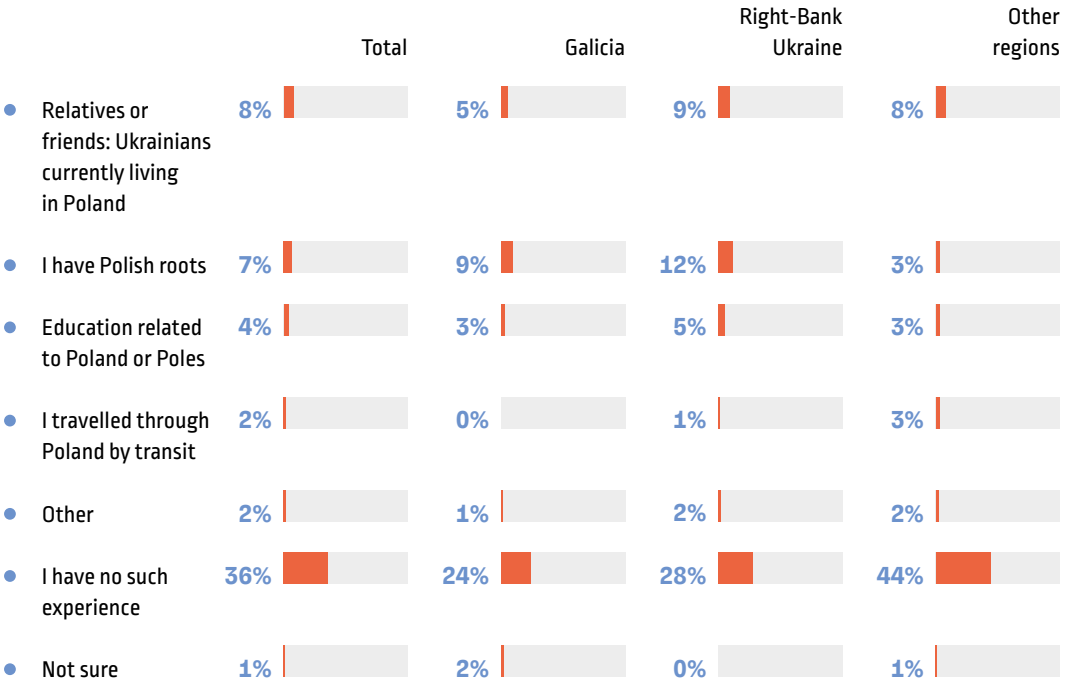
least at a basic level, 13% are interested in Polish culture, and 7% have Polish roots. Around 13% of respondents have work-related ties to Poland or Poles, and around 4% have educational ties. Just over a third did not mention any experiences that would link them to Poland in any way.

↓ FIGURE 7:

## What is your personal experience of Poland or Poles?

### By region.





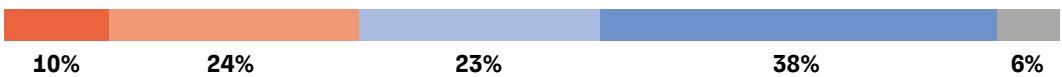
The majority of respondents (57%) had purchased Polish goods or used the services of Polish companies in Ukraine over the past twelve months. These were mainly food products (especially sweets), household chemicals, skin care products and cosmetics, clothing, non-food products, transport and tourism services.

↓ FIGURE 8:

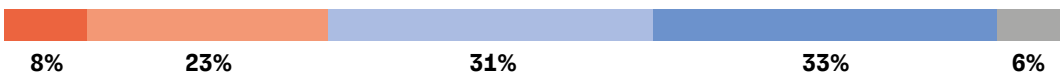
## Have you purchased Polish goods or used Polish services in Ukraine in the last 12 months?

By region.

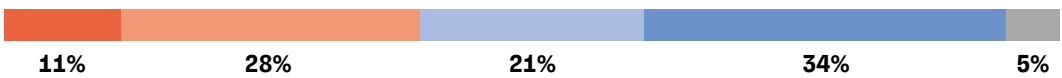
Total



Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



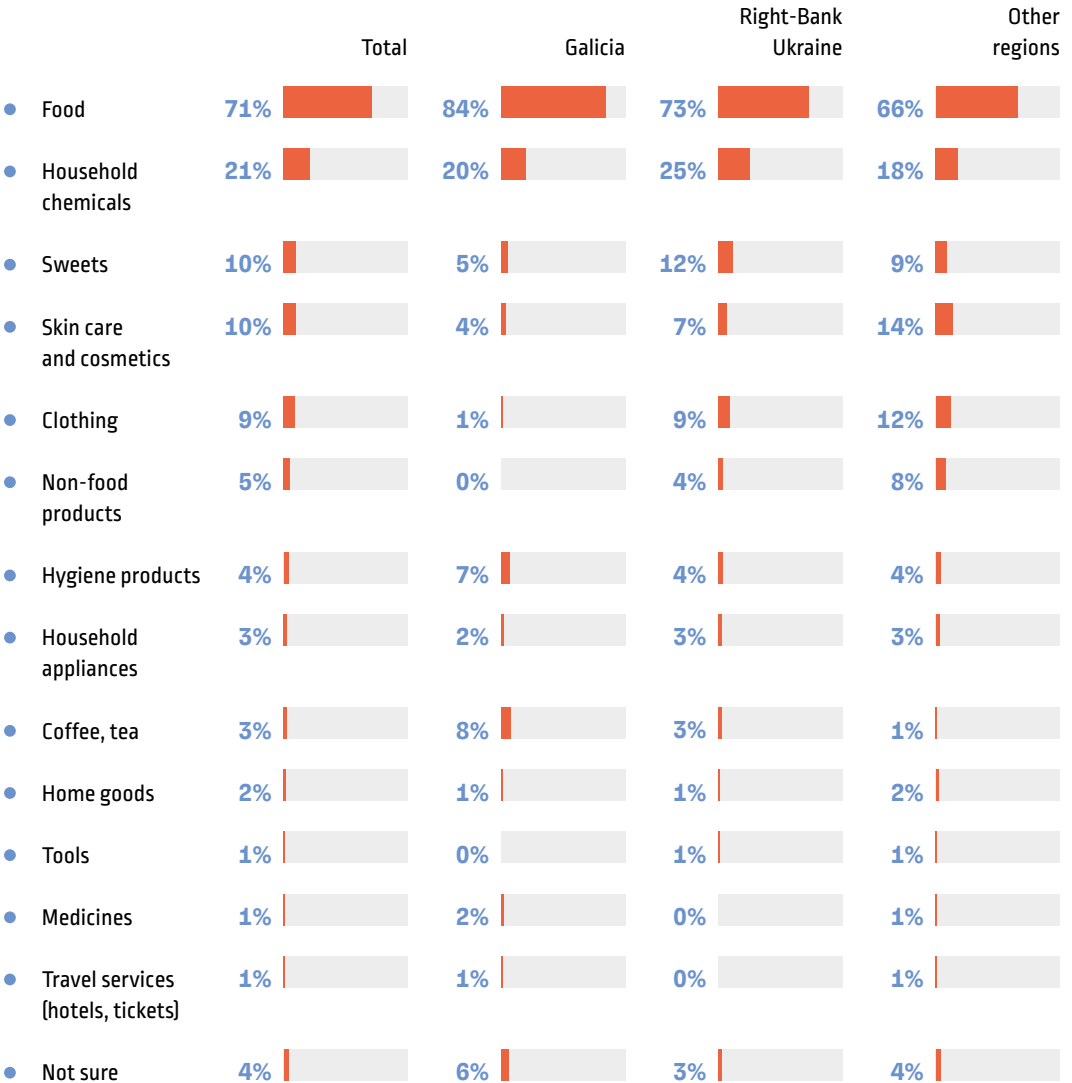
Other regions



↓ FIGURE 9:

## Which goods or services specifically?

### By region.

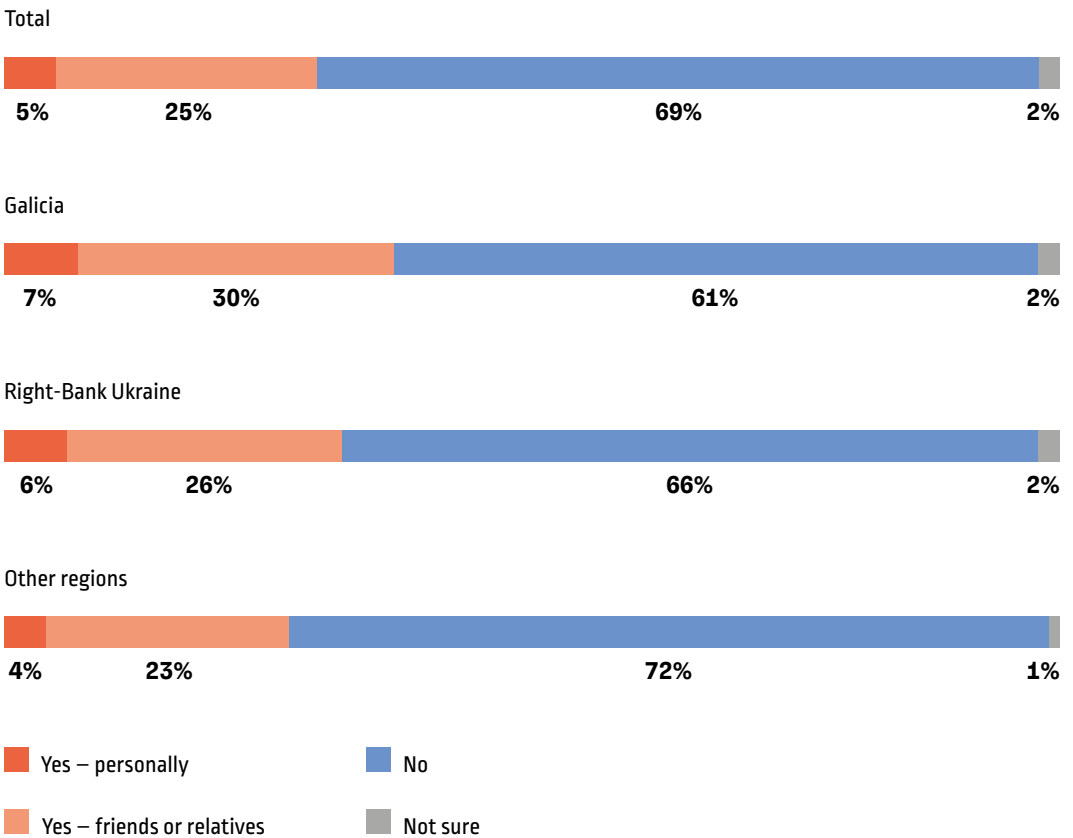


Almost a third of respondents admit that they themselves, or their friends or relatives, have experienced instances of hostile treatment of Ukrainians in Poland. The proportion

of such responses is highest among residents of Galicia – 37%, with 32% among residents of Right-Bank Ukraine, and 27% among residents of other regions.

↓ FIGURE 10:

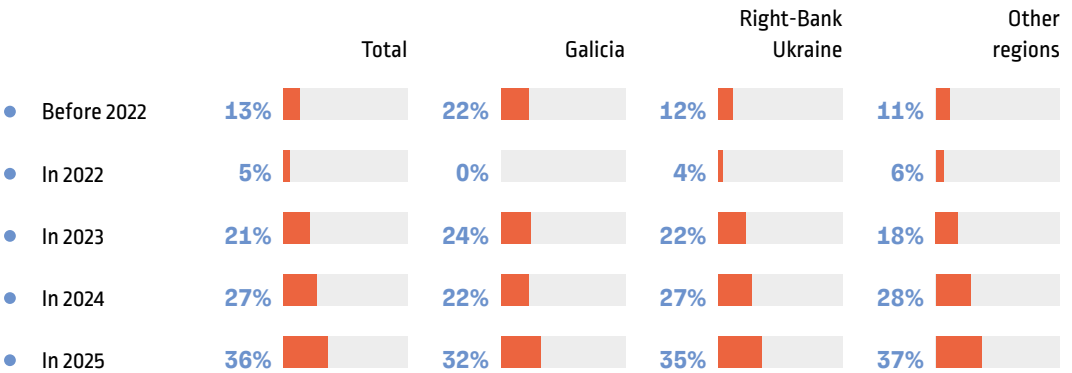
*Have you personally, or through your friends or relatives, encountered instances of hostility towards Ukrainians in Poland?  
By region.*



There is a clear upward trend in reports of incidents of unfriendly treatment by Poles, regardless of region. In 2025, a total of **36%** of Ukrainians encountered unfriendly behaviour in Poland, whereas this figure stood at merely **5%** in 2022.

↓ FIGURE 11:

### *In which year did you last encounter hostility towards Ukrainians in Poland? By region.*

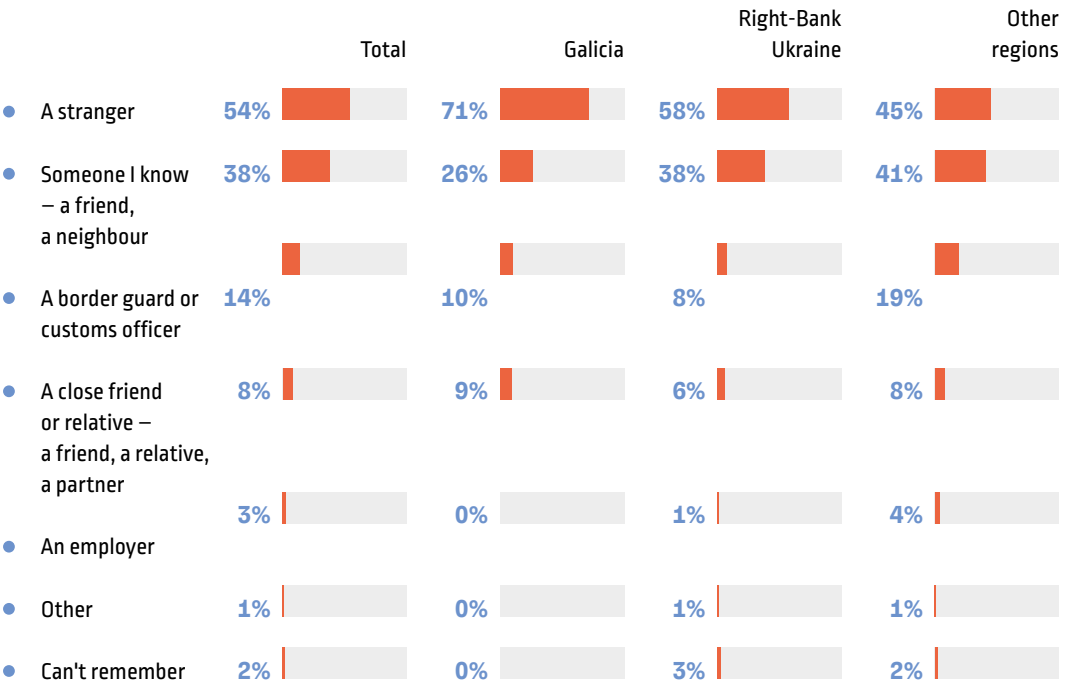


A total of **54%** of respondents said that the unfriendly treatment came from Polish strangers, whereas **38%** mentioned acquaintances, neighbours or work colleagues. One

in seven people reported instances of unfriendly treatment by the Border Guard or customs officers. Only **8%** mentioned close relatives or friends in this context.

↓ FIGURE 12:

### What kind of Poles showed hostility towards Ukrainians in Poland in your experience? By region.

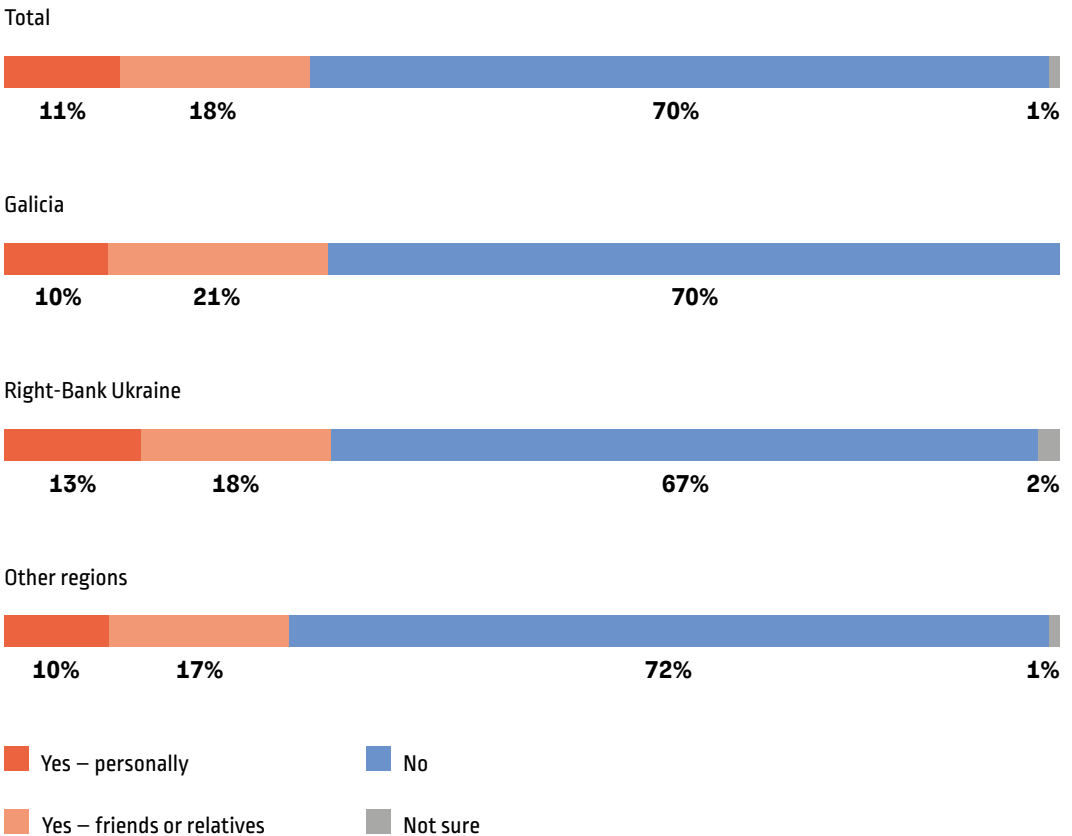


In addition to instances of unfriendly treatment, respondents were also asked to recall whether they themselves, or their relatives or friends, had experienced unselfish, unexpected help from Poles. In response, **29%** of respondents

mentioned such instances, regardless of their region of origin, which is almost the same as the proportion of people who experienced unfriendly attitudes (**30%**).

↓ FIGURE 13:

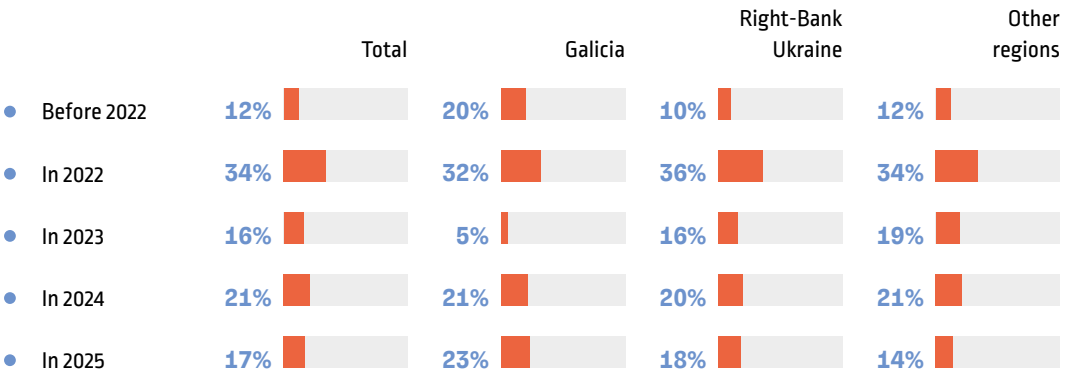
*Have you, either personally or through your friends or relatives, encountered instances of unselfish help from Poles – when such help was not expected? By region.*



It is quite obvious that the majority of such instances of selfless help occurred during the initial phase of the full-scale war, namely in 2022.

↓ FIGURE 14:

*In which year did you last encounter cases of unselfish help from Poles?  
By region.*



Interestingly, according to the survey findings, such selfless assistance was provided almost equally by strangers and acquaintances, as well as by volunteers and activists from

non-governmental organisations. Only 12% of the surveyed Ukrainians mentioned civil servants in this context.

↓ FIGURE 15:

## What kind of Poles offered unselfish help?

### By region.

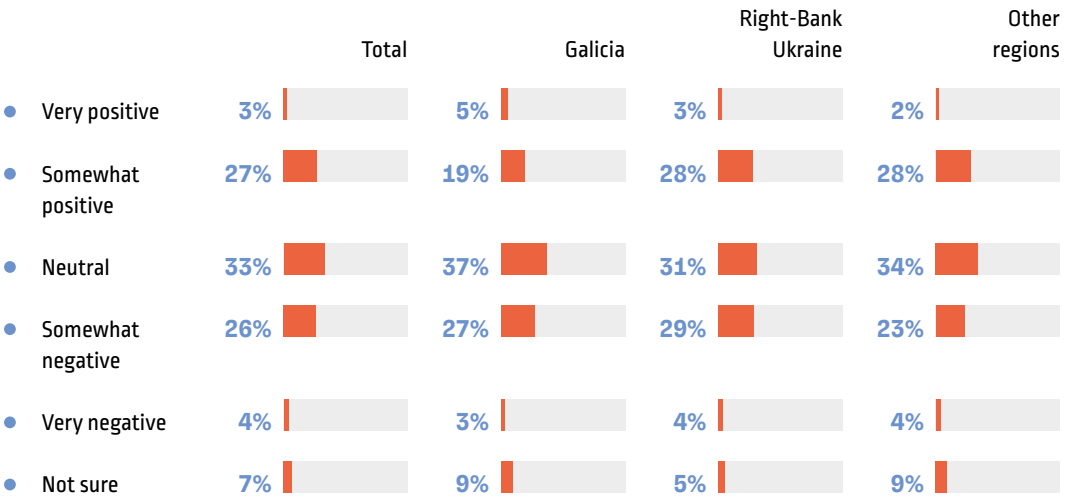


Ukrainians' views on the attitudes demonstrated by Poles living in Poland towards them were almost evenly divided: just under a third (30%) mentioned a negative attitude, and

the same proportion indicated a positive attitude. Exactly a third of respondents (33%) felt that the attitude towards Ukrainians demonstrated by Poles in Poland was neutral.

↓ FIGURE 16:

*In your opinion, the overall attitude of Poles towards Ukrainians in Poland is... By region.*



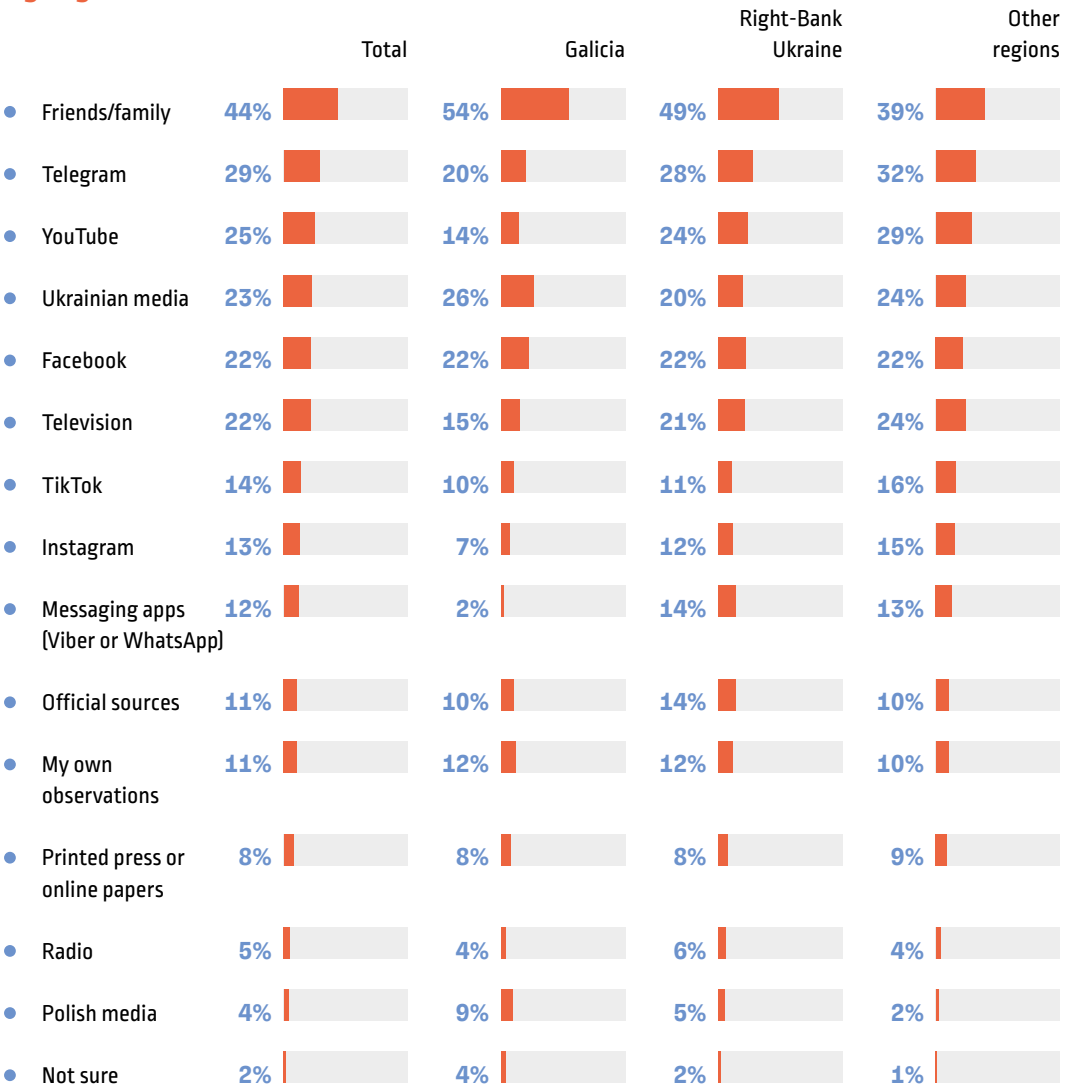
Friends and family remain an important source of information about Poland and Poles for Ukrainians (44%). As regards the media, social media platforms and messaging apps, the most popular ones include Telegram (29%), YouTube (25%), Ukrainian media (23%), Facebook (22%) and television (22%). The total percentage of respondents using at least one social media platform to obtain

information about Poland is 50%. The total share of respondents who receive such information via messaging apps stands at 35%. Therefore, the three main sources of information about Poland are social media (50%), friends and relatives (44%) and messaging apps (35%). The figures are given as the total percentage of respondents who selected at least one answer.

↓ FIGURE 17:

## Where do you usually get your information about Poland and Poles?

### By region.



During focus group interviews with people from Ukraine, regardless of the region and location where the FGIs were conducted, the participants' age, or the context of their contacts with Poles or experiences of visiting Poland, respondents mentioned both positive and negative experiences. Some respondents reported predominantly positive experiences, while others described mainly negative ones. Positive experiences were most often linked to evacuation from Ukraine following the onset of full-scale Russian aggression, whereas negative ones concerned employment-related issues, i.e. attitudes towards Ukrainian workers and unequal pay for Ukrainians and Poles.

According to the respondents, there are a great many Ukrainians in Poland, and Poles are increasingly concerned about economic and political competition, both from Ukrainian migrants and from Ukraine as a country in the global market. Consequently, anti-Ukrainian statements have become part of the political discourse, also among the current authorities in Poland.

The respondents' accounts suggest that tensions in relations between Poles and Ukrainians have been growing recently, and instances of hostile, or even aggressive, behaviour by Poles towards Ukrainians are not uncommon. At the same time, some interviewees pointed out that Ukrainians in Poland sometimes also behave in an unfriendly and uncivilised manner, which is sometimes perceived as 'importing' patterns of behaviour from Ukraine and provokes a negative reaction from Poles.

Respondents from Galicia and Right-Bank Ukraine often claimed that Poles lay claim to Ukrainian lands, and also recalled that relations between the nations were extremely hostile at times during the last century. In their view, the hostility displayed by the older generation, in both Polish and Ukrainian families, was often passed down and adopted by younger family members.

*"I travelled through Poland two or three times on my way to visit friends. I was waiting for my flight, so I spent one day walking around Warsaw. I only met normal, positive people. I didn't have any conflict situations. One lad helped me buy tickets for a local bus. I spoke to him in Ukrainian. And he kindly helped me. He switched to Russian."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"I have many friends. There are nice people, but there are all sorts... Some people, once they've had*

*a shot of vodka, will say: 'Lviv belongs to Poland'. And back home, the older generation used to say that 'a good Pole is one who is two metres under the ground'... They say that 'Ukrainians must be driven out of Poland, that they've already put down roots here and might set up their own political parties over time'. As they say: 'The two richest Poles in Poland – where do they come from? From Ukraine'. And they say: 'If the Ukrainians stay here a bit longer, they'll set up their own political party, get into parliament and start imposing their policies.'"*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"The service at the border was good, and so was the way we were treated, even though we were crossing the border at night. I was with my child. When we got off for passport control, the customs officers said I could stay on the bus, so as not to wake my child. I was very surprised to hear that. And in the city, whenever we asked someone for directions, they all seemed Ukrainian to me. I met kind, friendly people. We stayed at the home of a Polish man. A very nice person... However, many others are against Ukraine."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"Russian soldiers were stationed in Sumy. We left and ended up in Poland on our way to Germany. Everything had been organised before we came. We didn't spend any money, we didn't have to buy anything. I was travelling with a two-year-old. And everything was provided: food, nappies, hot water. Everything."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"I had good relations with the people I encountered. They support us, they feel sorry for us. They try to help as best they can, both through humanitarian aid and with words. They're on Ukraine's side. Though everyone says that Lviv is a Polish city. Gródek is thirty or forty kilometres from the border. And they consider all these places to be their own towns. But my impressions from my interactions with them are positive."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"...I can't say anything bad about them. Like everywhere else, there are decent people, but there are also those dodgy types. They're a bit of a sly lot. They're not honest or open. That's my impression."*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"...I worked with Poles... My best friend was a Pole. He once said something to me that I still remember to this day: 'If my grandfather knew I was working with you, he'd chop my hand off with an axe.' That's their attitude towards Ukrainians."*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"My husband used to say that we were strangers there, unnecessary. As a labour force, we're fine but not for living there."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"There are those who left before the war, and there are those who left during the war. Everyone has built a life for themselves in their own way, but generally our people work very hard. They say they aren't treated on an equal footing with Poles. Poles are in a very good position, with all the benefits. Our people work completely differently and are treated differently from Poles. That's what my friends tell me. I haven't been there myself, but from what I've heard I know that there are many places to visit and things to see in Poland, and the infrastructure is generally quite interesting."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"If I look at the experiences of many friends who went there to work, it involves hard physical labour for 10–12 hours a day. As for those who wanted to do intellectual work in other sectors, none of my friends managed to do that. My daughter's friend, who is 21, works as a barmaid. She's been living there for three years now and is simply happy. My daughter often visits her. They like the freedom out there. She lives in Kraków."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"The attitudes have deteriorated. It's not like it was at the start of the war. Generally, there are some positive opinions, but mostly negative ones. At first, Poles showed a pleasant, charming attitude. But now they've grown tired of us. We work harder than they do, and in many cases we work better. But they don't pay us what they should, they don't pay the same money as for local workers who are Polish."*

(Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"Before the war, when I used to visit them and meet Poles, their attitude wasn't exactly the best. You're Ukrainian, they're Poles. They're always so patriotic: 'we, the Poles'. That pride in Poland, that pride in being Polish. After the war started, the Poles softened towards Ukrainians. They embraced us, and helped us. They'd give us anything. Now, this year, I went to Poland again. Things have changed a bit now. I think it's a shift in the government's political views. They've changed their attitude towards Ukrainians. Now it's not just pride in being Polish, but also they say we've come to their country and are taking their jobs."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"There are a lot of Ukrainians out there. If you walk down the street, every other person is speaking Ukrainian. Lots of new commercial properties. Hala Baluvana, Nova Poshta, Ukrainian shops... I was in Poland a month ago, driving through the country, and my car broke down. On the road. Some Poles pulled up, it was the roadside assistance, they helped me a lot. They took me all the way to the repair garage."*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"I am very grateful to the Poles for the way they treated our women and young children, whom they took in. I will thank them for this for the rest of my life. It so happened that I had to send my daughter with my grandson, and my wife to Poland. It was incredible. My wife tells me she'll write a book about how it all happened. It was an extraordinary thing. As for today, my attitude hasn't changed."*

*My experience is positive and still prevails, but there are moments I don't like. It's about politics, about technology. People fall for political ploys: 'go back to your f\*\*\* Ukraine' and so on. It's just boorish behaviour. There are hooligans everywhere, and we have them here too, so there's no escaping it."*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"Relations with Poles were positive. Perhaps because I also treated them as human beings. That's what I think. Whatever you give to people, they will give the same back. That's why I didn't have any negative experiences. I can't say anything bad. My son is now engaged to a Polish woman. I know her parents, I know her, and her whole extended family."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., other regions)

*"I speak to Poles every two months. In my experience, about 60% don't like us. They'd say 'Fuck off', and that's it, 'goodbye', meaning: 'go to Ukraine, go home'. Like that famous Russian ship. This happens no matter where you are. When I was in hospital, or when you enter a shop ... To be honest, I don't like them at all."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions)

*"They're so self-important, they have a sort of hatred towards many Ukrainians. Many Poles are like that. I'm not talking about everyone."*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions)

Respondents have experience of buying Polish goods. Polish food products and clothing brands are available in Ukrainian supermarket chains, and there are also shops selling Polish goods. In respondents' view, it is more cost-effective for residents of border areas to buy, for example, household appliances in Poland rather than in Ukraine.

As a rule, respondents are unfamiliar with contemporary Polish culture. Most were unable to name well-known bands, singers, writers, actors or athletes. Some recalled names of famous Polish poets, musicians, film directors, contemporary performers or athletes.

*"I know Polish brands. I buy from Reserved, I order from them. They send stuff to me,*

*everything's fine. Good quality, affordable. Very fashionable, these clothes are brilliantly made. The collections, very good fabrics. It might be wool, silk or something like that. Very nice and at a very low price."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"It's interesting and cool to buy an iPhone in Poland. Tax-free, you get a 23% refund. It works out cheaper than back home. The same story with household appliances, like a fridge or an oven. If you're from Lviv, it's really worth the trip. It's just 65 kilometres to Krakowiec or Hruszów, to the border crossing point. And then you go 10, 20 or 30 kilometres further, and you're in Przemyśl or Jarosław. We can go to any shop, buy something, get the Tax Free refund. And we'll pay much less than back home in Ukraine."*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"When it comes to Polish products, I immediately think of cheese. If there's a deal on Polish cheese at ATB, I'll buy it."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"The Polish language, everyday conversations, I understand that. But I can't speak Polish. And I don't try to switch to Polish. I buy Polish products. We have shops here with Polish goods. When I used to travel to Poland, I'd bring some stuff home. However, I can't say I'm particularly impressed by their quality. They're just like ours. Both Ukraine and Poland have good stuff and poor stuff."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"At Auchan, ATB and Fozzy there are loads of Polish food products. Household appliances, as you know, are assembled in Poland and Romania. If we're talking about European appliances, Poland, Slovenia and Romania are places where European appliances are assembled. They're not originals, they're just assembled in Poland. And our people also work in the same factories and assemble the appliances which end up in Ukraine. Not to*

*mention clothes. A huge number of things come from Poland."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"The Polish bank Kredobank. When my daughter left in 2020, I opened an account there, deposited money, and she would withdraw it there, because this bank cooperates with a Polish bank. And you can withdraw hryvnias converted into zlotys at any cash machine. It was very convenient, because it wasn't cash, and it was safe for my child."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"Polish goods are sold in these little independent shops, specifically Polish products. They carry washing powder, fabric softeners and groceries. I went there, tried them out, I bought sweets, sausage and cheese. Very tasty."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., other regions)

*"Sinsay is considered a Polish brand, it's present all over the world. Beauty products, they have a brand called Isana, I think that's what it's called. I buy it, I like that brand."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"Kraków is a very interesting, historic city. It's also interesting from a military perspective. With lots of Mickiewicz monuments. He's their poet. Like Taras Shevchenko for us. Over there, they have Mickiewicz statues everywhere. Chopin is Polish, as far as I remember. And now I've just remembered Lewandowski, the footballer."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"Personally, I never come across anything Polish that would be very interesting to me. For example, musicians or films. We have these little shops here, selling products from Europe. But almost all goods in these shops are from Poland."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"Their songs are just like ours. If you take our Hutsuls or theirs, you could say they're identical."*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"Janusz Korczak was a Polish educator who died in a concentration camp alongside the children because he couldn't leave them behind. And that story moved me deeply. I remember it well. There's also the film director Jerzy Hoffman. He made a historical film about Ukraine."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"I used to go to the cinema in Poland because I like watching films in Polish. I attended concerts by Polish bands, including pop bands. I listen to Polish music. Even in Ukraine, I listen to it all the time."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"The language. I understand it, just like a dog, but I can't say a word. Basically, a week, or even less, is enough to learn the language to a communicative level and understand it when you're in a Polish-speaking environment. As far as I know, Poles are quite religious. For them, it's more the Catholic church, rather than Orthodoxy, like here in Ukraine. They like eating meat... But I can't say anything about anything related to culture."*

(Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"I have loads of Polish songs on social media. Nowadays, Polish singers often adapt Ukrainian songs into Polish and perform them at concerts. The only thing is that these songs are associated with war and pain. It's hurtful for us, but they dance to this music and shout out. Perhaps they simply don't fully understand what the songs are about, they don't get the emotional baggage. But I'm pleased to hear our words and theirs, and it helps me to understand it better."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“Cinematography, it’s simply brilliant. You need to watch Polish films, especially the old ones, the classics. You need to watch them and you can learn a lot, including things that have already happened over there, but are only just about to happen here.”*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“My friend now lives in Poland. She’s a craftswoman, she does embroidery. And the Polish community supported a project initiated by a Ukrainian woman, together with other Polish communities where other Ukrainian women also live. They embroidered a large map of Ukraine. I don’t know the details, but a book was published later, based on this project. Generally speaking, this initiative by Ukrainian artists was supported by the Polish community.”*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., other regions)

*“Pasta from humanitarian aid and tinned food. Nothing else. I haven’t tried the pasta yet, but their tinned food is tasty. But, to be honest, I didn’t explore the taste of Polish products.”*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., other regions)

*“When I’m in Poland, we often turn on the radio, which plays Polish music. I really enjoy listening to it. I dance and sing at home. I like it. It sounds modern, interesting, and even funny. Because their language sounds amusing to us.”*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., other regions)

*“They don’t have any champions. They don’t. Yes, I’m interested in football. But Polish sport isn’t as developed as Ukrainian sport. They don’t have stars like we do here in Ukraine. I don’t buy Polish products.”*

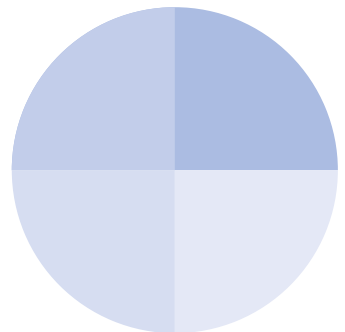
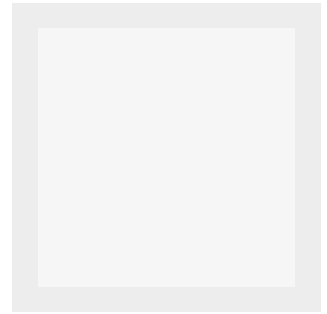
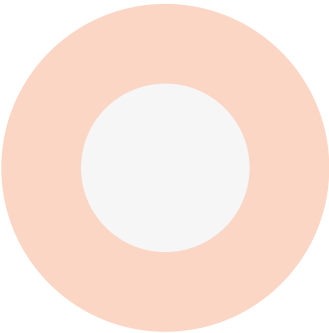
(Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions)

*“As for culture, they have absolutely no modern vocals in pop music. They do have folk music, they have very well-developed choral singing. In other words, it’s classics. They also play classical music from the old days, like from the 18th or 19th century. Bach, Chopin, Beethoven. Academic music, wonderful music, you see. But what about modern music? Their stuff is very similar to our Verka Serduchka.”*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions)



# Attitudes towards Poland and Poles

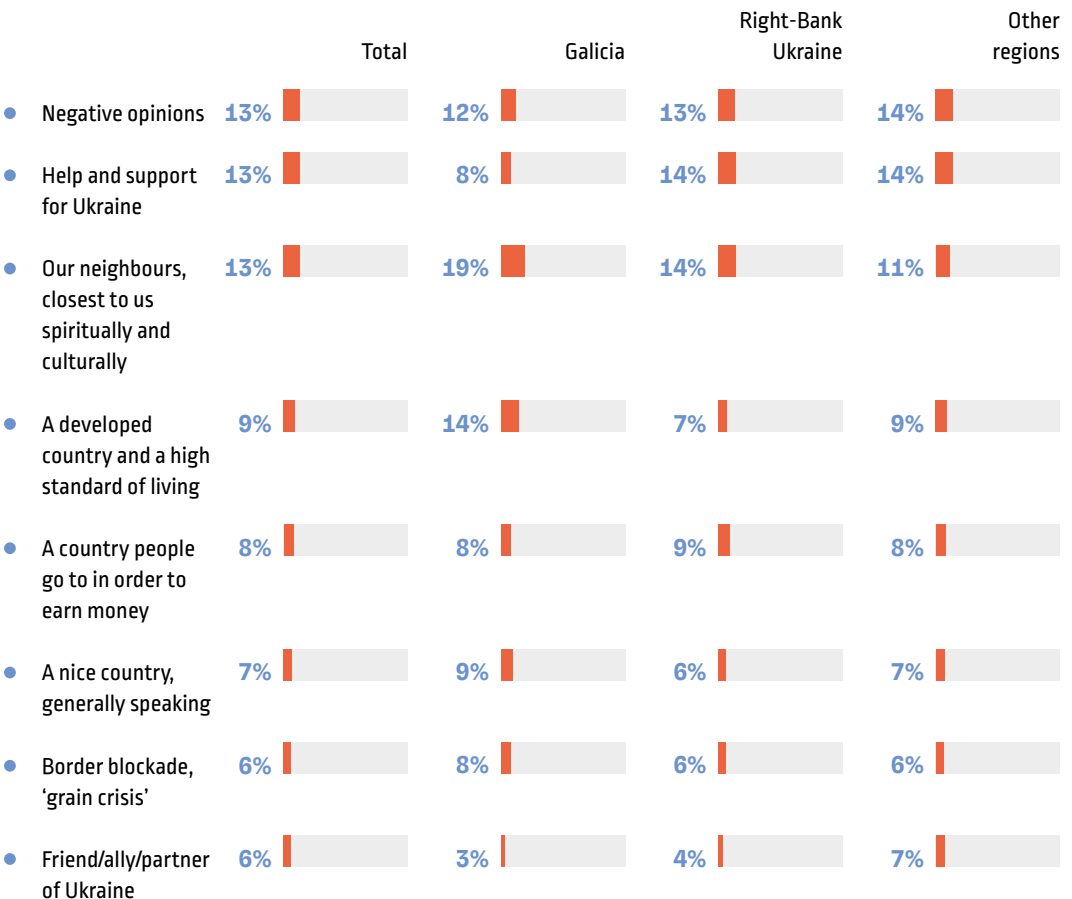


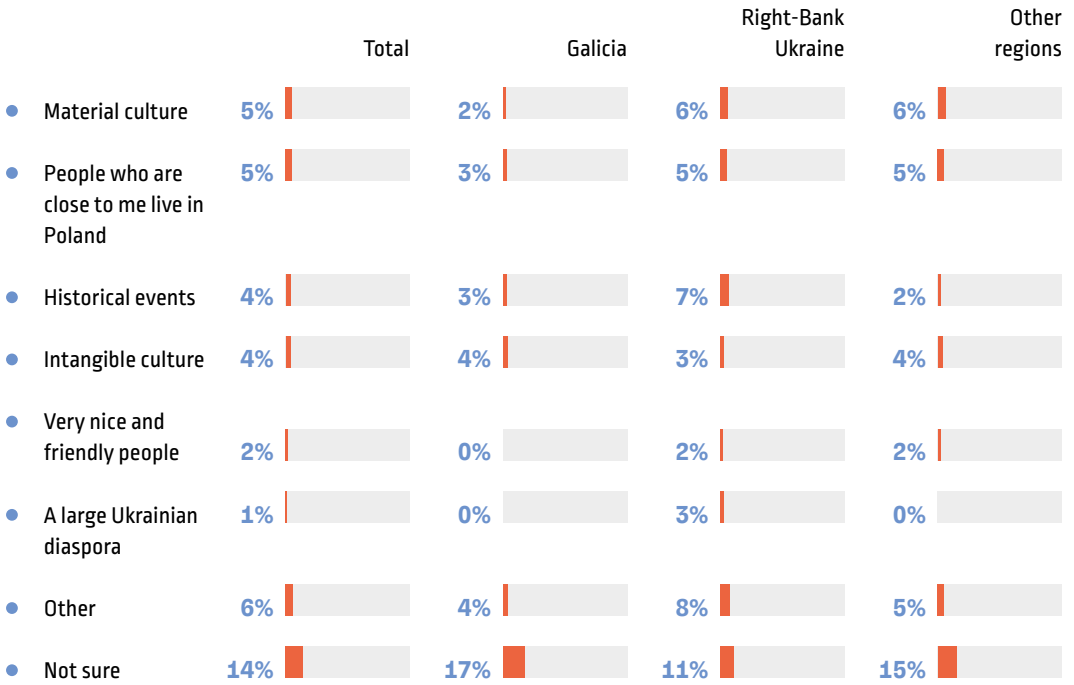
Generally speaking, Ukrainians' perception of Poland is not uniform, but positive associations undoubtedly prevail. Poland is most frequently cited as a country that helps and supports Ukraine, and it is also seen as its closest cultural and mental neighbour (13% each). A further 9% perceive it as a developed country with a high standard of living, whereas 8% associate it primarily with job opportunities. Respondents also highlighted the overall appeal of Poland, its culture, the friendly people and connections through relatives living in Poland.

Negative opinions were expressed by 13% of respondents, and 6% explicitly linked their attitude towards Poland to recent issues, such as border closures or the 'grain crisis'. The proportion of respondents who hesitated remained relatively high at 14%. Generally speaking, the structure of associations linked to Poland did not undergo significant changes in the years 2024–2025.

↓ FIGURE 18:

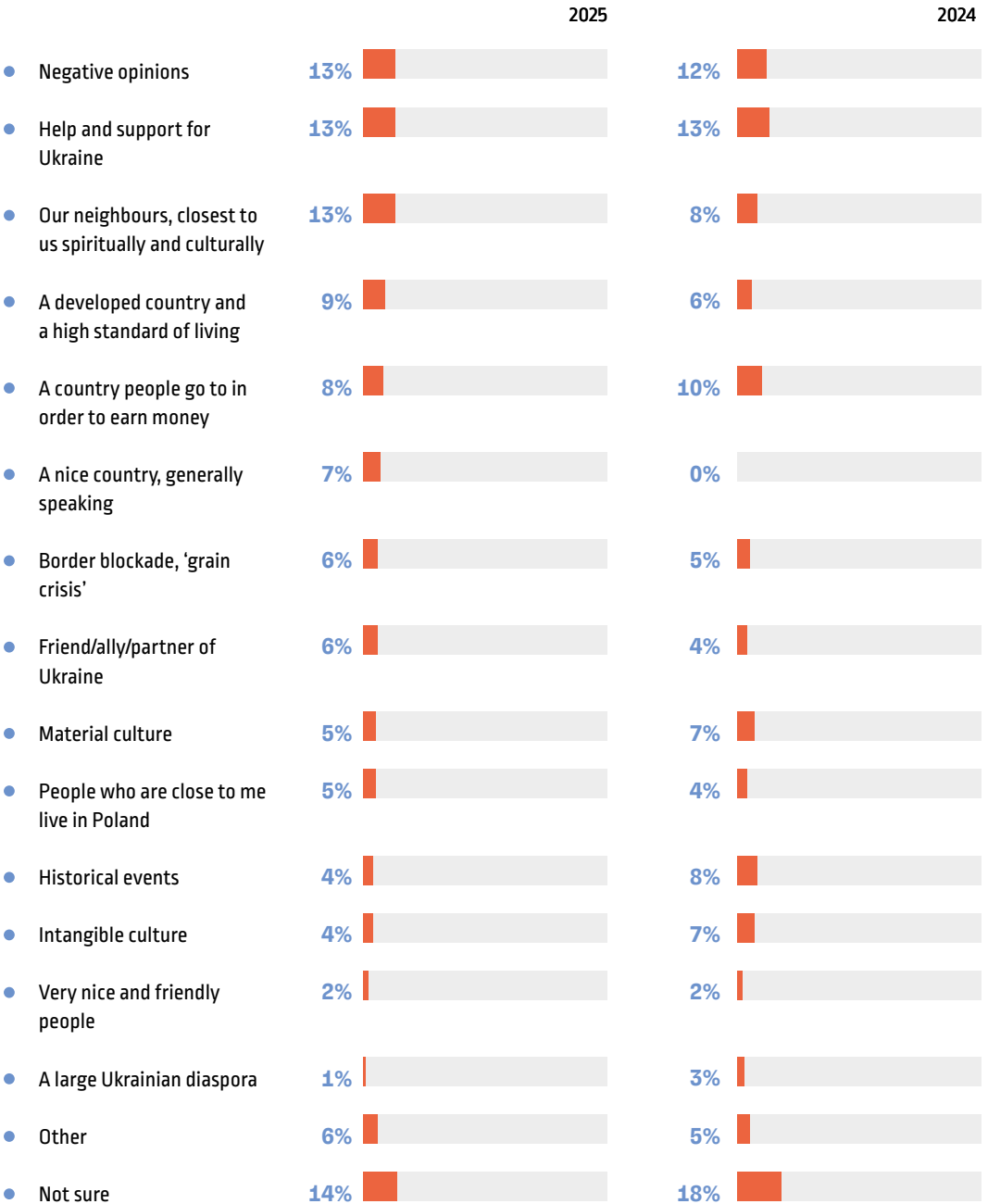
### What kind of things spontaneously come to mind when you think of Poland? By region.





↓ FIGURE 19:

### What kind of things spontaneously come to mind when you think of Poland?



The picture regarding attitudes to Poles is similar. The way they are perceived is not unambiguous, but the sentiment is more neutral-positive than overtly negative. Poles are most often described as kind people and friendly neighbours (9% each), and their help is appreciated (8%). At the same time, 8% of respondents claim that Ukrainians are treated badly, and the same number regard Poles as ordinary people, without any distinct characteristics. A further 6% claim that Poles are diverse, with both positive and negative traits. The same number of respondents emphasize that Poles are close and similar to Ukrainians.

Smaller groups of respondents associate Poles with being arrogant (4%), generally unfriendly (4%) or

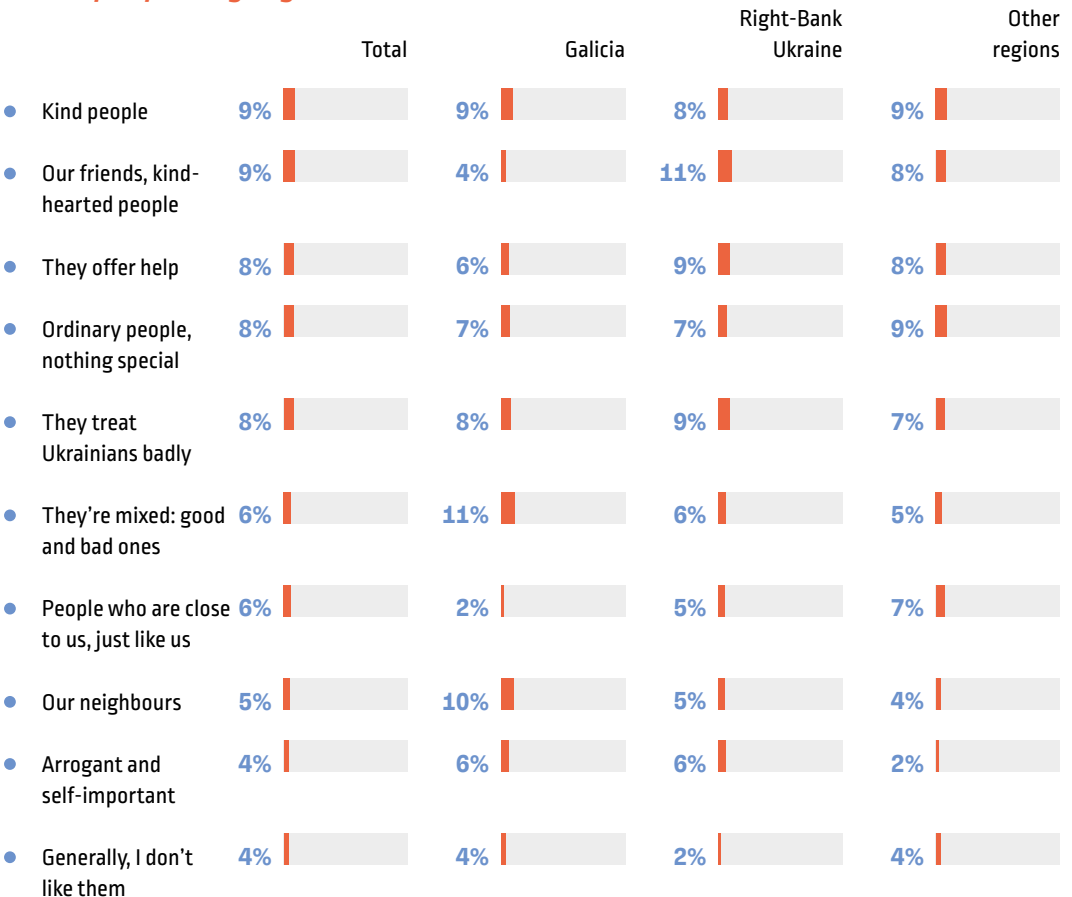
having certain personal traits ('hard-working', 'cunning', 'cheerful').

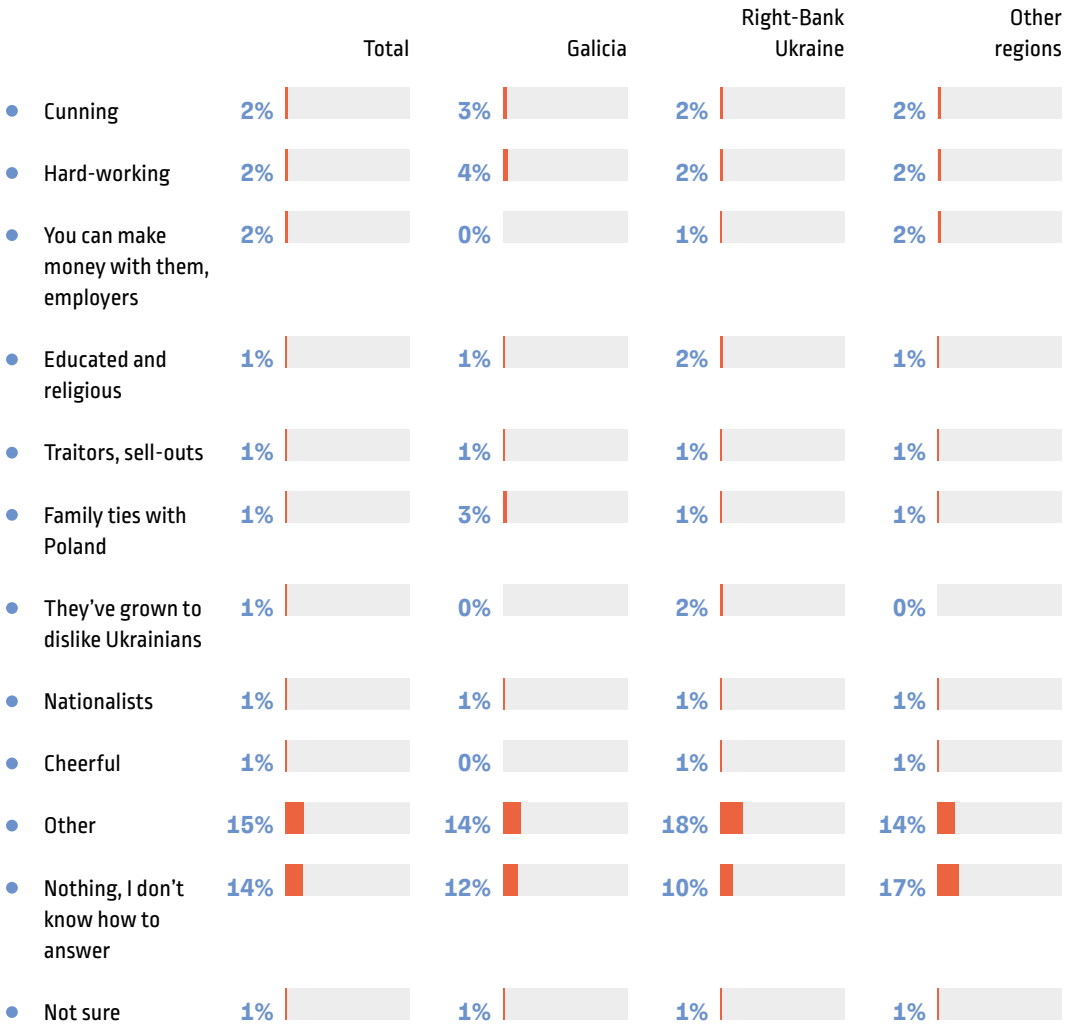
Only 1–2% of respondents provide more radical opinions and describe Poles as 'nationalists', 'traitors', and also say that Poles 'have grown to dislike Ukrainians' and similar.

The proportion of respondents whose answers did not fall within the main categories is quite significant: 15% of responses were classified as 'other'. A further 14% of respondents were unable to answer the question about associations with Poles at all. This indicates the absence of a clear and unambiguous image of Poles in the minds of Ukrainians.

↓ FIGURE 20:

## What kind of things spontaneously come to mind when you think of the Polish people? By region.

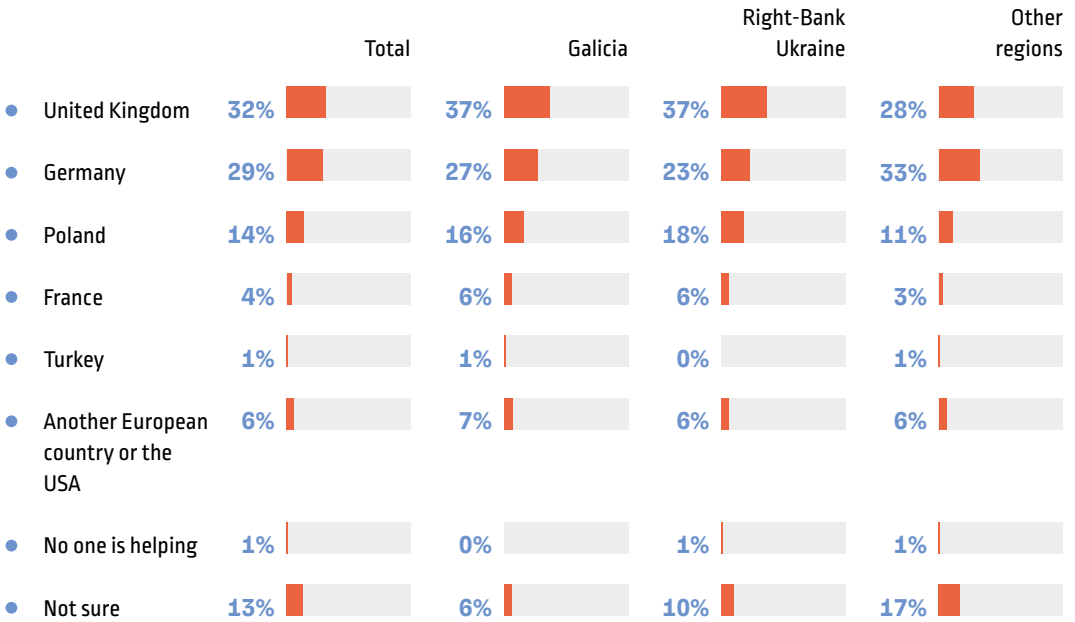




When asked about the European countries providing the most military aid to Ukraine, a relative majority of respondents mentioned the United Kingdom (32%) and Germany (29%). Poland was indicated by 14%.

↓ FIGURE 21:

### Which of these countries has been providing the most military assistance to Ukraine during the war? By region.

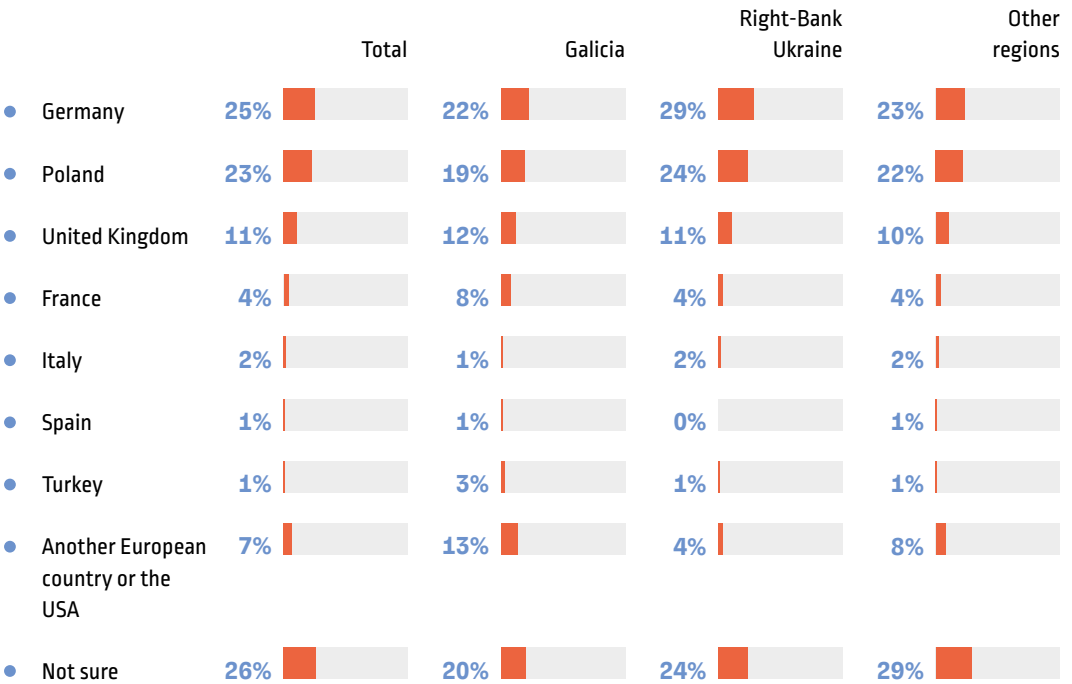


At the same time, in the perception of Ukrainians, Poland remains the second country providing the most humanitarian aid, just behind Germany. The difference in the ratings

is minimal: Germany was mentioned by 25% of respondents, with Poland being cited by 23%.

↓ FIGURE 22:

*Which of the following European countries has been providing the most humanitarian aid? By region.*



Which country has been providing the most humanitarian aid?



*Germany*

25%



*Poland*

27%



*United Kingdom*

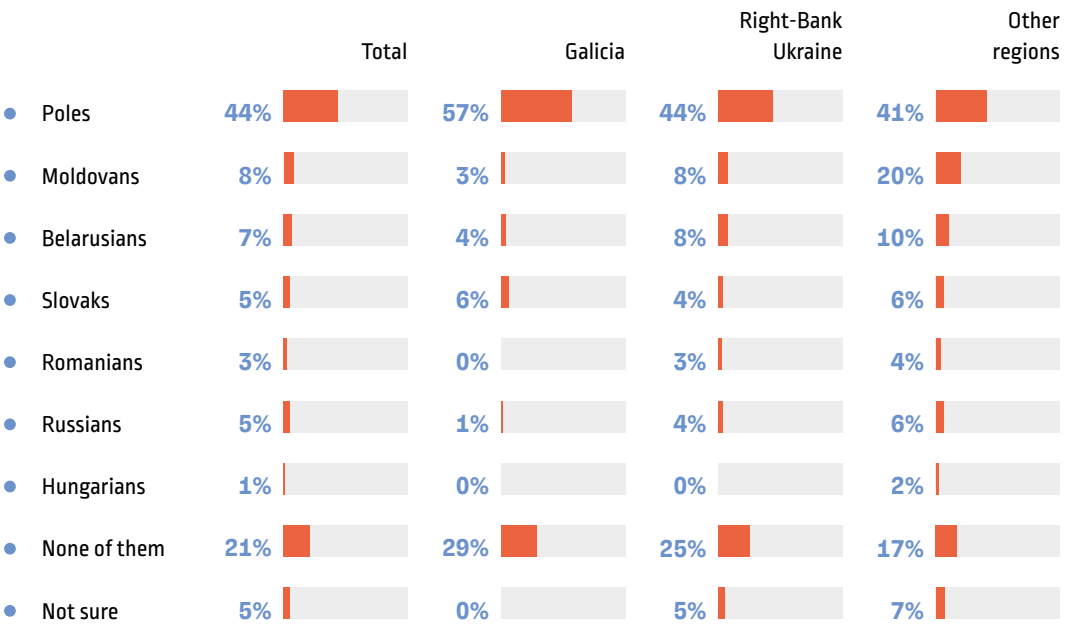
11%

According to **44%** of Ukrainian respondents, Poles are perceived as a nation which is particularly close to Ukrainians in terms of culture. This attitude is particularly prevalent

among the inhabitants of Galicia. The second position in this question, with a significantly lower number of responses [**8%**], is held by Moldovans.

↓ FIGURE 23:

### Which of these nations do you consider to be particularly close to Ukrainians in terms of culture? By region.



The next four questions focused on a comparison of Ukrainians' attitudes towards Czechs, Germans, Britons and Poles, presented in various social roles and statuses: as a family member, friend, colleague, neighbour and fellow citizen. Generally speaking, Ukrainians perceive all these nationalities either positively or very positively. No

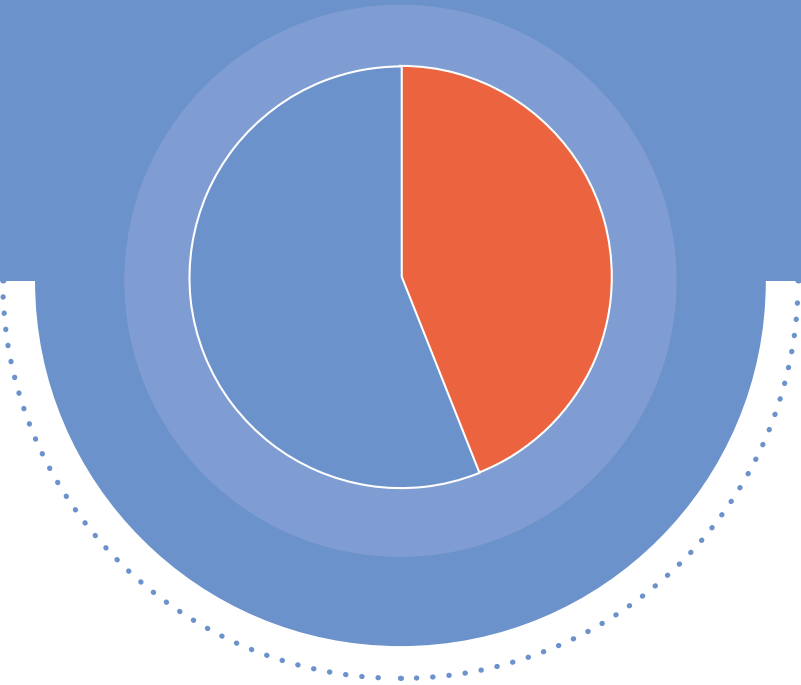
significant differences were found, and attitudes towards Poles do not differ from those towards other nationalities and fall within the same range of highly positive ratings.

When comparing the various social roles where Ukrainians are willing to accept a Polish man or woman, the response 'a spouse or family member' received

Which of these nations do you consider to be particularly close to Ukrainians in terms of culture?

*Poles*

44%



a slightly lower approval rating, i.e. **62%**, whereas 'a resident of Ukraine' received **80%**. A total of **77%** of Ukrainian respondents are willing to accept a Polish man or woman as a 'neighbour' or 'work colleague', and **75%** welcome them as 'a close friend'.

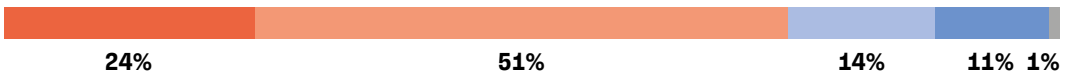
↓ FIGURE 24:

*To what extent are you willing to accept a Polish man/woman as...*

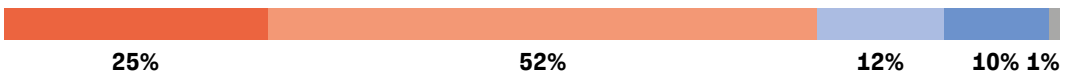
A spouse or family member



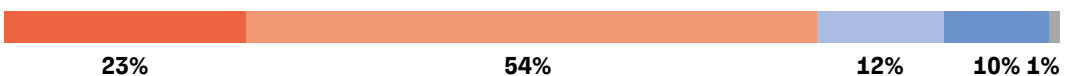
A friend



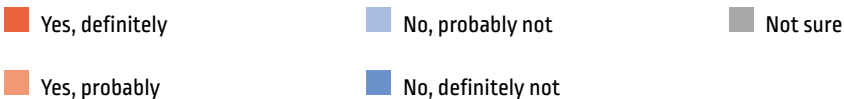
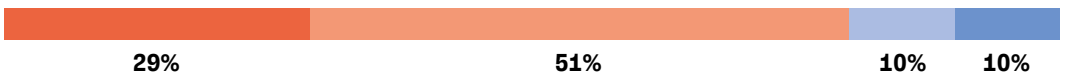
A work colleague



A neighbour



A resident of Ukraine



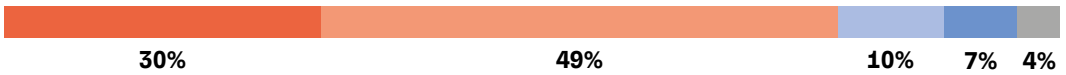
↓ FIGURE 25:

*To what extent are you willing to accept a Czech man/woman as...*

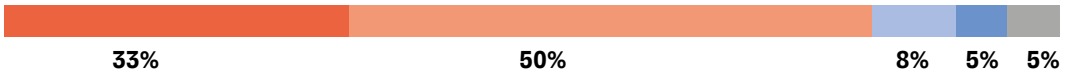
A spouse or family member



A friend



A work colleague



A neighbour



A resident of Ukraine



Yes, definitely

No, probably not

Not sure

Yes, probably

No, definitely not

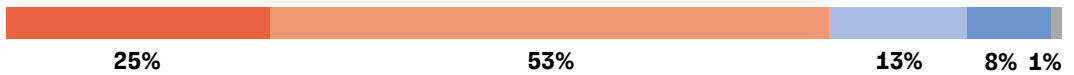
↓ FIGURE 26:

*To what extent are you willing to accept a German man/woman as...*

A spouse or family member



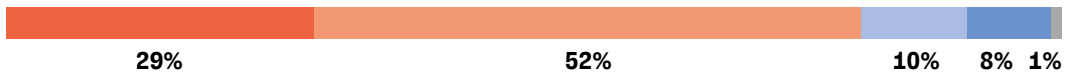
A friend



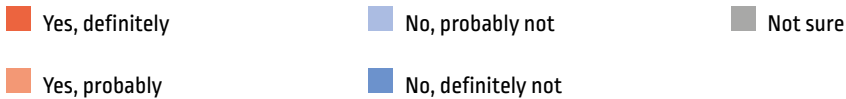
A work colleague



A neighbour



A resident of Ukraine



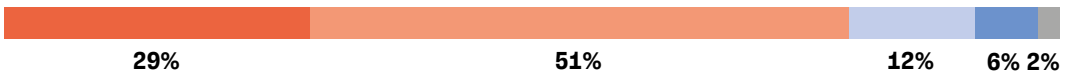
↓ FIGURE 27:

*To what extent are you willing to accept a British man/woman as...*

A spouse or family member



A friend



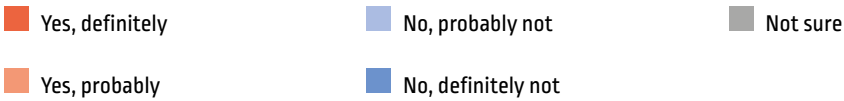
A work colleague



A neighbour



A resident of Ukraine



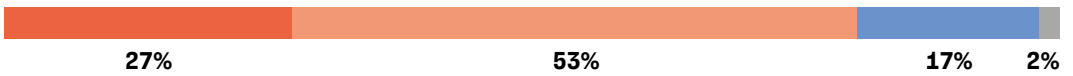
The proportion of Ukrainians whose opinion of Poles has improved since the outbreak of the full-scale war has fallen from **73%** [2022] to **27%** [2025], whereas the proportion

of those whose opinion has changed for the worse has risen dramatically from **1%** in 2022 to **17%** in 2025.

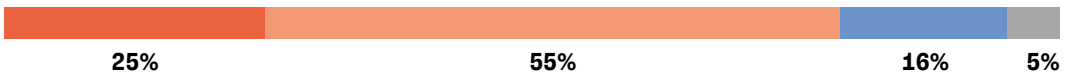
↓ FIGURE 28:

### Did your opinion about Poles change after 24 February 2022?

2025



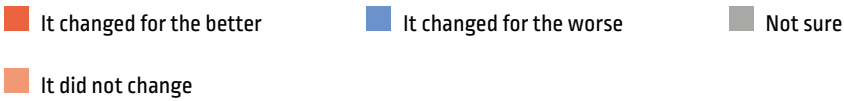
2024



2023



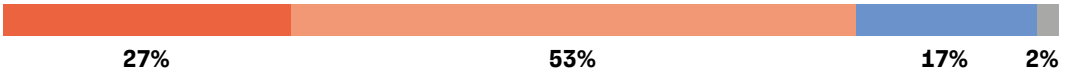
2022



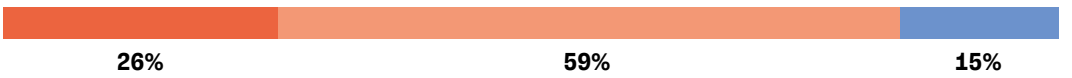
↓ FIGURE 29:

### Did your opinion about Poles change after 24 February 2022? By region.

Total



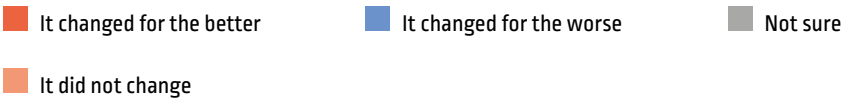
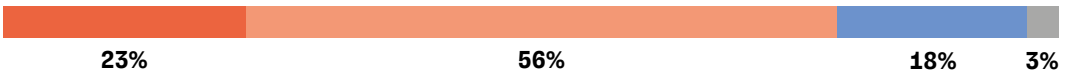
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



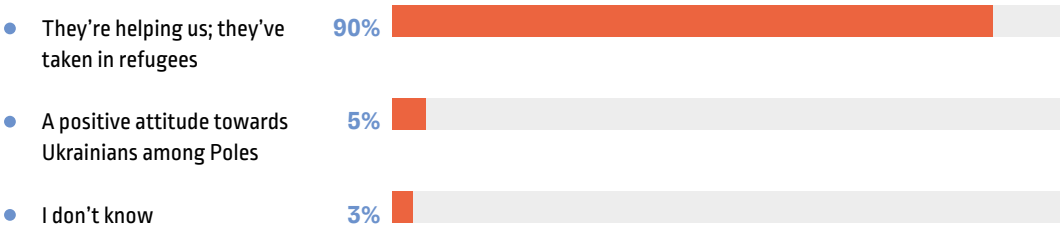
The vast majority (90%) of those whose opinion of Poles had changed for the better stated that this change was driven by the assistance provided by Poles and the fact that they had provided shelter to refugees.

Those who changed their opinion of Poles for the worse said that this was influenced by the negative treatment of Ukrainians by Poles (46%) and by the 'grain crisis' and border blockade (32%).

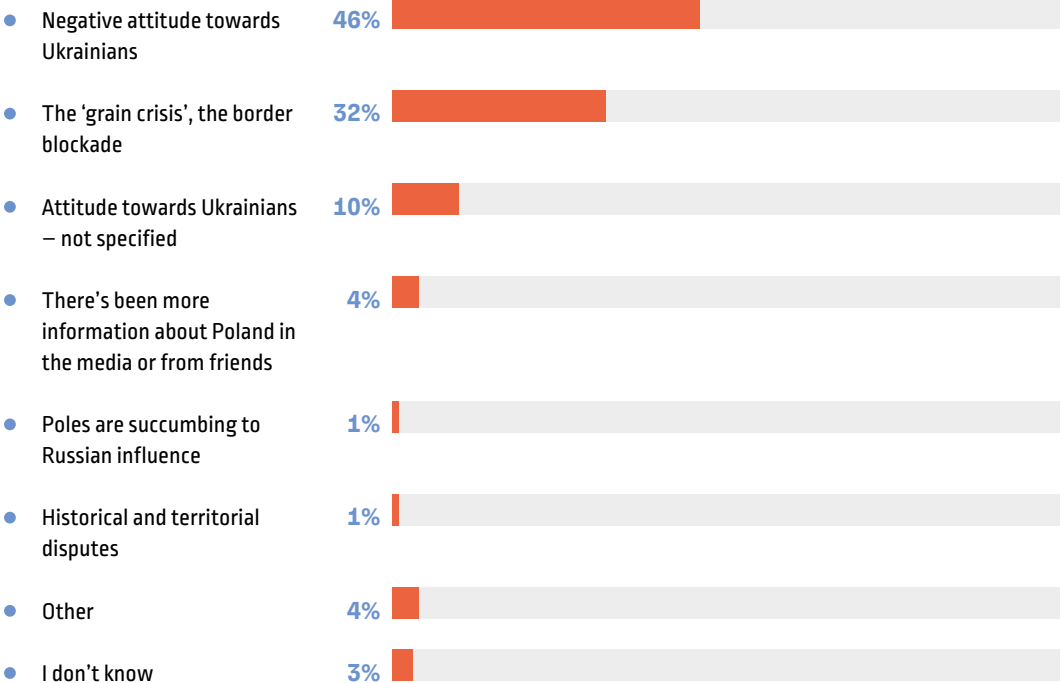
↓ FIGURE 30:

### Why did your opinion about Poles change after 24 February 2022?

Among those whose opinion changed for the better



Among those whose opinion changed for the worse





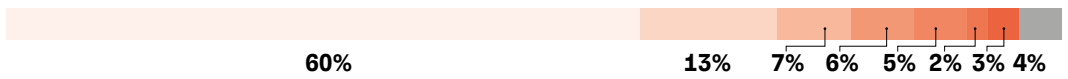
Competitors



Brothers/sisters



Enemies



Overall, current opinions about Poles among Ukrainians have not changed significantly compared to last year: **43%** of Ukrainians have a positive attitude towards Poles, **49%** are neutral, and only **8%** declare a negative attitude.

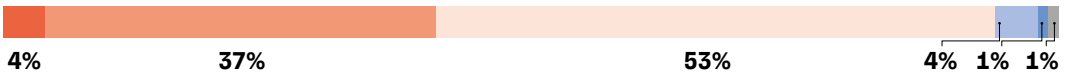
↓ FIGURE 32:

### What is your opinion about Poles now?

2025



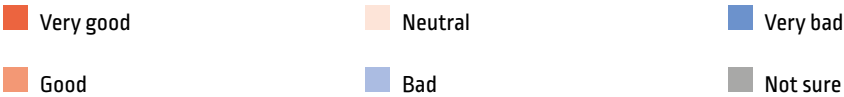
2024



2023



2022



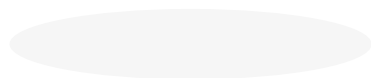
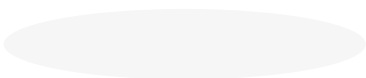
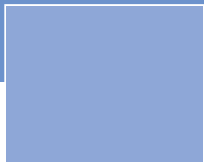
What is your opinion  
about Poles now?

*Good/Very good*

47%

*Bad/Very bad*

8%



Although the proportion of respondents declaring a neutral attitude towards Poles is significant in all regions, a higher proportion of neutral responses (53%) were recorded

in the other regions of Ukraine, i.e. not in Galicia or Right-Bank Ukraine.

↓ FIGURE 33:

## What is your opinion about Poles now?

### By region.

Total



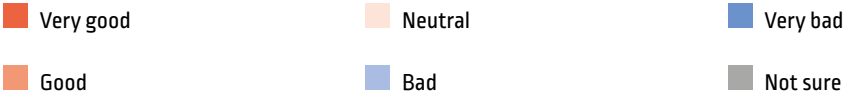
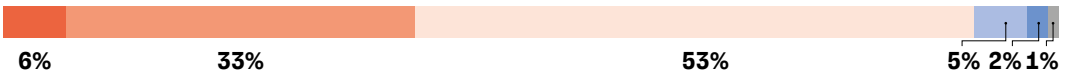
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



During the focus group interviews, respondents were asked to describe things they associate with Poland and Poles. In all regions and age groups, the participants mentioned polarised associations, both clearly positive and

decidedly negative ones. Importantly, the same respondents could report both positive and negative impressions, reflecting their experiences of interactions with Poles.

## *Positive associations*

- **Galicja**  
friends; a friendly nation; a neighbour; Andrzej Duda; a country of success; a kind attitude towards others; help; cleanliness, comfort; shopping in Poland; memes from TikTok.
- **Right-Bank Ukraine**  
tasty food; beautiful nature; nice people; good living conditions; openness; hard-working; kind people; a partner in the fight against Russia; economic growth; developed infrastructure; cycling paths; good roads; nice houses.
- **Other regions**  
'it feels like home'; beautiful nature; a beautiful country; a European country; hard-working people; hospitable people.

## *Negative associations*

- **Galicja**  
'Poland for the Poles'; dissatisfaction; the grain crisis; historical conflict; condescending, patronising treatment; slyness; imperialists; the pre-partitioned Republic of Poland; pride; nationalists.
- **Right-Bank Ukraine**  
the pre-partition Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; historical dependence of Ukrainian lands; competition; going there to earn money; a historical rival; self-importance; condescending, patronising treatment.
- **Other regions**  
'a foreign country'; people without clearly defined goals; lazy people; working overtime; self-love; hatred of Ukrainians; honour; jealousy; audacity; deceit, two-faced attitudes.

*“When I spoke to them, this topic kept coming up: ‘Why are you going to Poland to work? You’ve got Ukraine – just stay there.’ That’s when they started saying things like ‘Poland for the Poles’. A year has already passed. And, to put it bluntly, the Ukrainians have already ‘pissed them off’ a bit. Maybe someone did something wrong, someone did something... And Poles started expressing their dissatisfaction. ‘Poland for the Poles’. They started dumping our grain on the roads, on the railway tracks and so on. I think what they were doing wasn’t right.”*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“The conflicts probably started around 2012. As soon as the ‘trouble’ started here, there were also discussions at the border. For example, a red-and-black banner couldn’t be displayed because “that’s a Banderite”, as they would say.”*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“They see themselves as superior people, a mindset that dates back to serfdom. In Poland, nobody cares whether you’re healthy or sick. You have to work like a dog because ‘I am the master, and you are nobody’.”*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“A beaver is running, and some Pole shouts in the night: ‘Beaver, beaver’ [laughter]. And there are loads of videos like that. These are viral videos.”*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“I remember from my childhood that my grandmother used to say that for some reason they called Poles ‘the psheks’. I don’t know why. But that’s what I remember from my childhood. And it was a sort of... Let me try to find the right words... That they’re a bit cunning, crafty. Here and there.”*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“Up until 1939, let’s say, Poland treated our nation with a sense of superiority. Same as*

*Russia does now. Historically speaking, the relations were hostile.”*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“My husband worked in Poland and when the war started, he returned to Ukraine. He couldn’t stand it and went back. And he said: ‘The Poles wouldn’t let me through at the border.’ They tried to persuade him. Of course, we tried to persuade him too. No question about it. But he said, ‘the guys at the border wouldn’t let me through’... They said: ‘You won’t be coming back in, you know.’ To me, that shows a human approach. It’s friendly... I mean, they understood that he was going to Ukraine... that he might die. And indeed, he was killed in the war.”*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“Poles are very proud of being Polish. They say ‘I am Polish’. They are nationalists.”*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“Tasty food, beautiful nature, they have nice people, good living conditions. Simply speaking, I really like Poland. They are nice, open, not as worried as we are, they’re nice, hard-working people. I can’t say anything negative about them.”*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“Since I work in education, my association is with the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the time when Ukrainian lands were dependent on Polish lands. That’s how it has remained out there. I often interact with young people who study at Polish universities. They learn history completely differently from what we learn. The concept of the ‘Great Republic’ has survived. And now, when huge numbers of our students want to study at their universities, Poles are no longer happy about it and are suggesting that we set up the branches of their universities in Ukraine. Why? Because Ukrainians might outperform Poles at universities, while in their view Ukrainians are*

*supposed to pick strawberries and work for the benefit of Poles."*

[Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"When I think of Poland, I think of people from Western Ukraine who go there to work, picking strawberries or doing other seasonal jobs, where they can earn enough to last them the whole next season in Ukraine. Last year I was in Western Ukraine on holiday, and there, looking at the local people who run their own farms, who grow everything themselves and make a living from it, almost all their young people go abroad to work."*

[Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"Ukraine has the economic aspiration to achieve the same standard of living as Poland. We go there to earn money, and they are our ally in the fight against Russia, yet at the same time Poland is a historic rival, so to speak. And Poles are generally kind people."*

[Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"They're developing very quickly. We need to follow their example. We need to do as they do and live as they do. Because their infrastructure is probably the best in Europe, designed with people in mind. They have cycle paths everywhere, good roads, nice houses, things like that. This nation is friendly to us. When I think of Poles, the first thing that springs to mind is honour."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"When you're talking to a Polish woman or a Polish man and they can tell you're from Ukraine, and if the conversation goes on for more than five or ten minutes, you can still sense it... I haven't seen anything like that with Germans, Italians or English people. Poles have a bit of a superior attitude: 'we are Poles, and everyone else is... the rest.'"*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"My association is with the word 'lazy'. Because they wait for Ukrainians to arrive and*

*do their work, the jobs that Poles don't want to do, even though if they did it, they'd get much higher pay for it."*

[Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions]

*"To me, Poland is diverse and beautiful. Diverse, because I've visited different parts of Poland. And it's truly beautiful. Very rich in natural beauty. Poles have been kind to me, and I've only ever encountered nice people. They are very hard-working."*

[Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions]

*"They're hospitable. That's my impression. They decorate their homes and the area around them. They really love that kind of beauty. And that suits us, mentally, because the area around their homes always looks nice."*

[Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions]

*"They say 'Ukrainians have come in scores'. Because apparently Poles had been queuing for social housing for ages. And then those flats were given to Ukrainians. And that's when Poles developed, you know, a kind of hatred. Poland as such is a developed country. But there's a lot of our workforce there, so to speak. Our people work there and get even less money than the Poles themselves. I've had very few good experiences... I mean, the way they treat us. Very few."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*"They're envious, overconfident. And, I don't know the exact Ukrainian word for it, they're 'two-faced'. Like two sides to the coin. On the one hand, when we go in, everything looks lavish, impressive, European. Everything is really wonderful. But when you get deeper, when you've lived there a while, you see they also have corruption, although it's not on the same scale as in Ukraine."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*"There's an old saying about 'Polish honour'. It's about that self-importance. It turns out that every Pole thinks they're better than*

*everyone else. That's what it is. As far as I can tell, this is common to all Poles."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

Among the European countries providing military aid to Ukraine, focus group participants most frequently mentioned Germany, the UK, the USA (sic), as well as the Northern European countries and the Baltic states. They regard Poland as a logistics hub, and also as the country that took in the largest number of Ukrainian refugees at the start of the war. Poland played a crucial role from a humanitarian perspective, especially at the start of the war.

*"Germany is helping us. A great many of our people have gone there. Probably the biggest number. The most important countries include Germany and Poland, that's where Ukrainians have gone. And in terms of humanitarian aid... they're helping a great deal, especially with displaced people. The same goes for military aid."*

[Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"In my opinion, America is helping the most. Poland is an intermediary because it's closer to the border, everything goes through Poland. It's the biggest hub for transshipment and all that. Everything goes from Europe through Poland and reaches Ukraine... Humanitarian aid, military aid..."*

[Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"Poland? I don't know. I wouldn't write an article on the front page of a newspaper saying that Poland gives the most. It's an intermediary. A lot goes through the border anyway. Perhaps I'd rather say the UK, the USA, France, Germany. All of them give us more."*

[Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"It's the first destination country that people fled to during the war. Ukrainians went to Poland. That's because nobody knew how to cope in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark or Belgium. They simply stayed in Poland because the language was easier. Even if you can't speak it, you can understand it. That's*

*why more Ukrainians stayed in Poland rather than in Germany, the Netherlands or other countries."*

[Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"I believe that the Poles have been helping us right from the very beginning. That's my view. As soon as the war started, the first help came from the Poles. Humanitarian aid. And they were among the first ones to take in our refugees. I'm very grateful to them for being the first to start helping us."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"I also think it's only Poland. Because if they finish us off, Poles will be next [laughter]."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"Poland took in the first refugees. They organised the aid and food provision very well. They reached out to help us. They provided military, political and humanitarian assistance. There were various forms of support. Europe. In one word, I could say it's Europe."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"Outside Europe, Canada is helping us quite substantially. The Baltic countries are also helping us in the military sphere. Although they are small, they allocate a considerable amount of resources relative to their GDP. Belgium is also giving enough. Now France is starting to contribute a little too. And America as well. You can't overlook that."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"America owes it us. America is obliged to help Ukraine because when the Soviet Union collapsed, they made a commitment that they must help if necessary, even after the war."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"Poland and Germany, more than others. Those are the two countries that immediately spring to mind because there is a lot of humanitarian aid. They made arrangements for Ukrainian people who crossed the border after 24 February. The refugee camps, the*

*humanitarian aid, psychological support and so on. Granting refugee status.”*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“The Scandinavian countries stand out in terms of the aid they provide. I mean, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and France. It’s mainly military and economic aid, it’s quite good, generally. Not the same as the aid from the USA, but it’s significant as a percentage, relative to what they can give.”*

(Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“The United States, Germany and the UK. That’s in terms of money and, perhaps, various types of military equipment. And when it comes to taking in our internally displaced persons, it’s probably Poland and Germany.”*

(Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“The UK, probably Germany, Japan and Canada. The top five military and financial donors. The Baltic states are small, but they provide tangible aid relative to their capabilities. Denmark is also helping in proportion to its capabilities. And when it comes to Poland, it seems that during the first stage of the war, when people began to evacuate... Poland was the country that took the first blow. In the first months of the war, Poland shouldered 100% of the burden in terms of refugees.”*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“America, which supplied us with Javelins, then British NLAWs. Thanks to that, I believe we managed to hold the enemy back a little. And a huge thank-you to Turkey for the Bayraktars.”*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions)

When asked about nations that are close to Ukraine, respondents quite often identified Poles as the closest nation thanks to similarities in language, traditions and, to some extent, mentality. They also mentioned other neighbours: South and West Slavs, who are generally close to Ukrainians, as well as Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Croats and Moldovans.

Many groups emphasised that in the past Russians and Belarusians used to be considered as close to Ukrainians since these three nations were united, above all, by their experience of living in the USSR. The war has changed the respondents’ views: Russia and Belarus are now seen as hostile countries, and respondents highlighted differences between the Ukrainian mentality and that of Russians and Belarusians. At the same time, some respondents pointed out that the Belarusian people are oppressed and they generally support Ukrainians. Individual Belarusians and Russians are fighting on the side of Ukraine. Some participants claimed that Ukrainians are unique and cannot be compared to anyone else.

*“Many of my friends have gone to Croatia. And they love it there. They all keep in touch with each other. They were given a very warm welcome, provided with accommodation, and helped to settle in. And it was easy for my friends to start a life out there because they come from the south. They are used to living by the sea... People from Crimea moved there as early as 2014. It feels very familiar there and very much like home. And the people are very similar. And the neighbours... and overall, they’ve adapted well.”*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“All Moldovans speak Russian. The cuisine is similar, the jokes are similar. They know how to have a good laugh. All post-Soviet countries are similar in some way, no matter what we say or how we wave our hands. That’s just the way it is. They’re sincere, more open. On the negative side, they have a tendency to drink alcohol. As the saying goes, the fact that ‘you have to go to work tomorrow’ hasn’t stopped anyone from drinking yet.”*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“Belarus – I don’t think they’re our friends. They support the Russians more than us. I don’t think they’re the sort of nation you can count on or maintain friendly relations with.”*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“As for those Slavic nations, like Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and so on, they are close to*

*us, so to speak, in spirit, language and faith. The Belarusians are simply 'under the boot' right now. They cannot be regarded as our enemies at the moment. There are people out there who are fighting. Just as there are some Muscovites fighting on our side. Likewise, there are Belarusians who are against us. But for the most part, those are normal people. Besides, let's not forget that we are very close to the Baltic countries. Lithuania, Latvia. Especially Lithuania. It used to be one conglomerate. That Commonwealth thing, or whatever. They were living in a single state."*

*(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)*

*"Poles are closer to the western regions [of Ukraine], but I think that we are similar to them mentally: our open soul, willingness to help and being direct, in a good sense. Personally, I've talked a lot with Poles, and that's exactly how it looks to me."*

*(Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

*"Before the full-scale [war] and before 2014, most people considered themselves to be related to both Belarusians and Russians, and it's only now that everyone is starting to emphasise how we differ. We shared a common history, we were all under the Soviet yoke, and after 1991, one might say, each country 'got back on its feet' in its own way. But we seem to be closer to the Poles after all."*

*(Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

*"The situation is that during the Soviet era, people got mixed a great deal. Many Ukrainians live in Siberia, in the Far East, and many Russians live in Ukraine. We should also mention mixed marriages. In my family, for example, my father is Ukrainian, my mother is Russian, and so is my wife. That is why we think we are the same nation. In reality, when it comes to language, there is a very big difference compared to Russia. Linguistically, we are very close to Poland, the Czech Republic and Serbia. There are many words in common with the Ukrainian language."*

*(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

*"The Poles. They're an East Slavic people, but they're incredibly close to us culturally and historically. We share many traditions, similar folklore motifs. Ukrainian vocabulary is similar. The same goes for the Slovaks: their language is close to Ukrainian. The Czechs, after all, are a Slavic people. Bulgarians are also close to us, although their language is, of course, very difficult. But the mentality is similar."*

*(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

*"Until 2014, people often pointed to Russia and Belarus – they felt closer somehow. At the start of the full-scale [war], Poland opened its gates to us and took everyone under its wing. Some people walked there, others ran or drove to Poland. I think that when you arrive in Poland, you see that they even have embroidered shirts, just like our shirts in Ukraine. Earlier on, I didn't use to think that they were quite so close. And you can talk to them even without knowing the language at all: I understand them, they understand me because there are so many Ukrainian words, perhaps the pronunciation is a bit different. They have more European views; there's a lot of overlap. And there are so many Ukrainians in Poland, that influences Poles, too. Ukrainians bring their own Ukrainian things there."*

*(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

*"Belarusians. They're in a similar situation to us, essentially, just in a slightly different form. Some people were also forced to leave, and quite a substantial number of them. That is, the young people, the elite, the intelligentsia, the entire middle class has left Belarus. And everything in Belarus is 'easy' in the same way. The same problems with visas, passports, documents. The same story as here, these problems exist in their country as well."*

*(Man, 25–45 y.o., other regions)*

*"When we talk about Europe, about the European countries that surround us, I don't think there is anyone else who would be as close mentally as the Poles. I've been to every*

*one of those countries. Romania, Hungary, Slovakia. Mentally, we really are closest to Poland.”*

[Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions]

*“No one is like us. We are most like ourselves, to be honest, because we are Ukrainians, we are very stubborn, we’re ‘of our own mind’. Let’s take eastern and western Ukraine: we’re already different. You see, even in our own homeland, we can see that we’re different when we go to different regions of Ukraine.”*

[Woman, 25–45 and 46–65 y.o., other regions]

Focus group respondents described relations with Poland and Poles as ambiguous: they see Poles as neighbours, partners and competitors all at once. They pointed out that tension and conflict often arise between neighbouring nations. At the same time, the key point for many was that Ukraine and Poland are united by a common threat and a common enemy: Russia. The escalation of tensions and conflicts primarily benefits the enemy; Russia conducts information and psychological operations, provoking an increase in tension.

Following the outbreak of the full-scale war, respondents gained greater experience in their interactions with Poles since they were forced to leave Ukraine. These experiences are mixed, both positive and negative. However, the respondents did not note any significant change in their attitude towards Poles. Notably, however, there has been a change in political communication in Poland, which influences public opinion and provokes negative attitudes towards Ukrainians.

*“It’s some sort of propaganda, there must be a reason. It can’t be that the Poles just sat there and kept quiet, but now, all of a sudden, Ukrainians have turned bad. Starting from 2012, for no apparent reason, they started mentioning Bandera and so on. I think the Russians have definitely had a hand in this.”*

[Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*“Competitors, you could describe them like that. They don’t want Ukraine to join the European Union; they don’t want to lose their positions there. They understand that Ukrainians could outdo them in many areas.*

*That’s precisely why they don’t want it.*

*That’s why they staged these provocations with the grain and so on. I agree, that it’s all provocations, including those things about making references to Bandera. I believe the attitudes in the past used to be neutral. But now, with the war going on, this tug-of-war has begun. Everyone wants to grab a piece of Ukraine.”*

[Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*“It seems that the Poles have grown tired of our war, tired of the fact that we want something from them. We’d probably feel the same way towards another country if we were in such a situation. ‘Why should I give anything?’ We’d ask such questions, too. And sometimes I ask myself: ‘Why should they give anything to us?’ We can do something too, strive for something, to earn it ourselves.”*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*“The Polish President has exploited the dissatisfaction with Ukrainians, even though it is precisely our displaced persons who bring economic benefits to Poland.”*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*“They’re neighbours, I suppose. It’s hard for us to compete with them in the economy or other areas. Maybe with the IQ of our people, which is where we are able to compete. But over there [in Poland], our people aren’t able to fulfil their potential.”*

[Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*“I believe they are neighbours, and you should never quarrel with your neighbours, that’s the first thing. And secondly, unfortunately, we have something in common with Poland: the Russians as the enemy, which makes us friends. You see, if our stronghold falls, the Baltic states and Poland will be next, and there’s still Belarus, and that’s a shared border.”*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*“They’re a friend, but a richer friend, perhaps wiser than us. If you want to be rich and*

*developed yourself, you have to be friends with the richer folks. We should look up to them and take them as our role models, learn from them, so that we can be like them.”*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*“Poland is a good neighbour, a friend, a partner and a nation which is mentally close to us. Mentally, we are closer to Poland, at least in Western Ukraine. When I speak of Western Ukraine, I’m going to speak of [the city of] Khmelnytskyi.”*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*“They are neighbours that we have to live with. I’d heard negative things before. Now, from various women’s stories, I’ve realised that it really is even worse out there than I’d thought.”*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*“Allies. They’re giving financial aid to us over there.”*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*“Let me tell you why they’ve become allies. If Ukraine doesn’t hold out, it’ll be the end for them. If Putin had attacked the Baltic states rather than Ukraine, he would have taken them over long ago. And NATO wouldn’t have helped. They’d just express ‘deep concern’. We’ve become their insurance policy. It’s like a dam: if the dam holds, everyone will survive. And if the dam breaks – sorry for this comparison... And they’re patching up that dam with their assistance so it can withstand the pressure of the Russian onslaught. They understand this perfectly well.”*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*“We have such friends and neighbours out of necessity. If we’re gone, they’ll be gone too. We’re brothers in misfortune.”*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*“We’re forced to cooperate. I cannot forget that spilled grain. It is stained with our blood. If they could, they would tear us apart themselves.”*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

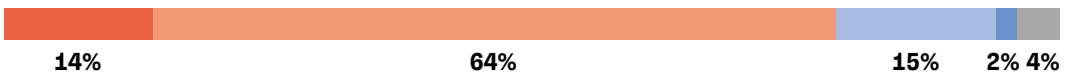
Ukrainians remain highly optimistic about Poland's support for Ukraine on its path to EU integration, although this optimism is slowly waning: almost four in five Ukrainians

count on such support, either definitely or to some extent. There are no significant differences between regions.

↓ FIGURE 34:

### *Do you think Poland will continue to support Ukraine on its path towards integration with the EU?*

2025



2024



2023



Yes, definitely

No, probably not

Not sure

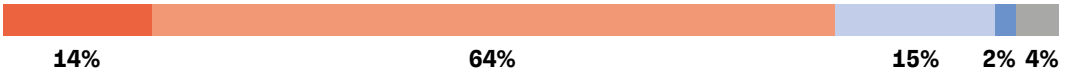
Yes, probably

No, definitely not

↓ FIGURE 35:

*Do you think Poland will continue to support Ukraine on its path towards integration with the EU? By region.*

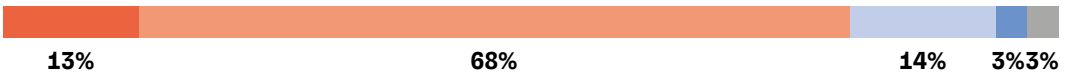
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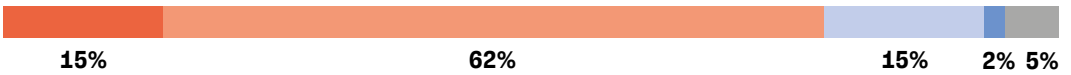
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Yes, definitely

No, probably not

Not sure

Yes, probably

No, definitely not

Expectations regarding continued Polish support for Ukraine's fight against the Russian aggressor remain quite high: as many as **88%** of respondents hope for it. At the

same time, the proportion of people convinced of Poland's unconditional support continues to fall: from **37%** in 2024 to **30%** in 2025.

↓ FIGURE 36:

### *Do you think Poland will continue to support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian aggressor?*

2025



2024



2023



- Yes, definitely
- No, probably not
- Not sure
- Yes, probably
- No, definitely not

Respondents in Galicia view the prospects for such unconditional support more cautiously (23% compared to 31% in other regions), but overall positive expectations prevail

precisely in Galicia, with 94% (92% for Right-Bank Ukraine and 84% for other regions).

↓ FIGURE 37:

*Do you think Poland will continue to support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian aggressor? By region.*

Total



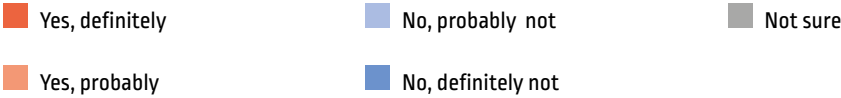
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Around a third of Ukrainians are not interested in Polish politics at all. Almost the same proportion recognise only the names of certain politicians but cannot say anything about them.

President Karol Nawrocki is the leader in terms of negative perception: as many as 15% of Ukrainians have a rather negative attitude towards him, and a further 3% report a very negative attitude.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk, on the other hand, is the most popular figure: one in three Ukrainians has a fairly positive attitude towards him, and a further 13% report a very positive attitude. Donald Tusk also tops the

ranking of recognisability: only 22% of Ukrainians do not know this politician.

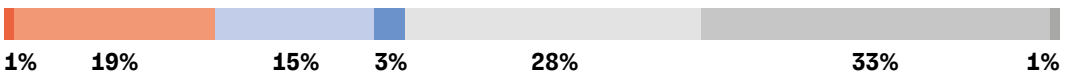
Radosław Sikorski has taken second place in terms of positive ratings. A total of 9% rate him very positively, and 28% report fairly positive opinions, with 30% of respondents not knowing this politician.

Attitudes towards Jarosław Kaczyński are moderately positive: a total of 25% positive ratings and 6% negative ones. However, the largest group of respondents do not know him (35%) or know him but cannot express an opinion about him (33%).

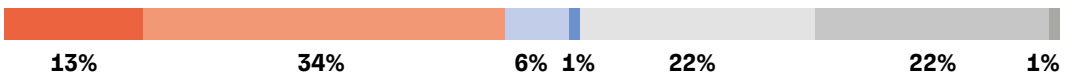
↓ FIGURE 38:

## Do you know these politicians? If so, what is your attitude towards each of them?

President Karol Nawrocki



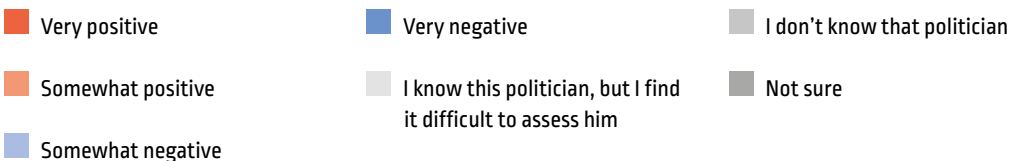
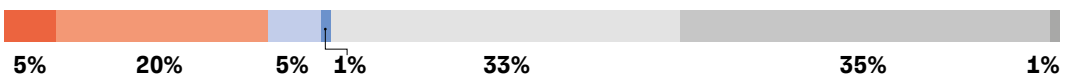
Prime Minister Donald Tusk



Radosław Sikorski



Jarosław Kaczyński

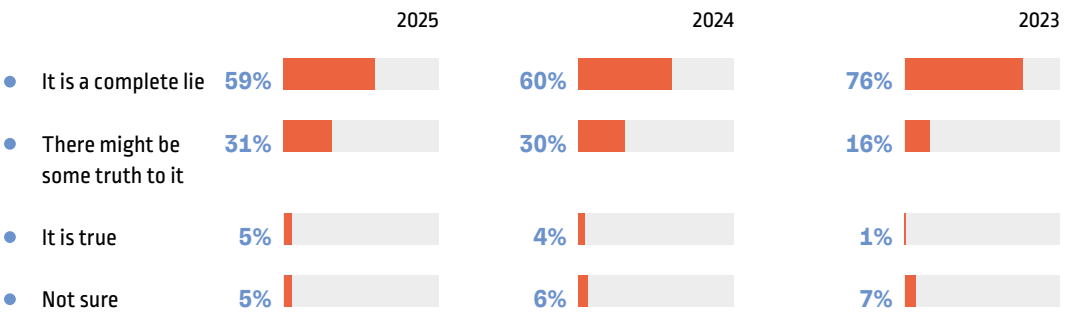


As was the case last year, the majority of Ukrainians **59%** do not trust online messages about Poland's allegedly aggressive plans towards Ukraine and its desire to occupy

western Ukraine and transform it into a Polish protectorate. The level of such critical attitudes does not vary by region.

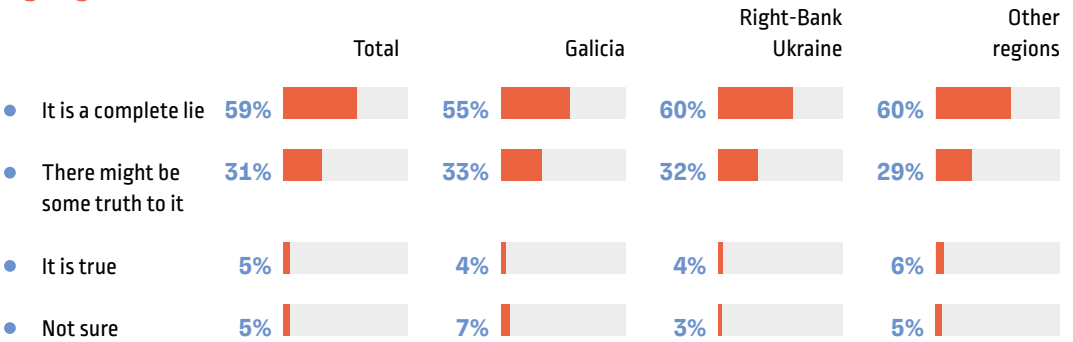
↓ FIGURE 39:

*Information can be found on the Internet about Poland's aggressive plans towards Ukraine, its desire to occupy western Ukraine and turn it into a Polish protectorate. To what extent do you think this information is true?*



↓ FIGURE 40:

*Information can be found on the Internet about Poland's aggressive plans towards Ukraine, its desire to occupy western Ukraine and turn it into a Polish protectorate. To what extent do you think this information is true?  
By region.*



Most respondents (57%) had not even come across such messages online or in the media.

↓ FIGURE 41:

## Have you encountered such information online or in the media? By region.

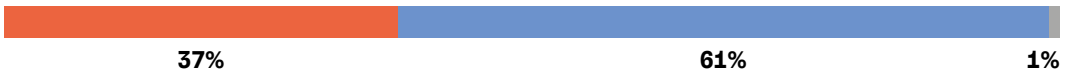
Total



Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Yes

No

Can't remember

Focus group respondents obtain essential information about Poland from Ukrainian sources, with Telegram channels being mentioned most frequently. Respondents had not come across any direct mentions of plans to occupy Galicia in the information space, and they regard such reports as Russian disinformation. At the same time, respondents said that they had often heard from Poles that 'Lviv belongs to Poland'. This view is quite widespread among Poles.

*"There are rumours like that, yes. But we don't need that, I think. I want our Ukraine to exist. We don't want to join anyone. I think these are myths. But there's a grain of truth in every conversation. There is a reason why things like that circulate online."*

[Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

Respondents are not very familiar with Polish politicians. They did not demonstrate any in-depth knowledge of Polish politics. Many participants know Andrzej Duda, whom they consider to be a friend of Ukraine. Not all respondents are familiar with the new Polish president Karol Nawrocki. It is often said that he has a negative attitude towards Ukrainians and Ukraine.

Some respondents mentioned other political figures and social activists such as Lech Wałęsa, Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński. Many of them remember that a plane carrying the Polish president and senior government officials crashed in Russia and believe that Russia is responsible for this disaster. Respondents in almost every group mentioned Pope John Paul II, who was a great friend of Ukraine.

*"I don't know anything about them at all. I'm not interested in their politics. If our news report anything about them, I hear it from our own people. It seems that there's very little information about them on our news."*

[Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"I've heard a bit about Tusk, but I know absolutely nothing about Nawrocki. I simply don't know. I didn't get round to it, I haven't been following it. And I feel that if you only read or watch our news, you won't come across much talk about Poland or our neighbours."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"Kaczyński. He's the brother of the one who died in that plane crash. And Tusk is also linked to that plane crash. As the Poles said: why was he the only one who didn't board that plane? The Poles say they don't trust Tusk because he was also supposed to fly on that plane. But he was late and didn't get on board. And the entire Polish government perished. And Tusk was the only one who survived."*

[Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"As for Nawrocki, when he was running in the elections, there were reports in the news that he was anti-Ukrainian. Probably because he places such a strong emphasis on the OUN–UPA. It seems to me he's being paid off by those who have more pro-Russian or anti-Ukrainian interests."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"I think he's primarily looking after his own interests. He simply suspended the aid that was being given to Ukrainians. Now he's restored it again. I believe he thinks mostly about himself, about his own approval ratings. And Ukrainians are last on his list. I think it's not in the Poles' interest for Ukrainians to be well off. Because we'll flood them with our grain, all that stuff. They'll start working for us, and we will no longer work for them."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"I don't really follow the news, but for some reason I liked Andrzej Duda more than this new president. However, it's not really clear what kind of man the next one will be, but somehow... I had some expectations. I thought it might be worse, that relations between Ukraine and Poland would deteriorate. And of course I'd heard about that plane crash where everyone died. But generally speaking, I don't really follow contemporary politics in Poland."*

[Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions]

*"I can say something about a Polish... well-known saint: Pope John Paul II. Karol Wojtyła. He was Polish, too. He visited Ukraine. If he*

*were alive today, he wouldn't have treated Ukraine the way the current popes have treated us during the war. The popes are on both sides, with them and with us. John Paul II would have really stood by Ukraine."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions)

Despite strained relations, the current political climate and competition, respondents believe that Poland will continue to support Ukraine in military and economic terms, as well as on its path to EU and NATO membership.

Respondents believe that the partnership will be maintained because security factors are paramount, and Ukraine and Poland are united by a common enemy. Many respondents believe that conflicts and tensions in Polish-Ukrainian relations are fuelled by Russia.

*"There will be some sort of partnership anyway. We are neighbours, highly integrated into the global economy, both politically and economically."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"Controversial issues will remain until there are mutual apologies and the claims are settled. Economically speaking, Poland derives significant benefits from the airport in Rzeszów, transit and so on. However, Ukraine is a major agricultural competitor to Poland. That's why they will not oppose our accession, but will constantly put forward some endless demands. Just like Hungary, Slovakia and our other closest neighbours. After all, Ukraine is their competitor. But the support will continue."*

(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"It's all about a political game, political ratings, manipulation. We would like to see a sensible approach to the common problem: the war with the Russians. To neutralise such a bad neighbour. And then, perhaps, we could have some independent expert assessments regarding all the historical tragedies. You see, there is a reason why they are raising these issues. Perhaps they will want some form of compensation. All this needs to be resolved with the involvement of independent experts, at the state level. And perhaps on the basis of joint agreements. It's hard to judge that thing now because the war is going on."*

(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"As for military cooperation, the priority at this moment is to protect them all from our neighbour. It's a complex set of economic, political and technological issues."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"They have no choice but to... help us – that's what I think. Otherwise the Russians will go further. I want to say this about the whole of Europe: if they make a deal with Russia behind our backs, they might abandon us. And very brutally so. That's the worst-case scenario. So I think the help will come anyway. And they will help us."*

(Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions)

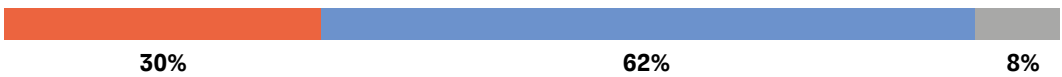
The complex history of relations between the Ukrainian and Polish nations is also reflected in the issue of guilt and responsibility for past events. Generally speaking, around **30%** of Ukrainians believe that Poles should feel guilty towards Ukrainians. At the same time, the number of such

people among the inhabitants of Galicia is as high as **45%**, which is significantly higher than elsewhere (**31%** in Right-Bank Ukraine, and **26%** in other regions).

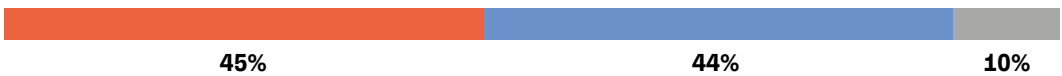
↓ FIGURE 42:

### *Do you think that Poles should feel guilty towards Ukrainians for certain events in the past? By region.*

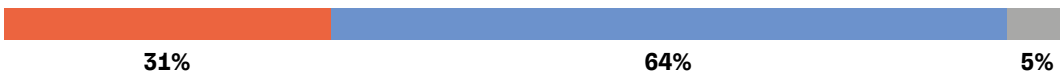
Total



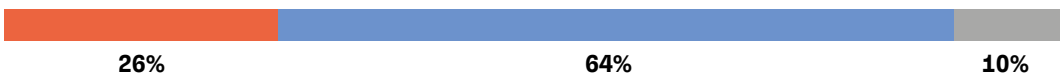
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Yes

No

Not sure

As regards Ukrainians' sense of guilt towards Poles, only one in five Ukrainians believes it is justified. Residents of Galicia were slightly more likely to answer this question in

the affirmative, with **23%** compared to **17%** in Right-Bank Ukraine and **20%** in other regions.

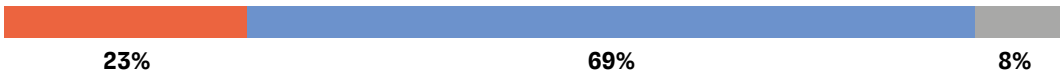
↓ FIGURE 43:

### *Do you think that Ukrainians should feel guilty towards Poles for certain events in the past? By region.*

Total



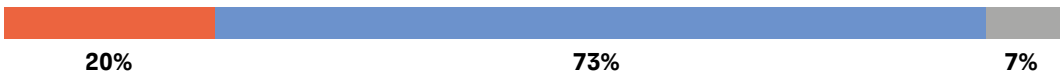
Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Yes

No

Not sure

Despite the asymmetry in feelings of guilt regarding the past, as described above, the majority of Ukrainians (54%) support the idea of mutual apologies between Poles and Ukrainians for certain past events, with the aim of improving mutual relations and resolving historically rooted disputes. At the same time, a fairly large proportion (40%) see no point in apologies from either side.

Very few respondents support the position of unilateral responsibility: only 2% believe that only Poles should apologise, and 1% think that only Ukrainians should offer an apology.

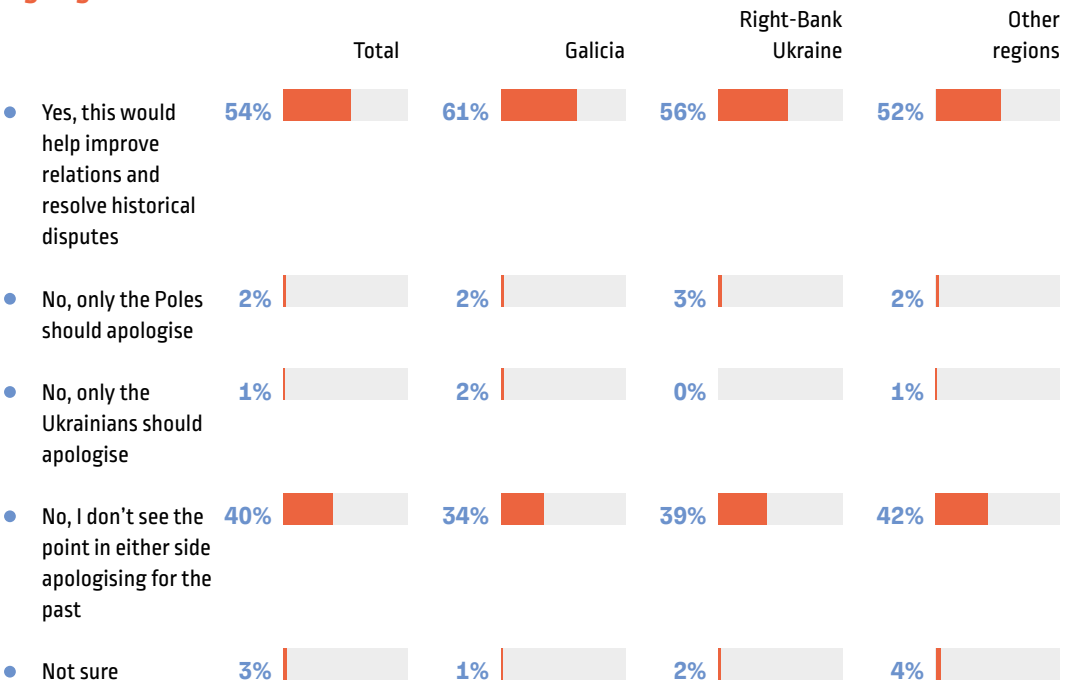
When it comes to this issue, the residents of Galicia also hold a view that sets them somewhat apart from other regions. The idea of mutual apologies was supported by 61% of respondents from Galicia, whereas the respective percentage for Right-Bank Ukraine was 56%, with 52% in other regions.

Generally speaking, when it comes to this issue, there is a prevailing desire for mutual understanding, even if symbolic, and a pragmatic reluctance to return to disputes over history.

↓ FIGURE 44:

## Do you support the idea of mutual apologies between Poles and Ukrainians for certain events of the past?

### By region.



Focus group participants supported the idea that Poles and Ukrainians should apologise to one another: after all, their relations have been difficult when viewed from a historical perspective. As for the issue of guilt, many respondents are inclined to believe that contemporary Ukrainians and Poles bear no responsibility for events of the past. They pointed out that history is important and should be studied, but one should strive to view the past events objectively. At the same time, they emphasised that the Ukrainian people had long suffered oppression at the hands of the Polish people, which led to uprisings and armed resistance over the centuries, resulting in the deaths of both Poles and Ukrainians. The respondents' comments suggest, however, that a historical dialogue should be conducted, perhaps involving third parties, and certainly neither side should impose its interpretation of events on the other.

*“Only through mutual [apologies]. Not in a situation where we are the only ones who kneel down. It's better to shake hands and say that we're forgetting the past and moving on. Rather than dredging up old issues... and now causing discord between us and the Poles. I don't think that will lead to anything good.”*  
 (Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*“What I mean is that they shouldn't impose their version on us, and we shouldn't impose ours on them. What has happened will not unhappen. What's happening now will be history in 50 or 100 years. Who will be looking for the guilty parties in this war?”*  
 (Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“And why do you think that anyone is to blame? I don't think so. And what can we change, anyway? It's been more than 80 years. What can we prove to anyone now? Who wrote the truth, who wrote lies? It's hard. The thing had already been quietly buried. No one touched it. Who needs to start digging it up again? I believe that the Russians are currently spreading such 'inserts' to create instability between the two countries.”*  
 (Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*“Poland also has things to apologise for. So I'm in favour of mutual reconciliation.”*  
 (Woman, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*“It's my personal opinion on apologies. Apologising for something that happened in the past, and it's historically difficult now to determine exactly who did what... It's better to accept it and take joint action such as days of remembrance, some commemorative events. Something shared, so that everyone understands. It's better than blowing everything out of proportion after so many years. That's a political trick to sow hostility between people. We should make peace and establish some kind of day of remembrance. Some joint actions to declare that this is a shared tragedy.”*  
 (Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions)

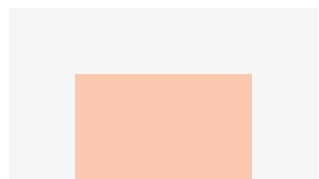
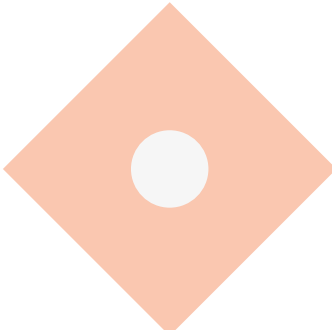
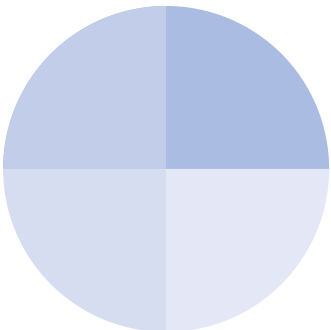
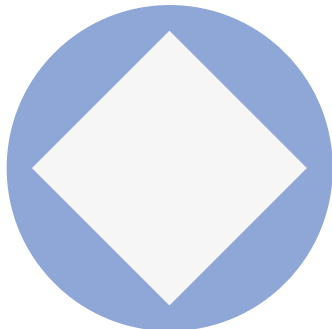
*“I think there should simply be days of remembrance for the fallen, on their side and on ours.”*  
 (Woman, 25–45 y.o., other regions)

*“We should understand and forgive, as they say, it's a historical fact. We cannot escape it. But we are living in the modern world. If we keep reminding people of everything that happened so many years ago, over 80 years ago, then how are nations supposed to continue to exist? It will only lead to hard feelings. We simply need to pay tribute, organise days of remembrance. Let the presidents of our countries meet. Let us honour the memory of the fallen on both sides.”*  
 (Man, 25–45 y.o., other regions)

*“I believe that now, while the war with Russia is ongoing, the attempts at raising this issue are nothing short of a crime. We need to leave this topic for later, for peaceful times. Right now, the only people who are raising this issue are politicians who want to gain some cheap fame and that's all.”*  
 (Man, 46–65 y.o., other regions)



# Attitudes towards selected aspects of Polish-Ukrainian relations



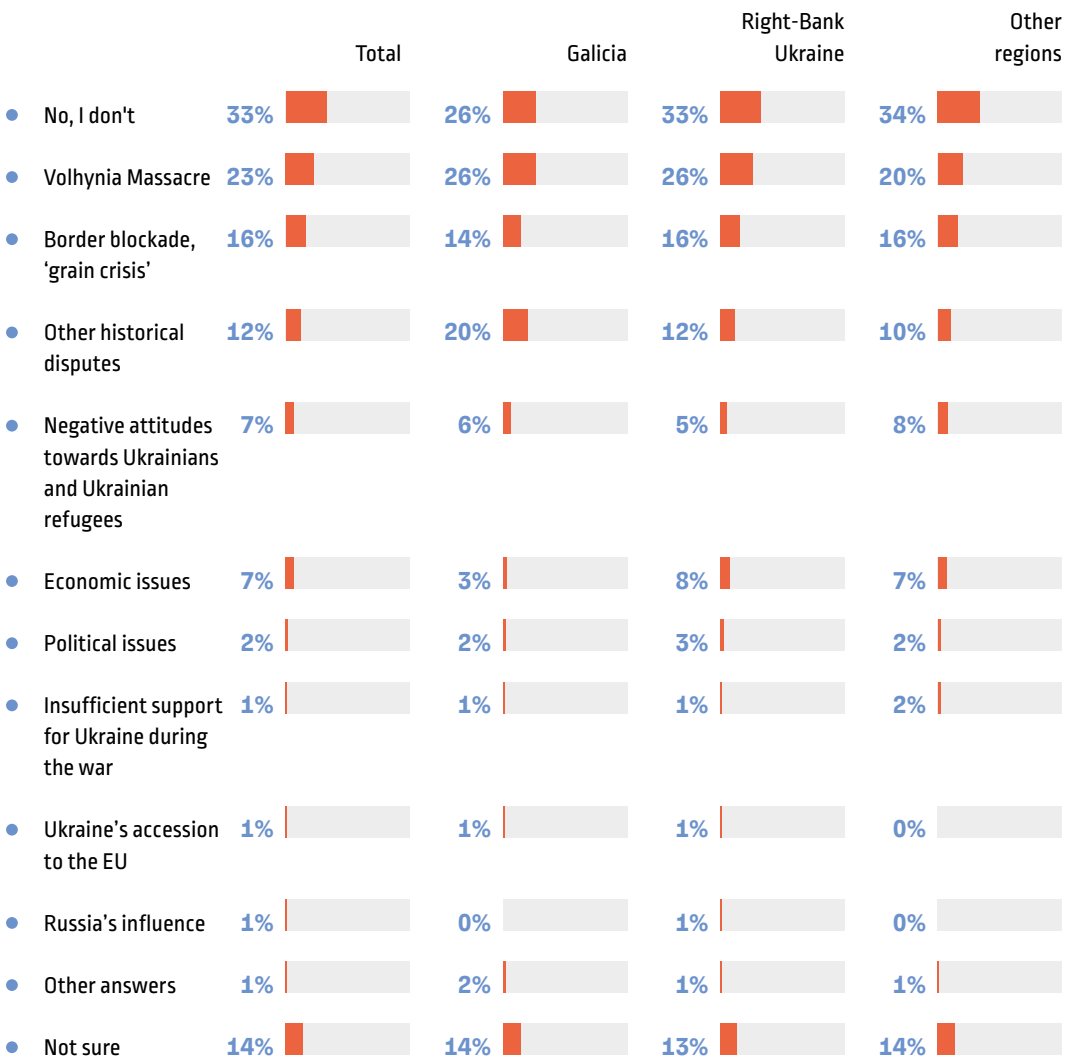
One-third of Ukrainians see no significant controversies in Polish-Ukrainian relations, whereas 14% are undecided. Those who have a clear stance usually mention historical issues: the Volhynia Massacre (23%) and other historical disputes [Stepan Bandera, territorial issues, events from the times of World War II], raised by 12%.

Economic conflicts and current political struggles are perceived as less important: the border blockade and the 'grain crisis' were mentioned by 16% of respondents, negative attitudes towards Ukrainians and Ukrainian refugees by 7%, economic disputes by 7%, and political discrepancies by 2%.

↓ FIGURE 45:

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

### By region.

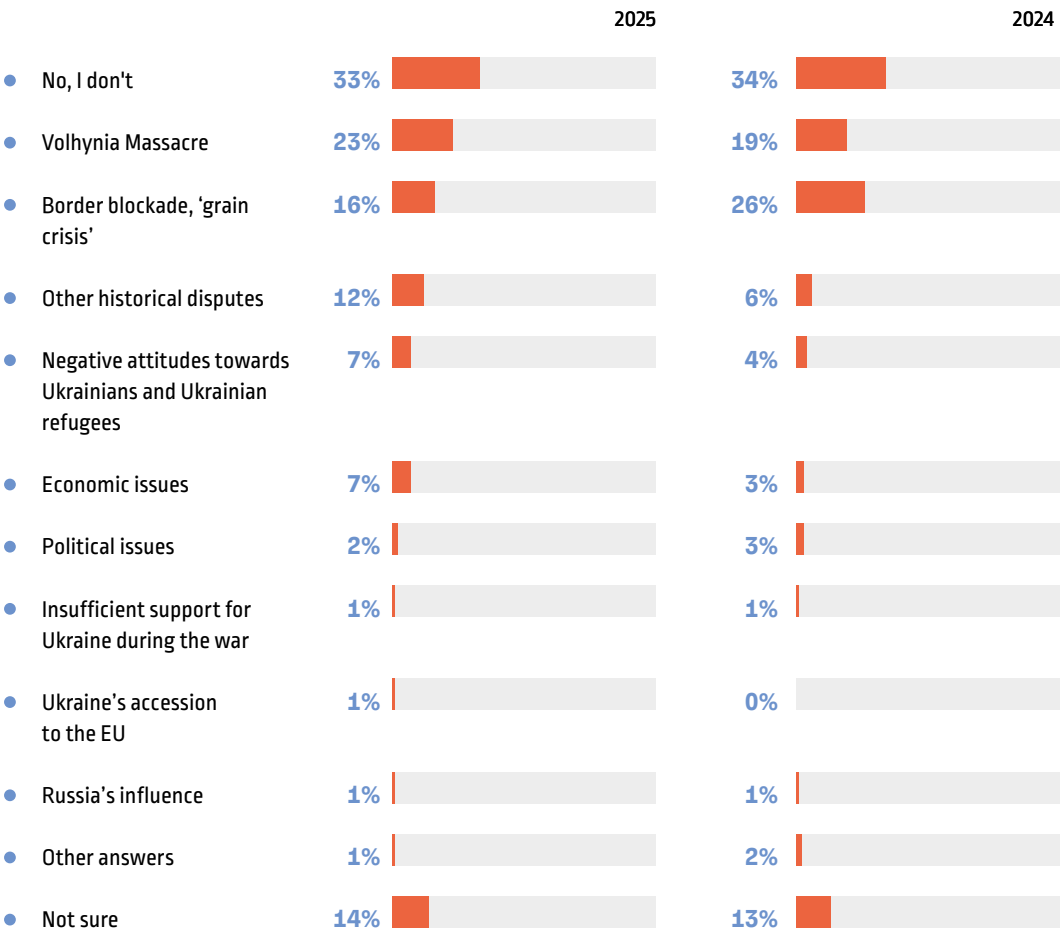


The years 2024–2025 brought certain changes in the perception of mutual disputes. The percentage of people who mention the Volhynia Massacre as a significant dispute in Polish-Ukrainian relations rose from **19%** in 2024 to **23%** in 2025, whereas the share of mentions of the border blockade

and the 'grain crisis' fell from **26%** to **16%** respectively. Other historical disputes have also become more prominent, from **6%** in 2024 to **12%** in 2025, indicating a gradual increase in the attention paid to the historical context in public consciousness.

↓ FIGURE 46:

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



It is worth noting that one of the most painful historical events and the one most frequently mentioned in responses, namely the Volhynia Tragedy or the Volhynia Massacre, was very well known to almost a third of Ukrainians

[31%] in 2025, with a further 57% saying they had heard of it. These figures are generally higher than in 2024 [23% vs. 58%], which shows that awareness of this issue has been growing in recent years.

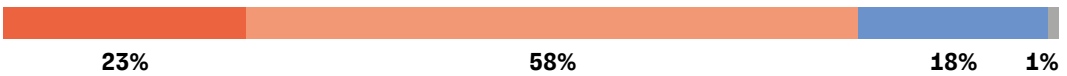
↓ FIGURE 47:

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

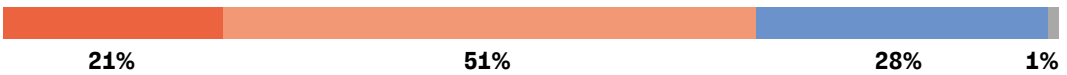
2025



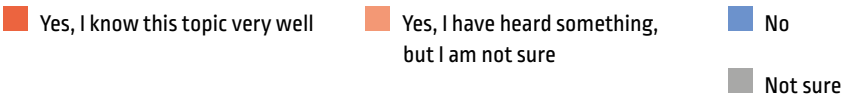
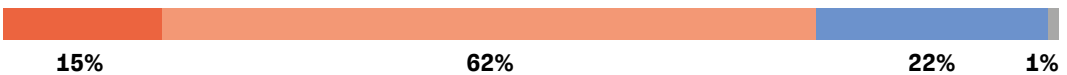
2024



2023



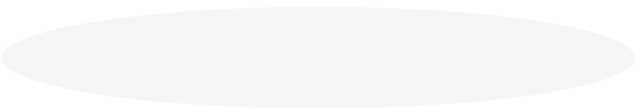
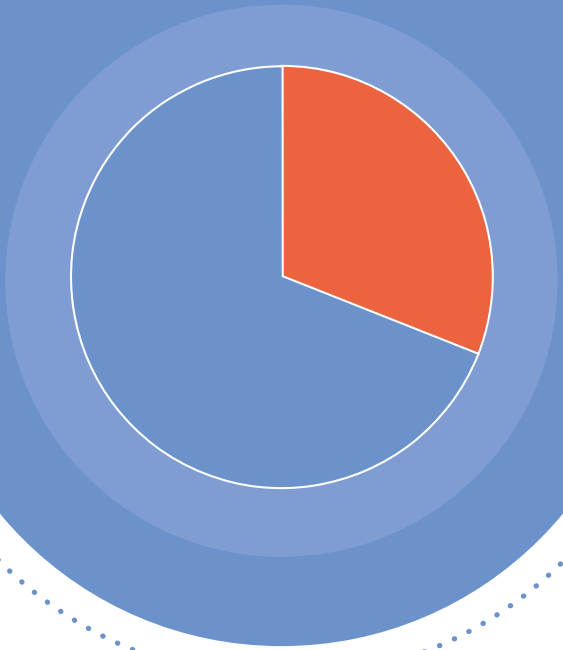
2022



Have you heard  
of the 'Volhynia Massacre'?

*Yes, I know this topic  
very well*

31%



Knowledge of this issue is slightly higher among residents of Galicia than among other Ukrainian respondents: **39%** of respondents from Galicia know a great deal about these

events, whereas the respective percentage for residents of Right-Bank Ukraine stands at **34%**, with **28%** for respondents from other regions.

↓ FIGURE 48:

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

By region.

Total



Galicia



Right-Bank Ukraine



Other regions



Yes, I know this topic very well

Yes, I have heard something, but I am not sure

No

Not sure

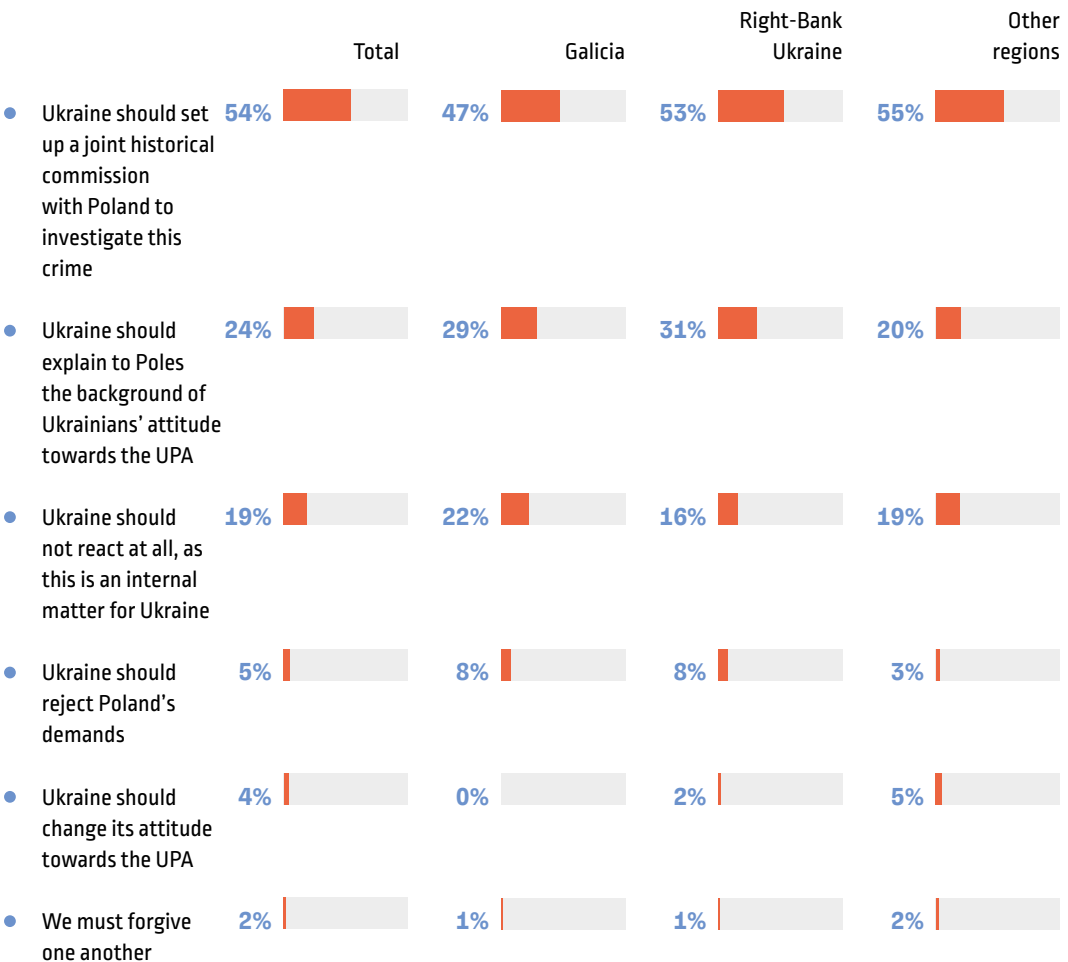
People in Poland expect Ukraine to change its stance towards the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army), which is blamed for murdering tens of thousands of Poles in Volhynia and Galicia.

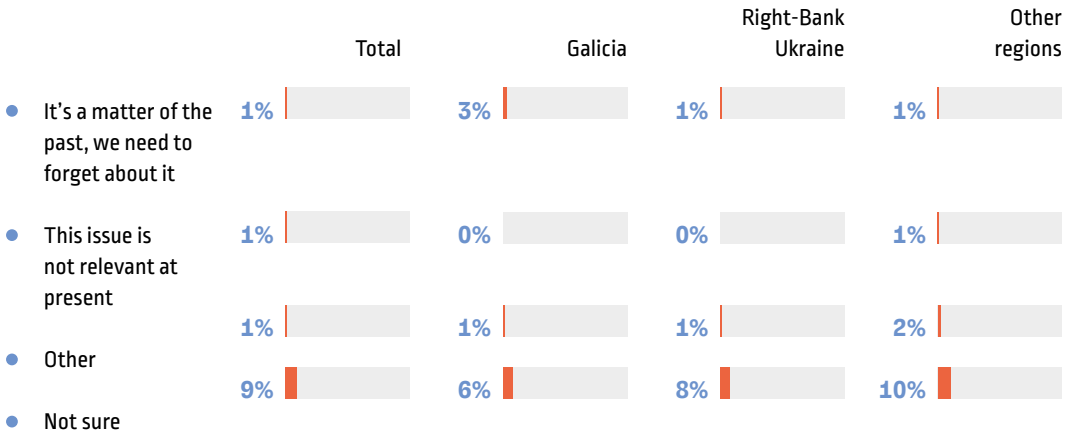
Ukrainians are divided as to how Ukraine should respond to this issue, but the majority (54%) believe that their country should establish a joint commission of historians with Poland to investigate these crimes. In turn,

one in four Ukrainians believes that Ukraine should explain the background of Ukrainians' attitude towards the UPA, whereas one in five claims that this is an internal matter for Ukraine and there is no need to respond. A clear minority of Ukrainians (4–5%) took a categorical stance, rejecting Polish demands and the call to change Ukraine's attitude towards the UPA.

↓ FIGURE 49:

*There is an expectation in Poland that Ukraine will change its attitude towards the UPA, which is accused of murdering tens of thousands of Poles in Volhynia and Galicia. In your opinion, how should Ukraine respond to this?*





The topic of conflicts, points of tension and animosity in Polish-Ukrainian relations arose spontaneously during all the focus group interviews. It was accompanied by a rather tense atmosphere and strong emotions.

Overall, Ukrainian respondents tend to believe that current disputes in Polish-Ukrainian relations are largely fuelled and exploited by Russia. This is believed to be part of its systematic information war against Ukraine, as well as against Europe and the West as a whole.

Respondents from Galicia and Right-Bank Ukraine recalled that sensitive topics such as the Volhynia massacre, the OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists) and UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army), and the figure of Stepan Bandera began to be actively raised more or less after the Orange Revolution. In their view, a situation where issues that had not been raised for decades suddenly return to public debate suggests deliberate action.

The respondents often claimed that the airplane crash near Smolensk was no accident, and that Russia thus sought to weaken potential resistance from Polish society to subsequent stages of information warfare. In respondents' view, Russia systematically manipulates public opinion in Poland and has agents of influence there, as it is keen to present Ukrainian fighters battling the Soviet regime for an independent Ukraine as terrorists or fascists to the Polish audience.

In respondents' opinions, the very memory of history and of past Polish-Ukrainian conflicts as such is another source of tension. This memory influences Poles' attitudes towards Ukrainians in everyday life to this day, leading to disputes. It was pointed out that in private conversations,

Poles often view Ukrainians stereotypically as people of a 'lower class', an unskilled labour force unworthy of earning as much as Poles. Some added that the perception of the western part of Ukraine as Polish territory has not faded among Poles, and that one may even encounter territorial claims regarding the border regions of Ukraine. Differences in advancement were also highlighted: as a European Union country, Poland is economically more developed, whereas Ukrainians are forced to travel there to earn money as economic migrants, often accepting inadequate working conditions and pay, which fuels mutual tensions.

According to respondents, people living in the border areas of both Poland and Ukraine maintain a vivid memory of past conflicts and mutual hostility between Poles and Ukrainians, of the Ukrainians' struggle against Polish cultural and socio-economic domination, which led to violence on various scales. These experiences were passed on to children by parents and grandparents. As a result, past conflicts lead to exacerbation of contemporary tensions.

Ukrainians would prefer not to revisit such painful topics as the events referred to as the 'Volhynian Tragedy' or the 'Volhynia Massacre' during World War II. They believe that it is difficult to ascertain the truth about them without full access to Russian archives. It was noted, however, that this topic is discussed heatedly in Poland, and the average Pole might ask a Ukrainian what they think about these events. In the respondents' view, regarding issues concerning the activities of the OUN-UPA in general, and particularly in relation to the events described as the 'Volhynian Tragedy', a significant role was likely played by the Soviet repressive structures of the NKVD and, perhaps, also

the German occupation authorities, as they provoked Polish-Ukrainian armed conflicts and crimes against the civilian population. It was emphasised during the discussions that such difficult events should be investigated by historians. They should not be instrumentalised for political purposes. At the public level, reconciliation should take place. Discussing these topics in everyday private conversations often leads to sharp conflicts and disputes.

Many respondents claim that the Soviet services skillfully manipulated history during World War II, conducting special operations and concealing archives. Consequently, some of the myths constructed by the NKVD at that time still persist and are utilised by contemporary Russian propaganda, which is the heir to Soviet approaches and methods. In this way, the figure of Stepan Bandera was demonised already during the Soviet era, and it constitutes one of the main myths surrounding 'Ukrainian Nazism' today. Respondents point out that other established interpretations of events may also be distorted, and the truth remains undisclosed.

Another significant theme concerned the mutual resettlement of Poles and Ukrainians in the final period of World War II and in the years that followed. Respondents emphasised that the border after World War II was drawn artificially: many Poles used to live in what is now Ukraine, and Ukrainians used to have homes in what is now Poland. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced, and some of them lost their lives in the process. At the same time, even though this border is perceived as artificial, it does not give rise to any desire among respondents to revise it. Such ideas are considered dangerous and likely to lead to wars, as exemplified by Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

In respondents' view, the burial sites of victims of Polish-Ukrainian conflicts should be researched, identified and commemorated. The truth should not be concealed, but since the subject is painful, one should avoid harsh terms such as 'murderers', as well as symbolism that may provoke conflicts in the present.

Respondents from areas liberated from Russian occupation recounted that, having survived searches of their homes by Russians looking for 'Bandera's followers' or even Bandera himself (sic!), they decided to take an interest in history to understand why the Russians hated him so much. Some respondents, particularly Russian-speaking ones from Southern and Eastern Ukraine, said they had studied historical materials to form their own, unbiased opinion and rid themselves of the influence of Soviet

stereotypes. They concluded that the leaders of the OUN-UPA were fighters for independence, and they are heroes to Ukrainians in the light of the events of the current war.

Some respondents declared they were not interested in such topics, whereas others learnt that these were important figures in Ukrainian history, finding that out through school or stories from older family members. At the same time, it was emphasised that every war breeds violence, and that individual UPA units may have committed crimes against the civilian population, particularly against Poles. It was added that all such crimes should be condemned as unacceptable. Unpunished crimes breed violence even many centuries later, as evidenced by Russia's current war against Ukraine. Some respondents repeated views propagated during the Soviet era, namely that the OUN and UPA were criminals and bandits rather than heroes, since only the Soviet soldiers were the heroes of World War II (known as the Great Patriotic War).

Respondents who are not historians and have no interest in history had a poor understanding of the Polish-Ukrainian conflicts of the 1920s, from the time of the West Ukrainian People's Republic or the Ukrainian People's Republic, when Ukraine suffered defeat in its struggle for independence. As such, they were unable to assess the role of Symon Petliura. Respondents are aware of the Haidamaks and the events referred to as the Uman Massacre from the works of writer Taras Shevchenko. These events were perceived as a Ukrainian rebellion against Polish oppression and serfdom. A handful of respondents said that the leaders and participants of the uprising were severely punished, many Ukrainians and many Poles were killed, and memorial sites and monuments associated with those tragedies have been preserved: there were victims on both sides.

It was noted, however, that this knowledge is fragmentary and consists of rather distant associations, though it does confirm the respondents' awareness of the depth and complexity of Polish-Ukrainian relations, which have been marked by conflicts for centuries. Respondents believed that Ukraine had been fighting for independence for centuries and continues this struggle to this day. They said that Ukraine had been surrounded by enemies for a long time, but they do not wish to return to past hostilities with other nations. Instead, they prefer to believe that their country has friends and partners in the current war between Russia and Ukraine. Despite all the complexities, Poland is among those friends.

Respondents pointed out that historically rooted tensions and conflicts, sometimes deliberately fuelled, have

intensified due to the significant presence of Ukrainians in Poland, which surged during the full-scale invasion. Quite naturally, competition arose over financial resources, housing, jobs, places in schools and nurseries, etc. The language issue can also stir up emotions since not all Ukrainians are learning Polish, and some of them are Russian-speaking. As in any nation, there are all sorts of people among Ukrainians. Some of them are involved in instances of inappropriate behaviour towards Poles or cultural misunderstandings.

In the respondents' opinion, there are so many Ukrainians in Poland that Poles fear that the Ukrainian diaspora might consolidate politically and aim for a representation in the country's parliament. This translates into conflicts in everyday life where Poles may tell Ukrainians to 'go back to Ukraine'.

Respondents mentioned yet another source of tension, namely the access to the European Union market for Ukrainian goods, including agricultural produce, granted during the war. Ukraine is becoming an economic competitor to Poland, and its potential accession to the EU poses certain economic risks.

All the factors mentioned during the discussion represent triggers for existing and potential conflicts and tensions at various levels. In respondents' view, they are instrumentalised by dishonest, populist politicians in Poland, some of whom may well be agents of Russian influence.

Despite systemic disagreements and tensions, the respondents feel that the awareness of the threat from Russia outweighs all the identified negative aspects and should prompt Ukraine and Poland to seek an understanding, especially since Ukraine can repel Russian aggression only through cooperation with European partners. Respondents noted that Russia is waging a hybrid war against Europe and the West, e.g. by provoking various conflicts and disagreements.

Focus group respondents found it difficult to speak of Ukraine's victory ending the ongoing war. They assessed the situation as uncertain. In their view, victory would be facilitated by a strong partnership and military and financial aid from Europe. Respondents did not place much faith in the effectiveness of peace plans and negotiations on a ceasefire. They were not convinced that Russia would abide by the terms of any peace agreements, even if Ukraine decided to strike a compromise.

At the same time, respondents would like to believe that the war will end in the near future. Among the possible scenarios, they mentioned economic decline or a political

crisis in Russia, but they also emphasised that these were highly uncertain scenarios. In the absence of realistic forecasts, all respondents ultimately expressed their belief that Ukraine needs perseverance and their hope for a better scenario for Ukraine.

*"The border blockade. The farmers arranged a border blockade. I believe that this was artificially provoked on their part and I think there were also Russian traces there. Just look, it hadn't happened before, and then, all of a sudden, the border blockades started, the grain was dumped. You see, it was simply some kind of subversion on their part."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Galicia)

*"Just as my great-grandmother or grandmother told me: once the Ukrainians were gathering for Easter, they were going to celebrate, waiting for a service to be held in the Orthodox church. And at that time the Poles wanted to burn our people in the church. Someone from our side found out about it and they burned their whole village. I think someone must have been stirring things up, some third party."*

(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)

*"My grandmother was born in 1918. Her childhood and youth were spent when those territories were part of Poland. She went to a Polish school. For example, whenever someone mentioned Poles, or when some Polish cultural centre was shown on TV in the 1970s or 1980s, my grandma would simply walk out of the room. She couldn't bear to look at those Poles."*

(Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)

*"There is always someone between Poles and Ukrainians. Between two conflicting sides, there is someone who gains from it. You simply need to look for a third party: who benefits from this. At different times, those were different people. And now, when we're talking about a specific event or in general, it is in*

*Russia's interest to weaken us, to ensure there is no unification."*

[Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"At that time, it benefited the Russians when Ukrainians murdered Poles, and Poles killed Ukrainians. But all in all, I believe that the Poles are to blame for this situation. After all, they were the ones who came to us. They behaved like occupiers, especially the army."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Galicia]

*"The secret archives must be declassified as much as possible. Of course, people don't tell the whole truth. There could have been a German or Austrian command behind it as well. After all, we all emerged from different empires, and Poland also threw off the Austro-Hungarian and Russian yoke. We need to find a way to reconcile, we need to acknowledge that there was a conflict which had many victims, but we should make sure it doesn't happen again."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"There was the Home Army, and we had the UPA. And they knew that to ensure the Germans weren't caught off guard, they had to pit them against each other: the Home Army and the UPA. So that the two armies wipe each other out, to weaken their forces, to make the armies weaker."*

[Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"The historic Rzeczpospolita: wherever there were Ukrainians, wherever there were Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, there were also Poles. They didn't regard Ukrainians as their equals. If they granted any privileges at all, they only granted them to Poles. Land was only given to Poles. Never ever to Ukrainians. Then the war began and the Poles could no longer control those territories. And when they couldn't control them, Ukraine launched an uprising."*

[Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia]

*"I think they all loved Ukraine, they all wanted freedom for Ukraine. And they fought in line with their beliefs. They fought as much as they could. To my mind, they... Yes, perhaps they didn't always choose the right paths, like Bandera, right? He followed the path he thought was right at the time."*

[Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"People tried to force me to watch the film 'Volhynia' (Wołyń), and I watched it. In my opinion, the conflict was triggered by Poland's discriminatory policy towards Ukrainians starting from 1920. In Volhynia, as far as I remember, there were about 400 schools, and only two remained. I believe that this is one of the triggers of the conflict."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*"As for the Volhynian tragedy, once again, the land was being divided up, everything was being divided up. The Ukrainians were defending their lands, the lands which belonged to them. And the Poles believed that it was their land. That is where all the wars come from, just like the war we are fighting now. We are seeing almost a repeated scenario: one of our neighbours believes that this has been 'Russian land forever'. And nobody wants to acknowledge that the Ukrainian people have lived here for so many years."*

[Man, 25–45 y.o., other regions]

*"This issue was also heated up by the NKVD: they would dress up as Ukrainians or as Poles. And they went about their business. And after all that, we became 'Banderites'. Because that's how they showed us, the Soviet propaganda portrayed us as very brutal."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., other regions]

*"Eighty years have passed. What can we change now? We need to sit down and talk, come to an understanding. And be friends with the Poles. That's all. What else can we do? We certainly don't need hostility now."*

[Woman, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine]

*“They remain silent about the Katyn Massacre, when Polish officers were transported away in railway wagons and the Russians shot them dead in the forests of the Smolensk region. But they keep quiet about it. They keep quiet about the fact that their president died in a plane crash, also over the forests of the Smolensk region. Nowadays, this topic suits them, or it suits someone else, some contemporary third party. That’s probably precisely why this topic is being heated up.”*

*(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)*

*“There was the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, our Ukrainian army, which fought for the freedom and independence of Ukraine, right? And Poles had the Home Army, which also fought against the Germans and the Russians. So why do they have the right to recognise their own people while we cannot recognise ours?”*

*(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)*

*“We really must do everything in symmetry. And apologise in symmetry, and accept [apologies] in symmetry, of course. And I’d like to add something else. About the victims... Nowadays, Ukrainians say that the number of victims on both sides was more or less similar. It’s not a problem to take the Poles, exhume them and bury them in Poland, and to take the bodies of Ukrainians from Poland, transfer them and bury them in Ukraine. I think*

*the problem is about the number of people. And I suppose there is some truth recorded in history. And that is why it looks the way it does. I’ve heard that the number of victims of this tragedy is overstated. Highly overstated.”*

*(Man, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)*

*“We need to bring together historians and researchers from the European Union and America. So that we can resolve this issue once and for all, so to speak, regarding the Volhynia Massacre. And also about Stepan Bandera and Shukhevych. I believe these people are our national heroes, especially for us here, in Western Ukraine. I cannot say anything bad about them.”*

*(Woman, 24–45 y.o., Galicia)*

*“I think that nowadays the Russians are spreading such ‘metastases’ to create instability between the two countries.”*

*(Man, 46–65 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

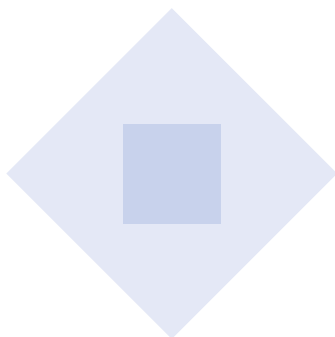
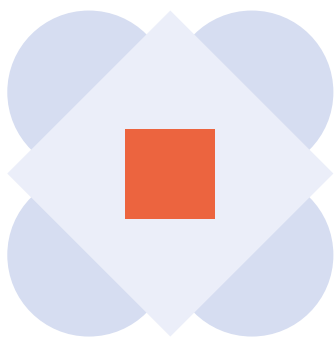
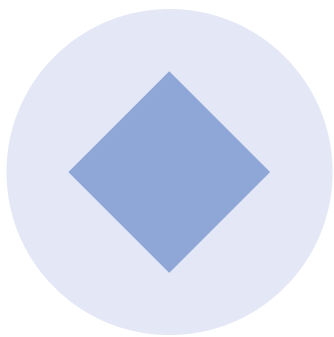
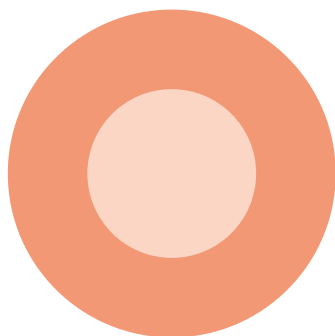
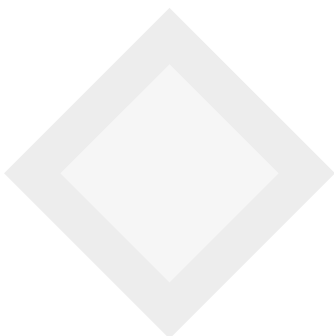
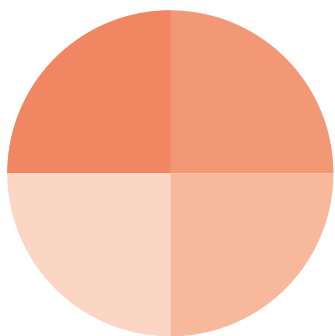
*“Here in Ukraine, we have had nothing but problems. We were liberating ourselves from Poland, and then Bandera wanted liberation from the Soviet Union, from the Soviet rule. We have a not-so-good ‘positive’ history. There have always been some problems here. And various consequences of that, too.”*

*(Man, 25–45 y.o., Right-Bank Ukraine)*

# Notes

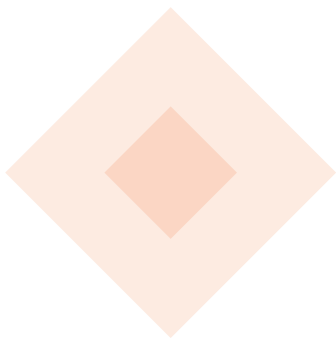
## Notes

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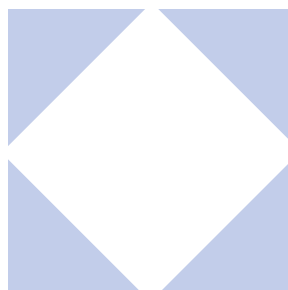


We are pleased to present another report on a public opinion survey in Ukraine regarding perceptions of Poland and Poles. It was commissioned by the Mieroszewski Centre and carried out by Info Sapiens, the Ukrainian social research institute. Unlike the editions dated August 2022, October 2023 and November 2024, this study also includes findings from focus group interviews. These in-depth discussions provide a better understanding of Ukrainians' attitudes towards 'Polish-related issues'.



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The Mieroszewski Centre is a Polish state institution established by an act of law. The Centre's mission is to initiate, support and carry out activities aimed at the peoples of Eastern Europe, in particular Ukrainians, Belarusians, Georgians and Moldovans, in order to strengthen the independence of their countries in the face of Russian attempts to redraw borders and re-establish regional hegemony; to support processes instrumental in building mature democracies; to bring them closer to Euro-Atlantic structures; and to deepen ties with Poland. Dialogue with Russians remains within the Centre's sphere of interest, but for both political and moral reasons it must be limited to individuals and institutions that have unequivocally condemned Russian aggression and crimes.