THE WORLD THROUGH HUNGARIAN EYES
FOREIGN POLICY ATTITUDES IN HUNGARY IN 2024

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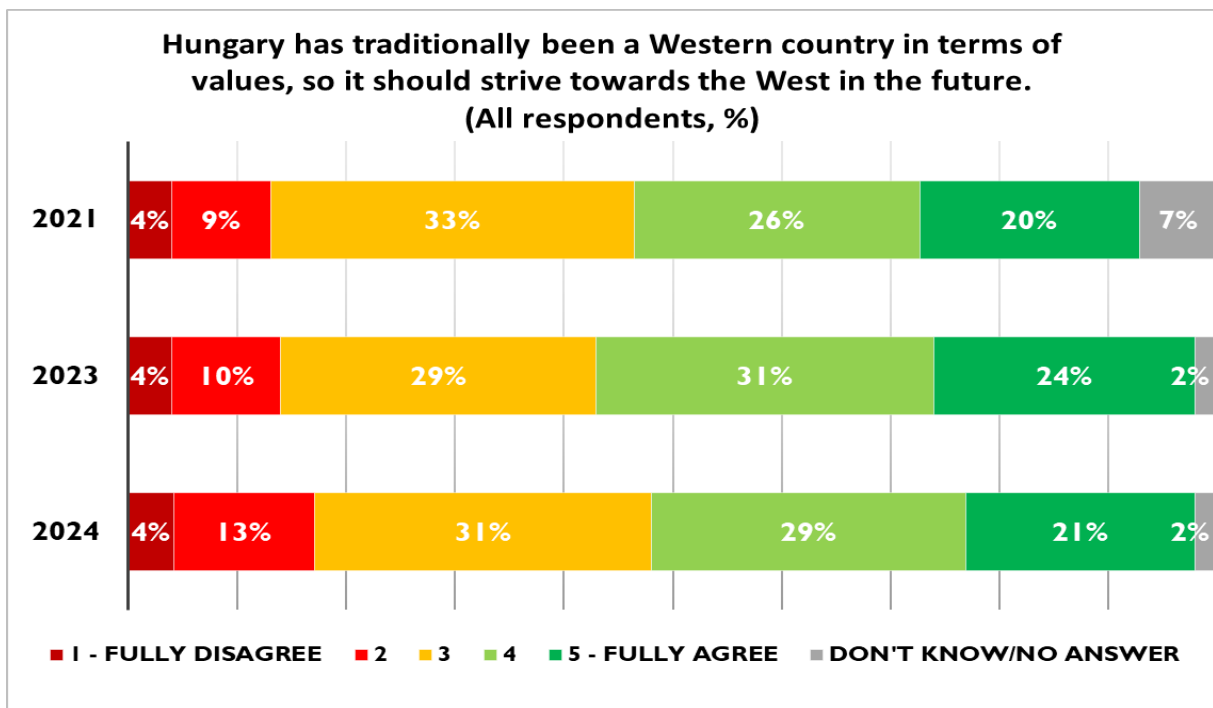
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In its comprehensive survey of foreign policy attitudes in Hungary in 2024, Policy Solutions looks at the world through the lens of Hungarian public opinion. The objective of this study is to show how Hungarian society views our country's place in the world and what it thinks about international affairs, conflicts, and players. We asked respondents which objectives they believe should define Hungarian foreign policy and which countries we should cooperate with closely. We also surveyed the name recognition and popularity of selected global leaders and public figures, as well as the public's perception of the United States and China. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Hungary's NATO accession, we pay special attention to the public's assessment of Hungary's place in the defence alliance. We also dedicated a separate block of questions to the Hungarian public's assessment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which flared up massively once again in the autumn of 2023. As part of our foreign policy survey in 2024, we focused especially on mapping the public attitudes towards the Russia-Ukraine war.

We used a survey conducted by Závecz Research between 1 and 9 March 2024 as the basis of our analysis. As part of the survey, 1,000 people were interviewed in person. The respondents were selected to be representative of the Hungarian adult population in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, and the type of municipality they live in. The study was realised with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest.

Although a majority of Hungarians believe that the country's place is in the West, support for Western orientation has declined among the supporters of Fidesz

An absolute majority of Hungarians (50%) believe that in terms of its values, Hungary has traditionally belonged to the West, and that's the way we should keep it (Figure 1). A mere sixth of all respondents (17%) took the opposing view. As compared to 2023, the share of those who support a Western orientation has dropped by five percentage points, while the ratio of those who oppose it has increased by three. **Although a relative majority (37%) of the ruling Fidesz party's supporters also endorse Hungary's Western orientation, the share of those who agree with this statement is nine percentage points lower than last year. Furthermore, we found that a quarter of Fidesz supporters (25%) disagree with Hungary's Western alignment.** By contrast, two-thirds (66%) of opposition voters agree that in terms of our values, we have traditionally belonged to the West; this is the same share as last year.

Figure 1

A quarter of Hungarians (27%) said that it would be in our nation's interest to intensify ties with Russia and distance ourselves from the European Union. It is important to stress that a relative majority of the Hungarian public (43%) continues to reject closer cooperation with Russia. We have not found any major changes in this respect since last year; the share of pro-Russian opinions is one percentage point higher, while the share of those who disagree with the idea of closer ties to Russia has dropped by two points. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that as compared to 2021, the share of those who advocate closer ties with Russia has doubled, from 13% to 27%.

According to the voters, the defence of national sovereignty, cooperation with our Western allies, and good relations with our neighbours are the most important foreign policy goals

In line with last year's survey results, Hungarians said that protecting national sovereignty (35%), cooperating with our Western allies (29%), and deepening relations with our neighbours (29%) are the most important foreign policy goals. As compared to

2023, economic foreign policy objectives have moved up in the ranking, with over a quarter of Hungarians (26%) indicating that the Hungarian state should promote the foreign expansion of domestic economic players.

Apart from the widespread agreement on the most-preferred goals, there is also a near-consensus in Hungarian society – regardless of partisan affiliation – on the least-supported issues. **Hungarians are least likely to support foreign policy objectives that hold out fewer political or economic benefits for our country.** This includes subsidies for less-developed countries, the defence of Christian values, and the promotion of Hungarian culture; all of these were in the last spots of the ranking across the political spectrum.

As far as military force is concerned, 34% of Hungarians said that Hungary should become the leading military power in the region of Central Europe, while the share of those who reject this goal was similarly high at 32%. As compared to 2023, respondents were four percentage points more likely to say that Hungary should become a regional military leader, while the share of those who were against it dropped by eight percentage points.

Hungarians view Austria as our country's most important partner, with Ukraine ranking last on the list in 2024

We also surveyed which countries respondents believe Hungary should nurture closer ties to. **Forty-one percent of Hungarians said close relations with Austria should be a top priority, an 11 point increase since 2023.** The country that came in first last year dropped to second place in this year's ranking; around a third of respondents (31%) said that maintaining good relations with Germany is essential. However, the share of Germany's mentions in this context was 16 percentage points lower than a year ago. At 30%, the United States came in third – just as it had in 2023 – and the share of its mentions was three percentage points higher than last year.

Our survey also asked respondents about 19 countries individually. **Using this method, we found that most respondents regarded cooperation with Austria (84%) as vital, but Germany (80%) and Croatia (79%) also received high ratings.** These countries were followed by the Visegrad countries (Slovakia and Czechia both stood at 77%, Poland at 76%), but Hungary's Western European orientation was also reflected in the survey. Hungarian society also holds close partnerships with the United Kingdom (77%), Sweden (75%), and France (75%) in high regard. **Among the 19 countries we asked about in 2024, respondents were least likely to prioritise relations with Ukraine (39%), Russia (48%), South Korea (52%), and China (59%).**

A year earlier, Russia had ranked last (even back then, however, 48% said they wanted Hungary to have a strong partnership with Russia). In the case of Ukraine, we found a steep drop in the share of those who view it as an important partner. In 2023, 53% of Hungarians wanted close relations with Ukraine, while in 2024 the share of those who agreed was 14 percentage points lower. **In 2024, the proportion of respondents who rejected a close partnership with Russia was eight percentage points lower than that of respondents who said the same about Ukraine.**

Government party supporters (69%) are far more likely to endorse close ties to Russia than opposition voters (32%). Ukraine's assessment has deteriorated considerably over the past years: in 2024, 64% of Fidesz supporters and 43% of opposition voters rejected closer cooperation with our war-torn neighbour. We can further assert that Austria has maintained its pre-eminent position in every voter demographic, while a majority of Hungarians, irrespective of partisan affiliation, want a closer partnership with the neighbouring countries. Sixty-six percent of Fidesz supporters want closer cooperation with the United States, too, while an even higher share of the governing party's voters want closer ties with Russia (69%) and China (75%).

In 2024, Hungarians are more likely to view Ukraine as a threat than Russia

In addition to exploring Hungarians' views of our national partnerships, we also surveyed which countries they tend to view as threats to Hungary. **Among the countries we asked about, they were most likely to name Ukraine (51%) as a threat, followed by Russia (46%), China (34%), and the US (34%). This marks a significant shift as compared to last year when Hungarians were far more likely (by 12 percentage points) to view Russia as a threat than Ukraine.** As compared to 2023, Hungarians were 16 percentage points more likely to view Ukraine as a threat. The assessment of Russia has not changed since 2023: a relative majority of Hungarians (46%) still consider it as a source of threat. At the same time, the assessment of China has deteriorated: while in 2023, 27% had viewed the Far Eastern country as a threat, this year, 34% thought so. We found a similar trend in the case of the United States: in this year's survey, a third of Hungarians (34%) said that the US is a threat, which marks an eight percentage point increase since last year (26%).

Just as last year, Fidesz voters were once again most likely to see Ukraine as a threat to Hungary. At the same time, the share of those government party voters who agree with this assessment has surged by 15 percentage points, from 46% to 61%. Forty-three percent of government party supporters feel threatened by the United States, while only 34% view Russia as a threat. Almost half of government party supporters (47%) do not consider China a threat to Hungarians, and only every fourth among them (24%) views this differently. As compared to 2023, the share of those Fidesz voters who viewed either the US and/or China as a threat had risen by seven percentage points each, even as Russia's assessment did not change. Almost two-thirds of opposition voters (61%) had viewed Russia as a threat in 2024. China ranked second (43%) among those countries perceived as a threat by opposition supporters, while 41% of them thought the same about Ukraine. Almost half of opposition supporters (47%) do not view the United States as a threat, and fewer than a quarter (23%) regard it as dangerous. Over the last year, the assessment of China has improved somewhat among opposition sympathisers – the share of those who see it as a threat declined from 47% to 43%. Meanwhile, the perception of Ukraine has deteriorated; the share of opposition voters who view it as a potential threat to our country has surged by 15 percentage points, from 26% to 41%. **On the whole, we found that Ukraine was the country whose assessment has deteriorated the most, and this holds across partisan lines.**
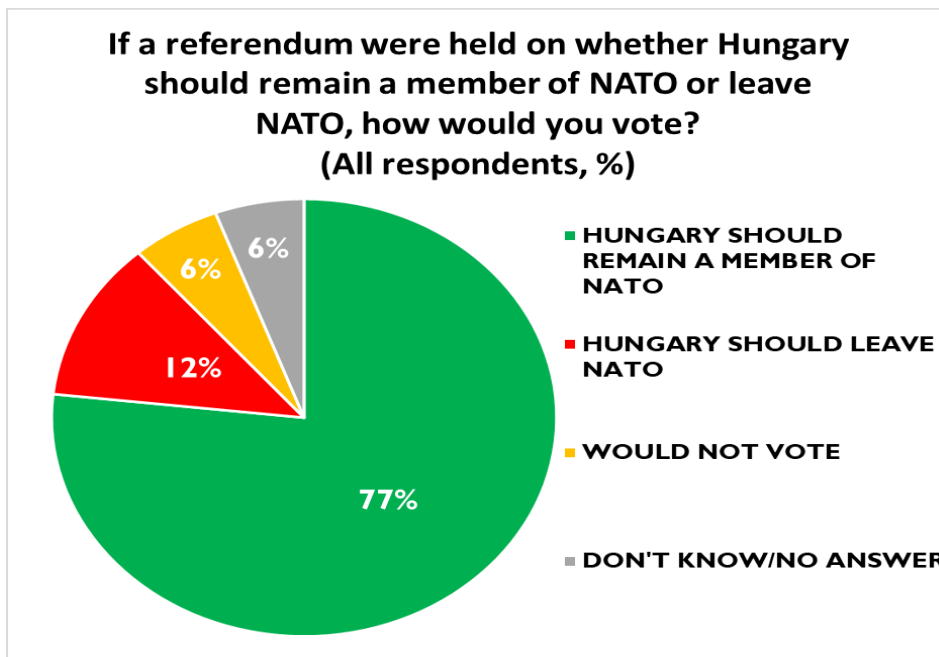
NATO membership is most likely to be viewed favourably, and Hungarians do not tend to believe that either NATO or the EU could disintegrate in the coming 20 years

We asked our respondents how they view Hungary's membership in various international organisations. On the whole, a majority of Hungarians view our membership in international multilateral organisations positively. **They were most likely to see our NATO membership favourably (61%). The Turkic Council is still least likely (29%) to be viewed positively; at the same time, it was also the only international organisation we surveyed whose public assessment did not deteriorate over the past year.** Next, we asked the public to comment on the probability of international events that could substantially affect Hungary's situation. None of the scenarios we laid out were assessed as particularly likely by a majority of the public, but ultimately, respondents were more likely to believe that European integration and closer cooperation could intensify than that these could disintegrate. Among the potential future scenarios, respondents were most likely (43%) to assess that a joint European army would emerge. Nevertheless, the share of those who believe that this will not happen is still higher (47%). Roughly a third of the public believes that there will be a shift towards a more federal Europe and a United States of Europe will emerge (34%). At the same time, over half of our respondents (54%) do not see this as likely. Even fewer believe that the European Union or NATO could disintegrate (in the case of the EU, 27% said this was likely and 63% said no, while with respect to NATO, 19% said yes and 71% said this was unlikely).

25 years after accession: three-quarters of voters support Hungary's NATO membership

Over three-quarters of the Hungarian public (77%) are in favour of retaining our country's NATO membership (Figure 2). This ratio has not changed since last year, when it was 76%. Still, the share of those who would support leaving NATO is slightly higher (12%) than it was in 2023 (9%). **There is no partisan group that does not overwhelmingly support our NATO membership.** Among Fidesz voters, 78% approve, while among opposition voters, over 80% endorse our NATO membership. Just as we saw in 2023, in 2024, too, the voters of the far-right Our Homeland party were least likely to approve of Hungary's NATO membership (64%).

Figure 2

If a referendum were held on whether Hungary should remain a member of NATO or leave NATO, how would you vote?
(All respondents, %)

- HUNGARY SHOULD REMAIN A MEMBER OF NATO — 77%
- HUNGARY SHOULD LEAVE NATO — 12%
- WOULD NOT VOTE — 6%
- DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER — 6%

Nearly three-quarters of Hungarians (73%) say their country is safer in NATO than if it were not a member of the alliance. A majority in all political camps agreed with this. Two-thirds of respondents (67%) believe that NATO helps uphold peace and stability in the world. **However, about half of all respondents (50%) also said that NATO might drag Hungary into a military conflict that our country had best avoid.** At the same time, only a third of Hungarians (33%) believe that Hungary has any substantial say in how NATO will develop in the future.

Three out of ten respondents (29%) said that it would be better for Hungary to enter into a military alliance with Russia instead of NATO. Still, on the whole, the strong Western orientation of the Hungarian public is also manifest in the fact that 63% of respondents disagree with the notion mentioned above.

The vast majority of Hungarians agree with Sweden's NATO accession and said that Hungary must comply with the NATO security guarantees

At the time of our survey, the Hungarian ratification of Sweden's NATO accession was still pending, so we asked respondents whether they supported the Scandinavian country's aspiration to join the alliance. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Hungarians supported Sweden's NATO membership. About a fifth of all respondents (18%) said they were against it, and nearly the same proportion (17%) said they did
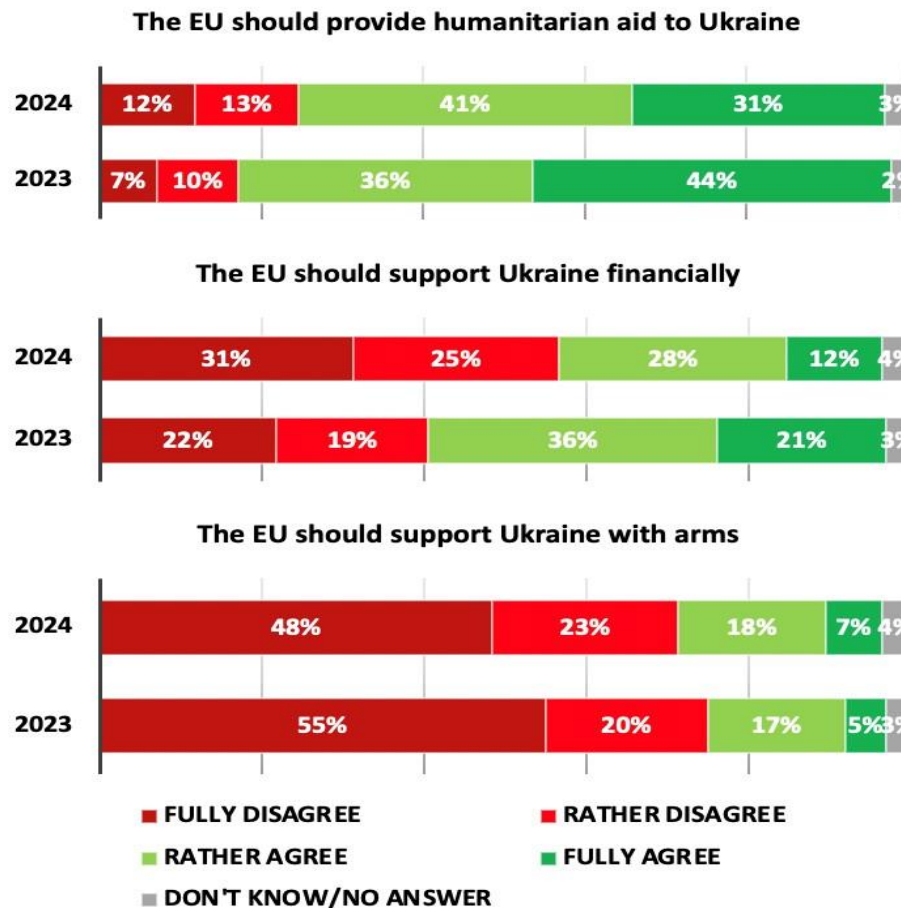
not know or did not want to respond. The overwhelming majority (62%) of government party voters also supported Sweden's NATO membership bid.

Three-quarters of Hungarians (76%) said that in the event of a Russian attack on a Baltic country, our country could be legitimately expected to send troops in support of the embattled ally. Over seven out of ten government party supporters (71%) also agreed. Among opposition voters, the share of those who would want to send troops in support of an attacked Baltic ally was 85%. We also asked our respondents about the reverse scenario, namely **Russia attacking Hungary – what actions could we expect of NATO in that case? Over four-fifths of Hungarians (82%) agreed that in this event, we could legitimately expect NATO to come to Hungary's aid.** Four-fifths of Fidesz voters (79%) and 88% of opposition voters agreed with this.

Support for Ukraine: at this point, only humanitarian assistance enjoys broad public support, a majority of Hungarians oppose both financial and military aid

There has been a massive increase over the last year in the share of respondents who said that the EU should not support Ukraine financially (from 41% to 56%, Figure 3) or provide humanitarian aid (25% against in 2024, up from 17% in 2023). The former marks an especially vital milestone, since it means that by the **spring of 2024, those opposed to providing financial assistance to Ukraine (56%) had become a majority, against a minority who prefer Hungarian solidarity with Ukraine (40%).** Regarding humanitarian aid for Ukraine, those in favour are still the overwhelming majority (72% vs 25%). **In 2024, we found that the vast majority of Hungarians reject supplying Ukraine with weapons (71% against vs 25% against), just as they had a year earlier (75% vs 22%).**

Figure 3

The EU should provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine

	FULLY DISAGREE	RATHER DISAGREE	RATHER AGREE	FULLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER
2024	12%	13%	41%	31%	3%
2023	7%	10%	36%	44%	2%

The EU should support Ukraine financially

	FULLY DISAGREE	RATHER DISAGREE	RATHER AGREE	FULLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER
2024	31%	25%	28%	12%	4%
2023	22%	19%	36%	21%	3%

The EU should support Ukraine with arms

	FULLY DISAGREE	RATHER DISAGREE	RATHER AGREE	FULLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER
2024	48%	23%	18%	7%	4%
2023	55%	20%	17%	5%	3%

■ FULLY DISAGREE ■ RATHER DISAGREE ■ RATHER AGREE ■ FULLY AGREE ■ DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER

Among government party voters, there has been a massive decline in support for EU funding for Ukraine: among respondents with a partisan affiliation, Fidesz voters were most likely to be opposed (69% against, 28% for). By contrast, in 2023 the party's voters had been evenly divided on this issue (50% vs 49%).

In both years, our surveys revealed slightly higher levels of opposition to direct Hungarian assistance for Ukraine than to the idea of the EU providing aid. There has been a ten percentage point increase over the past year in the share of those who opposed humanitarian aid (from 20% to 30%). However, it is important to stress that as of 2024, a majority is still in favour of Hungary providing humanitarian aid to its neighbours who are caught up in a war trying to defend their homeland (68%). **By contrast, the idea of Hungary extending direct financial assistance to Ukraine (2024: 66% against vs 30% in favour, 2023: 66% vs 33%) or sending arms to Kyiv (2024: 77% vs 19%, 2023: 84% vs 14%) is still very much the minority view.** Our data show that although it started from a very low level, there has been a slight rise in the support for both the supply of arms to Ukraine by the EU (support rose by three percentage points compared to the previous year) and/or Hungary (a five percentage point increase).

Our multivariate analysis shows that as compared to those without a partisan affiliation, opposition voters were significantly more likely to endorse both EU and Hungarian aid for Ukraine, while Fidesz voters, in turn, were less likely to agree with this idea. A consistent pattern over time has been that the residents of major urban areas (the county seats) were more likely to endorse the idea of sending aid to Ukraine than those living in villages. Our data also show that Budapest residents were significantly more likely than the residents of either other urban areas or villages to agree with the idea of sending EU and/or Hungarian aid to Ukraine.

The attitude towards Ukrainian refugees has deteriorated further

Since our 2023 survey, we have found a further deterioration in the attitude towards Ukrainian refugees. In the spring of 2024, a mere 17% of respondents said it would be all right if Ukrainian refugees moved in next door, while every second respondent said they would feel uneasy about that (49%). A year earlier, the share of those with such a negative perception of Ukrainian refugees had been six percentage points lower (43%), and in 2022 (30%), it had been 19 points below the 2024 level. This reflects a massive deterioration since the start of the war.

By contrast, there has been a slight improvement over the past year in the Hungarian public's attitude towards the Chinese: the share of those who would feel uneasy about Chinese families or individuals moving in next door has dropped from 44% to 41%, while the proportion of those with a positive view of potential Chinese neighbours has increased from 16% to 20%. The government's ongoing communication campaign since 2015 has entrenched the negative attitudes towards refugees from the Middle East: Hungarians are still most likely (56%) to harbour apprehensions about refugees from that region. **At the same time, the gap between the negative assessments of Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugees appears to be shrinking: the share of those who would feel uncomfortable with Middle Eastern refugees as their neighbours was only 7% higher than the share of those who said the same about Ukrainian refugees.**

The perceived threat of war has declined in Hungarian society

We also asked respondents about the threat of war, which was one of the key issues of the 2024 EP election campaign in Hungary (Figure 4). We observed a clear shift on this issue: whereas in 2023, one year after the war started, an absolute majority of the respondents had believed that there was a real threat of Hungary sliding into the war

(59% vs 37%), 2024 saw a discernible drop in the share of those who are concerned about Hungary becoming caught up in the war (49% vs 45%).

Figure 4

There is a threat that Hungary will be dragged into the Russia-Ukraine war

	FULLY DISAGREE	RATHER DISAGREE	RATHER AGREE	FULLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW/NO ANSWER
2023	10%	27%	42%	17%	4%
2024	12%	33%	41%	8%	6%

In the spring of 2024, the respective shares of respondents who did not think that there was an actual war threat and those who were apprehensive about the possibility of war were relatively similar among government party and opposition voters. However, among government party supporters, those who are actually wary of the geopolitical threat were in a slight majority (53% vs 44%), while among opposition voters, the two antithetical views were tied (48% vs 48%). On this issue, the type of municipality that respondents lived in was decisive in terms of perceptions: while in Budapest merely a third of respondents (33%) said that Hungary being embroiled in the war is a possible scenario, in the smaller towns and villages half of the respondents (48% and 53%) thought so, and in the larger urban areas outside Budapest (the so-called county seats), the share or those concerned about the possibility of war was even higher at 60%.

The share of respondents who believe that the EU sanctions against Russia have backfired is just as high as the share of those who think that the sanctions have hurt both sides equally

The public's assessment of the EU's sanctions policies was roughly the same in 2024 as it had been a year earlier. **Four out of ten respondents (40%) said that the sanctions have backfired and have hurt the EU economy more than Russia (in 2023, 44% had said this). Roughly the same proportion said that the sanctions have hurt Russia and the EU to the same degree (41% in 2024 and 37% in 2023).** In both years, slightly over ten percent of respondents assessed that the sanctions had hurt the Russian economy more (11% in 2023 and 12% in 2024).

Fidesz supporters are more likely to anticipate further Russian military breakthroughs, while opposition voters expect the frontlines to be frozen

Nor did the Hungarians' expectations concerning the further trend of the war change significantly over the year. **The share of those who believe that the Russians will gain further territory (38%) and the proportion of those who believe that the frontlines will harden (37%) was roughly the same in 2024** – this, too, was similar to the distribution of responses a year earlier (when it had been 39% each). Fewer than one in ten Hungarians expected a Ukrainian military breakthrough in 2024 (9%) or in 2023 (7%). Opposition voters were less likely to expect Russian military breakthroughs (33% in 2024 and 32% in 2023) than government party voters (49% in 2024 and 50% in 2023).

Although there was a slight deterioration in Hungarians' perceptions of the US, they still view it as a military and political superpower

Our next set of questions concerned Hungarians' view of the United States and China. **When asked an open-ended question about their view of the US, by a significant margin, respondents were most likely (36%) to say that it is a military and political superpower and the leading country in NATO.** This ratio was only two percentage points lower than it had been in 2023. The second most likely spontaneous response was that the United States often launches or participates in wars and aggressively asserts its interests, which roughly one in five respondents (22%) agree with. **In this category, we observed a significant increase in the share of responses that described the US as a pro-war country.** The third most often-mentioned response – lagging significantly behind the first two – was the idea that the United States is a global economic leader and a centre of global commerce, which 7% of the respondents mentioned.

Hungarians continue to identify the United States with prosperity (51%) and freedom (51%). However, 44% of respondents also said that the superpower expands aggressively. **Furthermore, as compared to a year earlier, the share of those who identified the United States with prosperity has dropped by 15 percentage points, while there was also a significant 12 percentage point decline in the ratio of those who identified the US with freedom.** Although the majority of respondents associated the United States with prosperity, only about one in four respondents (28%) said they believed that America takes care of those in need, which is also a significantly lower percentage than in 2023, when it had been 37%.

Hungarians are more likely to perceive China as a great power, but many believe it is aggressive and repressive

When asked an open-ended question about their perceptions of China, over a fifth of respondents (22%) said that it is the other great global military and political power besides the United States. This is a substantial, nine percentage point increase as compared to 2023 (13%). Looking at another dimension of China's global role, the first association that came to the minds of 19% of Hungarians with regard to China concerned the role of the latter in global trade – this is a two-point drop as compared to 2023 (21%). This shift meant that after occupying the top spot in 2023, this public perception moved into second place among the concepts the public associates with China. China's expansion took third place in the rankings with 16% of mentions (a five percentage point drop as compared to 2023, when this was the second most frequently mentioned notion concerning China). The share of positive attributions in the case of China was seven percentage points higher than last year. Cheap and low-quality mass products from China were mentioned by 8% of respondents, the same ratio as in 2023.

When it came to the potential problems with China's global role, respondents were most likely to agree with the idea that the country is expanding aggressively (44%) and that it represses its minorities (40%). Still, the share of the former was six percentage points lower than last year, while there was no significant shift in the share of mentions of repression (39% in 2023). Just as a year ago, it is once again worth noting that respondents were just as likely to believe that the United States is expanding aggressively and a global threat as they were to say the same about China. Thirty-nine percent of respondents said that China is a threat to the global order (no major shift as compared to 2023, when 37% said the same). Only 27% said that China is characterised by prosperity (a four percentage point drop) and only 21% said that it is a free country (five percentage points fewer than in 2023).

A majority of Hungarians do not expect a war between the US and China in the coming two decades, and a relative majority would not support EU sanctions against China even in the event of the latter's invasion of Taiwan

We asked respondents whether they think a war between China and the United States in the next 20 years is likely. A majority of Hungarians (57%) do not think such a conflict is likely. Sceptics were in the majority among all partisan groups, and Fidesz voters and opposition voters were fully aligned on this question.

Because of the geopolitical importance of the conflict between China and Taiwan, in our 2024 survey, we asked Hungarians once again what steps they would deem appropriate in the event of an attack by China on Taiwan. With regard to imposing EU sanctions, Hungarians continue to be divided: 47% would be opposed, while 40% would support it (a year ago, the respective shares were 43% and 42%, which means that there has been a slight shift in the sceptical direction). Government party supporters are far more likely to be opposed (64%) to potential sanctions, while among opposition voters, the supporters of sanctions are in the majority (55%). A majority of Hungarians (54%) would be opposed to NATO military assistance, which is consistent with the pattern of the previous year (the share of intervention opponents was the same at 54%, while 42% agreed with the idea). The vast majority (63%) of Fidesz supporters would be opposed to a NATO involvement in the conflict, but the opponents of such an involvement were also in the majority (51%) among opposition voters.

Israel-Palestine conflict: Hungarians believe the Israeli counterstrikes are justified but disproportionate

At the time of our survey, the new flare-up in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been ongoing for close to six months, and we asked Hungarians about their opinions of this issue as well. **The assessment of the terrorist attacks by Hamas in October 2023 was unequivocal: four-fifths of Hungarians (81%) condemn this.** Looking at this issue by political affiliation, we found that the supporters of various partisan groups broadly agreed on this issue.

However, Hungarian society is more divided when it comes to the Israeli counterstrikes in Gaza. **Three out of ten respondents said that Israel's response to the terror attacks in October 2023 was justified and proportional. The share of those who believe it is justified but disproportional was slightly higher (41%).** Almost one in ten Hungarians (9%) said it was both unjustified and disproportional, while about one in five (20%) could or did not want to respond to this question. We did not find significant differences between the supporters of various parties concerning their respective assessments of the justifiability of the Israeli counterstrikes. Respondents were far less likely to agree with the proportionality of the Israeli response: a relative majority among the supporters of all parties said that the Israeli response was justified but disproportional (the shares of this opinion ranged between 39% and 48%).

Beyond the public's opinion concerning the Israeli counterstrikes, we also asked what Hungarians think about the government's position in support of Israel's war in Gaza. Roughly half of all respondents (49%) said they agree with the government on this point, while 34% said they disagree.

Vladimir Putin, Pope Francis, and Donald Trump are the most prominent global public figures, but Ursula von der Leyen's name recognition has increased the most since last year

As part of our survey, we asked about the name recognition and popularity of 23 global public figures. Just as a year earlier, **the three most prominent global figures among Hungarians were Vladimir Putin (92%), Pope Francis (92%), and Donald Trump (88%). The Ukrainian**

President Volodymyr Zelensky (86%), the incumbent president of the United States, Joe Biden (85%), and the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen (82%), all boasted a name recognition in excess of 80%. The French President Emmanuel Macron is also widely known (77%) to Hungarians. With two exceptions, there has been no significant change as compared to 2023 in the name recognition of those at the top of the ranking: Ursula von der Leyen's name recognition has increased by nine percentage points, while that of the French president is four percentage points higher now than it had been a year earlier.

Outside the top seven most recognised global figures, the name recognition of the remaining prominent global leaders was below 70%. A majority of Hungarians recognised the names of the following eight international leaders: Benjamin Netanyahu (63%), Recep Tayyip Erdogan (62%), Olaf Scholz (60%), Xi Jinping (59%), Donald Tusk (59%), Marine Le Pen (56%), Giorgia Meloni (54%), and Aleksandar Vučić (51%). In several cases, there was a significant change in the levels of name recognition: since last year, the Israeli prime minister's name recognition has increased by eight percentage points, that of the Turkish and Chinese presidents, as well as of the Italian prime minister rose by five points each, while the share of those who recognised the Serbian president's name was six percentage points higher. With the exception of the Polish prime minister and the Serbian president, all of the leaders of the countries in the Central European region were less likely to be recognised by Hungarian respondents. Andrzej Duda (48%), Klaus Johannis (42%), and Zuzana Čaputová (41%) were all recognised by fewer than half of all respondents.

Pope Francis is the most popular global public figure, while Zelensky has become just as unpopular as Putin

We only asked respondents if they liked a given public figure when they indicated they knew them. **The most positive and most negative figures both stand out among the 23 we asked about (Figure 5): Pope Francis was the global public figure with the most positive public assessment (60% have a favourable opinion of him), while the Russian president Vladimir Putin (63%) and the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky (61%) were most likely to be viewed negatively.** At the same time, respondents were also very likely to have an unfavourable opinion of Ursula von der Leyen (49%).

The former president of the United States, Donald Trump, is also more likely to be viewed negatively than positively: among those who recognised his name, almost a third (30%) said they have a positive view of him, while more than four out of ten (41%) have a negative assessment. Still, the former Republican president, who is now again his party's nominee for the presidency, has seen his public image in Hungary improve since last year: respondents were six percentage points more likely to see him as a positive figure, while the share of those who view him negatively has declined by four percentage points. **The Hungarian public sees the incumbent president, Joe Biden, more negatively than former president Donald Trump:** 50% have a negative view of Biden, while only 22% see him positively. The president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, was seen favourably by 24% of the respondents, but the share of those who have an unfavourable view of her was 25 percentage points higher (49%). **Von der Leyen's image has decisively deteriorated since 2023: her negative ratings have increased by 12 percentage points, while the positive assessments have dropped by four percentage points.** The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is also predominantly seen negatively: 40% have an unfavourable assessment (5 percentage points higher than last year), while only 24% have a positive view of him. The results were similar for Xi Jinping: among those who recognised his name, 23% had a favourable view, while 41% offered a negative assessment. At the same time, there is a slight improvement in the way he is perceived by the Hungarian public since, in 2023, only 17% had a positive view while 44% had a negative assessment.

Figure 5

Please tell us whether you have a negative or positive opinion of the person
(Among those who know the person, %)

	FULLY NEGATIVE	RATHER NEGATIVE	NEITHER POSITIVE NOR NEGATIVE	RATHER POSITIVE	FULLY POSITIVE
POPE FRANCIS	6%	9%	25%	34%	26%
DONALD TRUMP	18%	23%	29%	23%	7%
ALEKSANDAR VUČIĆ	11%	17%	43%	23%	6%
ANDRZEJ DUDA	8%	18%	46%	20%	8%
JENS STOLTENBERG	8%	19%	45%	20%	8%
EMMANUEL MACRON	10%	23%	39%	22%	6%
ZUZANA ČAPUTOVÁ	9%	17%	46%	20%	8%
OLAF SCHOLZ	10%	18%	44%	23%	5%
GIORGIA MELONI	10%	18%	44%	21%	7%
RISHI SUNAK	11%	14%	48%	18%	9%
MARINE LE PEN	14%	23%	37%	20%	6%
PEDRO SÁNCHEZ	11%	16%	48%	18%	7%
ULF KRISTERSSON	9%	19%	47%	17%	8%
KLAUS JOHANNIS	9%	19%	47%	17%	8%
BENJAMIN NETANYAHU	10%	19%	46%	19%	6%
URSULA VON DER LEYEN	22%	27%	26%	18%	7%
NARENDRA MODI	12%	17%	47%	17%	7%
RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN	18%	22%	36%	18%	6%
DONALD TUSK	11%	25%	41%	15%	8%
XI JINPING	19%	22%	36%	18%	5%
JOE BIDEN	22%	28%	28%	17%	5%
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY	34%	27%	22%	13%	4%
VLADIMIR PUTIN	36%	27%	22%	11%	4%

■ FULLY NEGATIVE   ■ RATHER NEGATIVE
■ NEITHER POSITIVE NOR NEGATIVE   ■ RATHER POSITIVE
■ FULLY POSITIVE