

HELPING CLIENTS NAVIGATE CHANGE

WAR IN UKRAINE

A COMPARATIVE COUNTRY ANALYSIS

2022

ABOUT THE STUDY (1/2)

As we all know, not long ago Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine, resulting into a bitter conflict which is still raging on.

The war turned on to be unexpectedly brutal for 21st century Europe, with high degrees of destruction of besieged Ukrainian cities, with lots of casualties on both sides, including Ukrainian civilians, with possible war crimes, with threats of nuclear weapons usage and turning into a humanitarian crisis – more than 4 million people have already left the country and further 6.5 millions are displaced within Ukraine, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

We already looked into how urban Romanians are perceiving this war.

To widen the perspective, we decided to reach a similar population in a couple of more countries, which, like Romania, are neighboring Ukraine and are members of EU and NATO – namely Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

We also chose urban Serbia as an interesting term of comparison – an East European country, member of the Slavic speaking family like both war combatants, former member of the communist bloc like all the others, but not part of EU or NATO and still maintaining very close ties with Russia.

Finally, we also looked at the opinions of the Moldavian youth, this time both from urban and rural areas. It was not possible to reach a similar urban target with all the other countries, due to the less than 50% urbanization rate and low internet usage by older people, especially over 50.

All these countries are in one way or another connected with each other and with both war combatants – either due to the geographical and/or cultural proximity – all are European countries, all have been on same side of the Iron Curtain for 45 years under Soviet (meaning mostly Russian) domination, with

a difficult transition from communism, some are Orthodox or Slavic Speaking countries, including both combatants. And that without mentioning the economic ties crisscrossing the region.

All these factors and also the scale of the conflict make the whole situation much more relevant for the people surveyed than other wars as or even more violent – Chechnya, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, to name just a few.

It turned out the city dwellers opinions differ pretty much from country to country, spreading on almost like a predefined scale.

First of all are the Poles, at one side: with by far the worst opinion about Russians relatively to Ukrainians, both at population and leaders level – Putin's actions rating in the war context is abysmal, by far the lowest; the most convinced about Ukraine's chances in this war and about the war's impact on the future of Europe as a whole; the most skeptical (some could say realistic) about the chances of peace negotiations; the most supportive of the international measures (military aid & sanctions) supporting Ukraine and of Ukraine rapid admission in EU and NATO; the most willing to help Ukraine people (more than half say are already helping, which is huge) and of, course, Poles are very open to Ukrainian refugees – in fact Poland already hosts almost 3 millions of them.

For many historical reasons (centuries of Russian occupation, events from the Second World War and around, even from the communist era – like Solidarity movement struggle), Poland was always wary of Russia's intentions, even in recent times. This war just confirmed the worst fears of the Poles, so it's not surprising that Ukrainians are so well perceived right now – looks like their fight somehow feels like it's Poles' fight too.

ABOUT THE STUDY (2/2)

Then there are the Romanians which, as we already shown, are feeling mostly along the same lines as the Poles, just not with the same intensity. From the 19th century onwards Romania had her share of disputes with both Russia and Ukraine, as parts of the Tsarist Empire, USSR and now as independent countries – starting with Bessarabia / Moldova annexation and up to recent times, with various territorial disputes (around Snakes Island, Bystroye Canal) and minorities treatment issues with Ukraine. But there's no doubt Ukraine is right now the hero and Russia the bad guy in the eyes of Romanians.

Then there are the Slovaks which also have a better opinion about Ukrainian people and president than the Russians, are still supportive of the international actions towards helping Ukraine and punishing Russia, but to a lesser extent (Putin's actions rating is tied with Lukashenko's and both rating are not so bad), and only half are willing to help Ukrainians, . As opposed to Poles and Romanians, majority of them are opposed to fast tracking Ukraine into EU and NATO.

The Hungarian are further from the Poles pole, with an opinion slightly favoring the Russians; Zelenskiy's actions rating is still first but barely, Putin's rating is already ahead Lukashenko's and the gaps are much smaller; most of them are not convinced about Ukraine's chances in this war and about the war's impact on the future of Europe as a whole; the proportions of those supportive of military aid for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia, of people willing to help Ukrainians are lower, although still higher than proportions of those against. And 6 out of 10 Hungarians are opposed to fast tracking Ukraine into EU and NATO, a far cry from the 6 out of 10 of Poles in favor of the quick admission.

And then there are the Serbs which often look like Poles in reverse – a much higher opinion about the Russians than the Ukrainians, highest ratings for

Putin and then Lukashenko; the most convinced about lack of Ukraine's chances in this war and about the war's lack of impact on the future of Europe as a whole; the least approving of the military aid for Ukraine and strongly opposing sanctions against Russia. They are also warm to the chances of peace negotiations success – a quick resolution at this time would favor Russia, their friend. It goes without saying they are overwhelmingly opposed to fast tracking Ukraine into EU and NATO – likely because themselves are not part of these organizations and not just because they are Russophile.

Finally, the Moldavian youth mostly agrees with Romanians and Poles (Ukrainians are clearly the good guys) but with a few twists of its own. They are far less supportive of sanctions against Russia – maybe they fear of or already feel a direct impact on their country – and more warm to diplomacy and peace talks success chances – maybe it's youth optimism or just hope all will end quickly; if the war spreads their lives might be in danger – after all, young men are the most likely who end up in trenches.

But regardless of the proximity to the war and the opinion about it and the parties involved, there are a few commonalities: there are very few people against hosting refugees in their own country, so hope in humanity is not completely lost; basically everybody feels the war will impact their own country, either economically, politically or socially; the vast majority of people are emotionally impacted by the war in Ukraine; in all countries,, there are enough people believing the war might spill over in other countries and even evolve into something worse – even in Serbia, although small, the numbers are not insignificant.

For the sake of all of us, let's hope these fears will prove unfounded.

Liviu Micu,
Senior Researcher



METHODOLOGY

TARGET

Hungary, Romania, Poland, Serbia and Slovakia: Urban, 16-65 years old

Moldova: Urban & Rural, 16-34 years old

SAMPLE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

Hungary: 408 respondents, sampling error 4.85%
Poland: 408 respondents, sampling error 4.85%
Romania: 440 respondents, sampling error 4.67%
Serbia: 440 respondents, sampling error 4.67%
Slovakia: 408 respondents, sampling error 4.85%
Moldova : 400 respondents, sampling error 4.9%

National representative for the selected targets by age and gender.

FIELDWORK PERIOD

4 -30 March, 2022

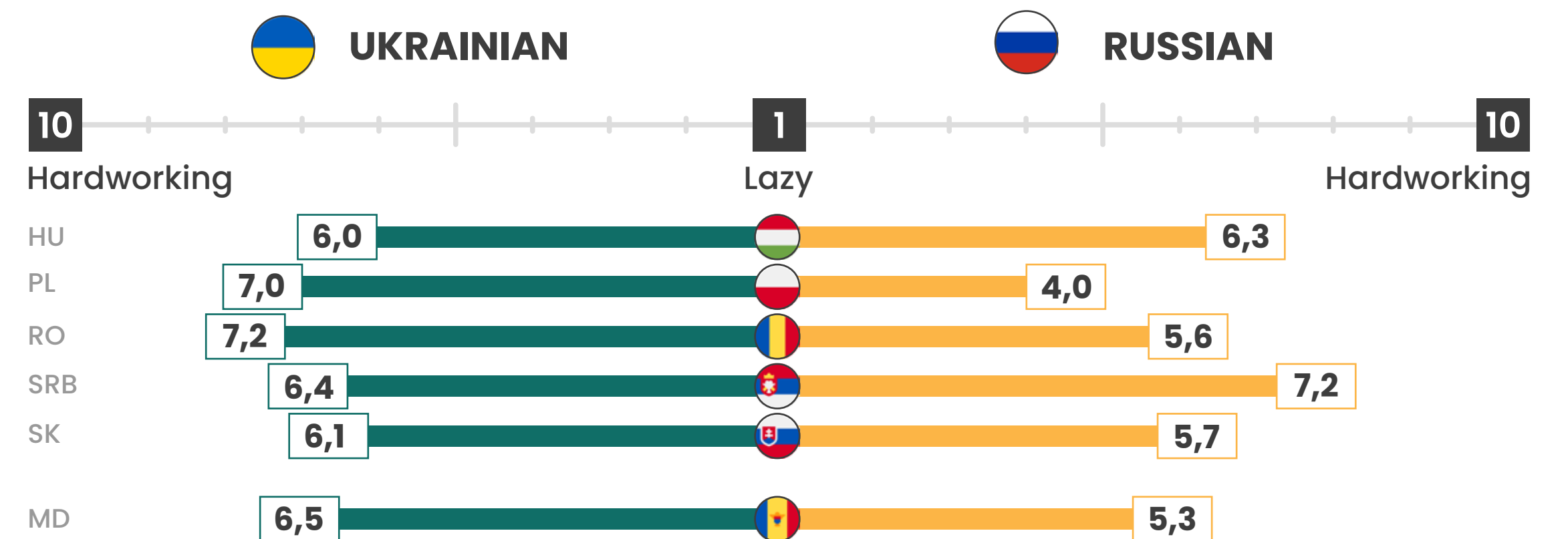
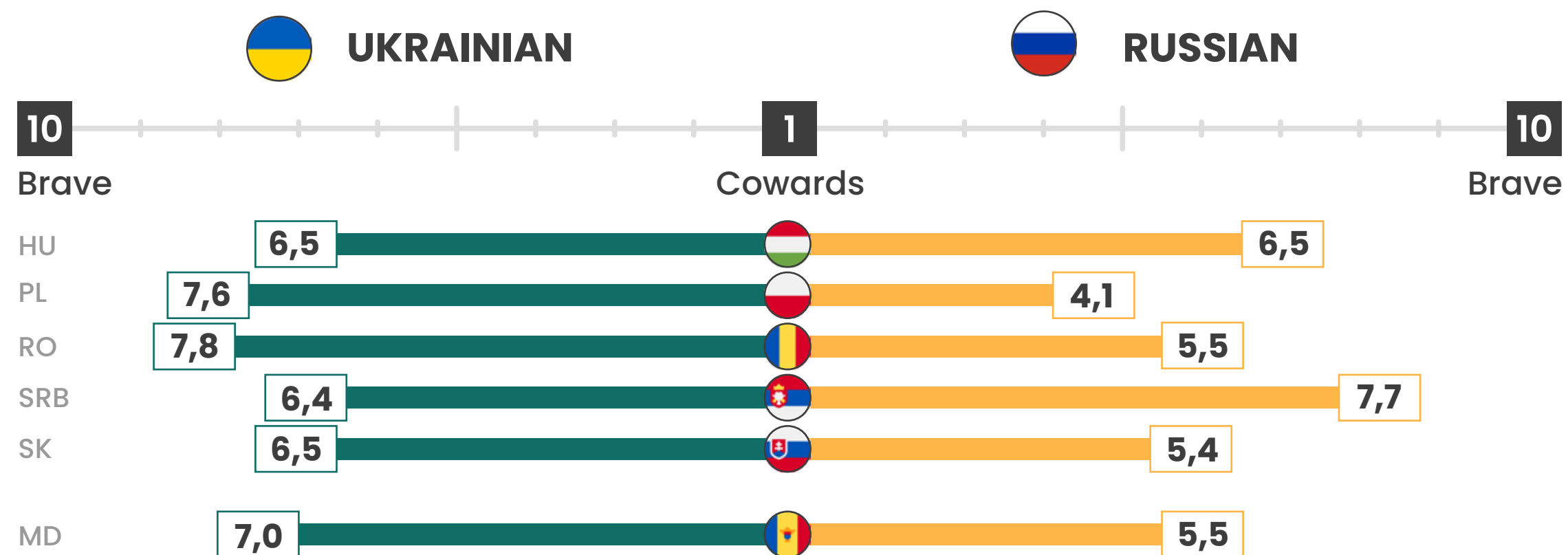
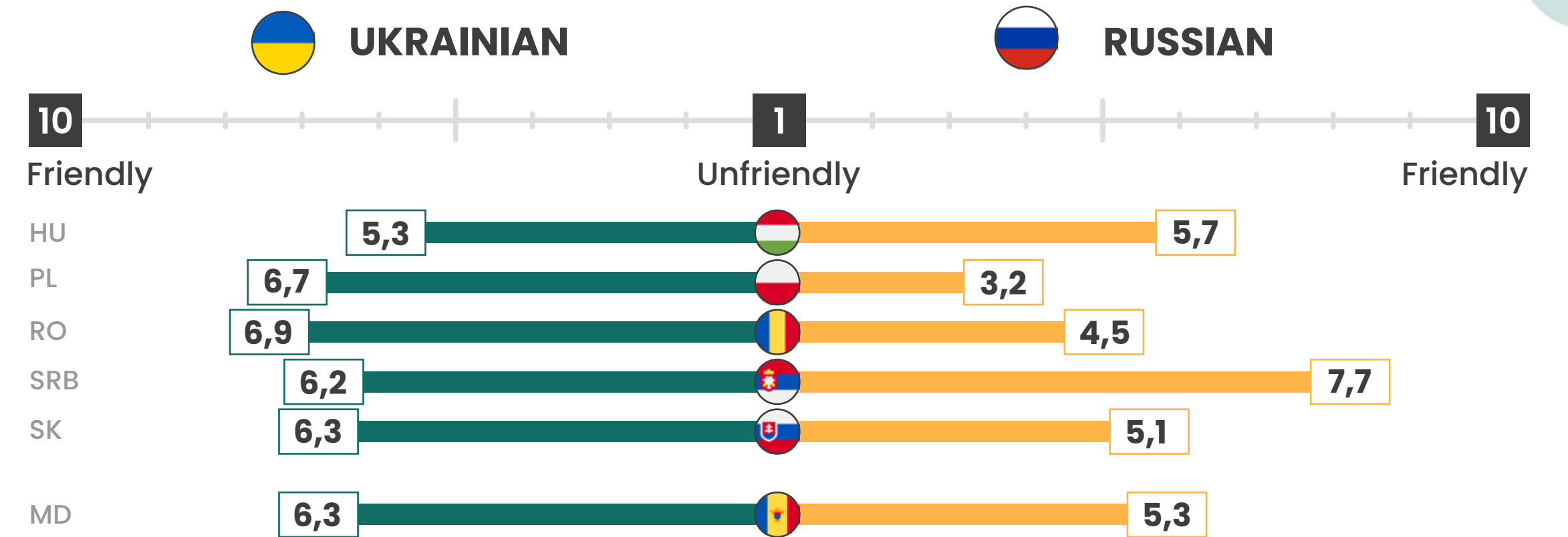
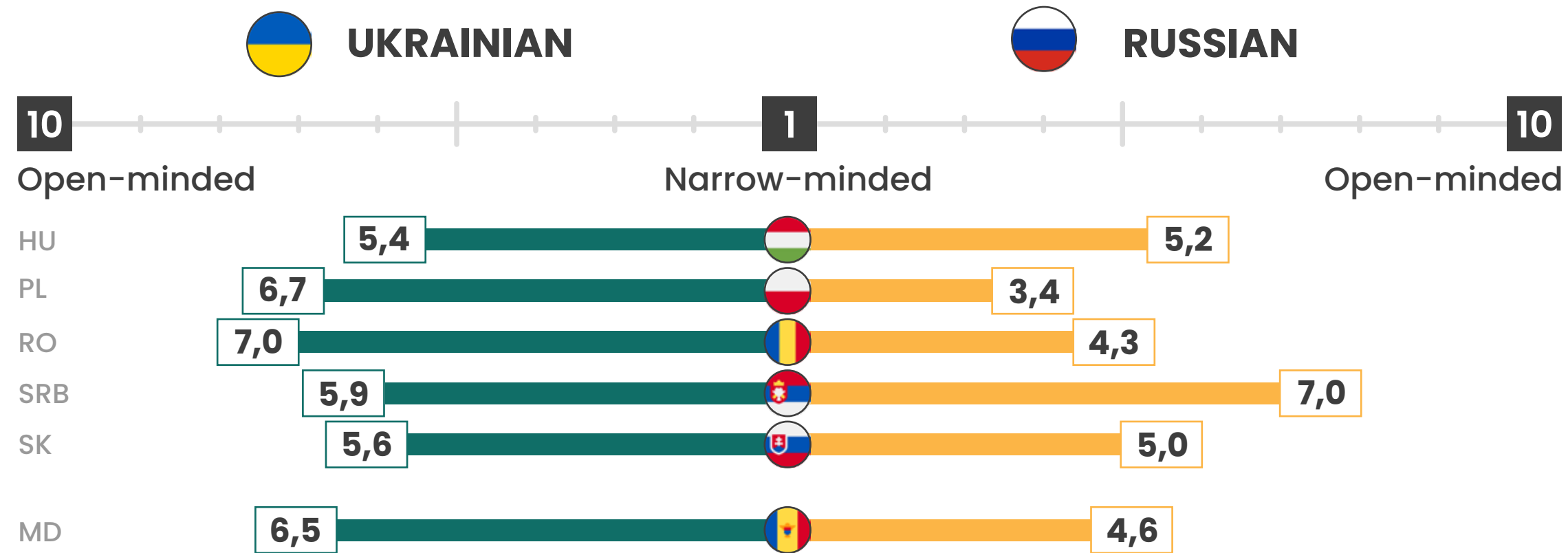
DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Online interviews

QUESTIONNAIRE LENGTH

6 minutes

What do you think about ... people, in general ?(1/2)



The perception about Ukrainians and Russians among urban population in these five countries is distributed in almost a linear fashion:

At one extreme are the Poles, with the highest advantage for Ukrainians over the Russians.

Then there are the Romanians which are also rating the Ukrainians significantly higher, although the gap is not so large.

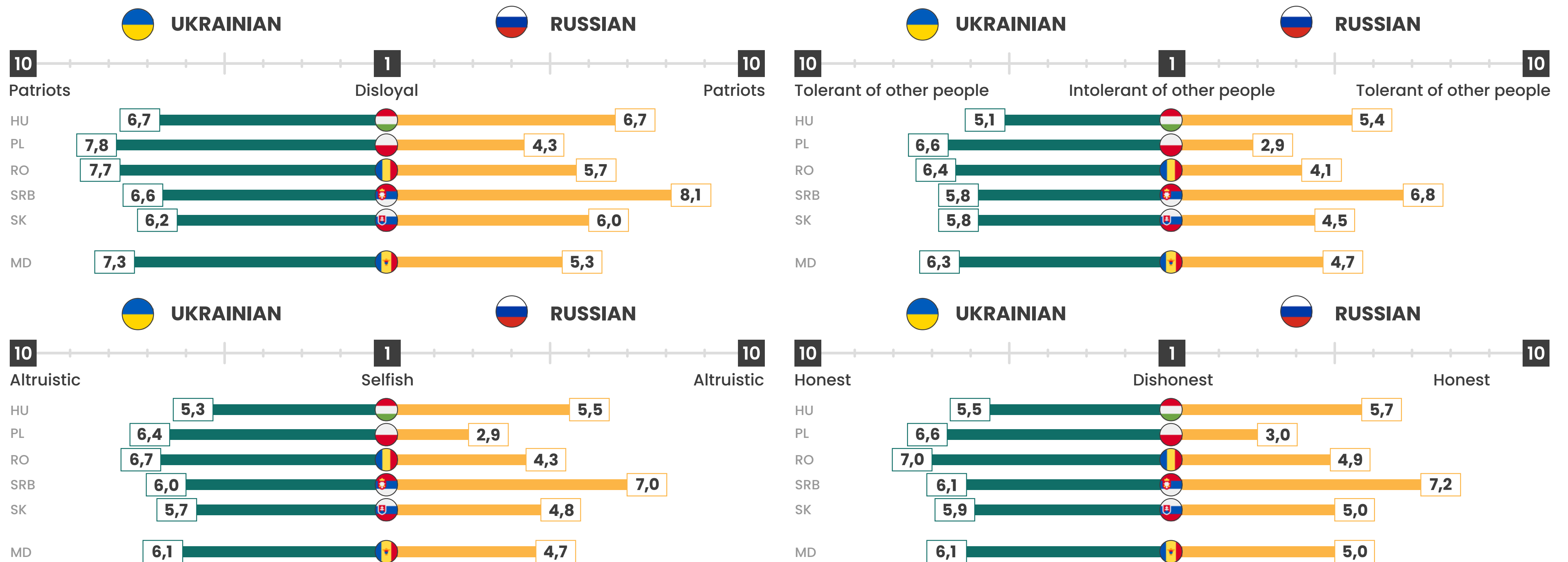
Then the Slovaks which are also having a better view on the Ukrainians, but the gap is even smaller.

Then the Hungarians, which perceive Russians as a bit more Hard Working and Friendly (although not by a large gap), otherwise is a tie with Ukrainians.

At the other extreme are the Serbs which have a significantly better (and high in general) opinion about Russians, although they have a pretty good opinion about Ukrainians too.

Finally, the Moldavian youth are favoring the Ukrainians, but with a bit less enthusiasm than the Romanians, not to mention the Poles.

What do you think about . . . people, in general ?(2/2)



Not surprisingly, the distribution of perception about Ukrainians and Russians among the urban population on these four traits is very similar with the distribution for the other four traits:

The Poles at one extreme, with the highest advantage for Ukrainians relatively to the Russians.

The Romanians are rating the Ukrainians significantly higher, but the gap is not so large.

The Slovaks rate the Ukrainians better, with an even smaller gap; moreover, the Russians and Ukrainians are seen as equally Patriots.

The Hungarians see the Russians as a bit more Tolerant, otherwise is basically a tie with Ukrainians.

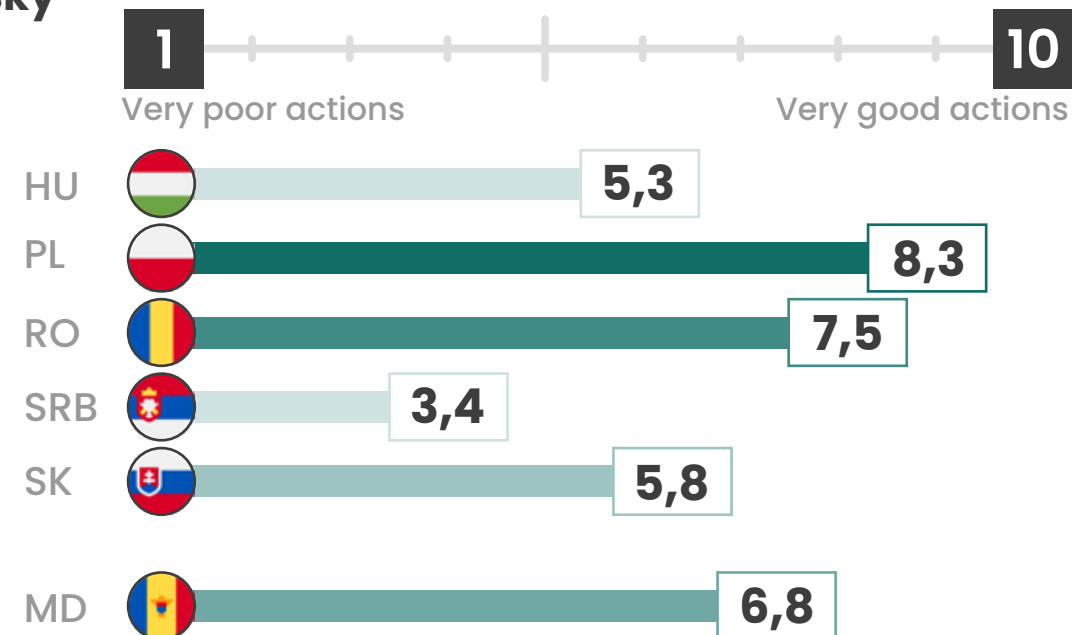
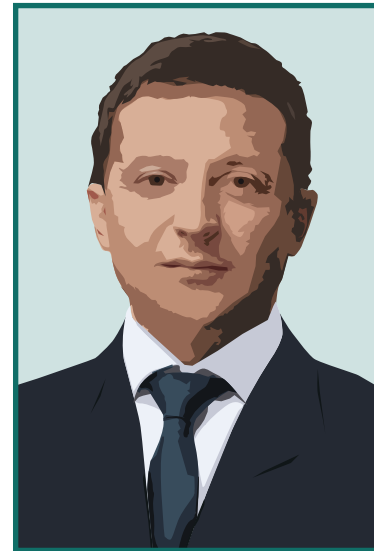
The Serbs are at the other extreme, with a significantly better, high in general, opinion about the Russians, with a pretty good opinion about Ukrainians too.

The Moldavian youth are favoring the Ukrainians, with a bit less enthusiasm than Romanians and Poles.

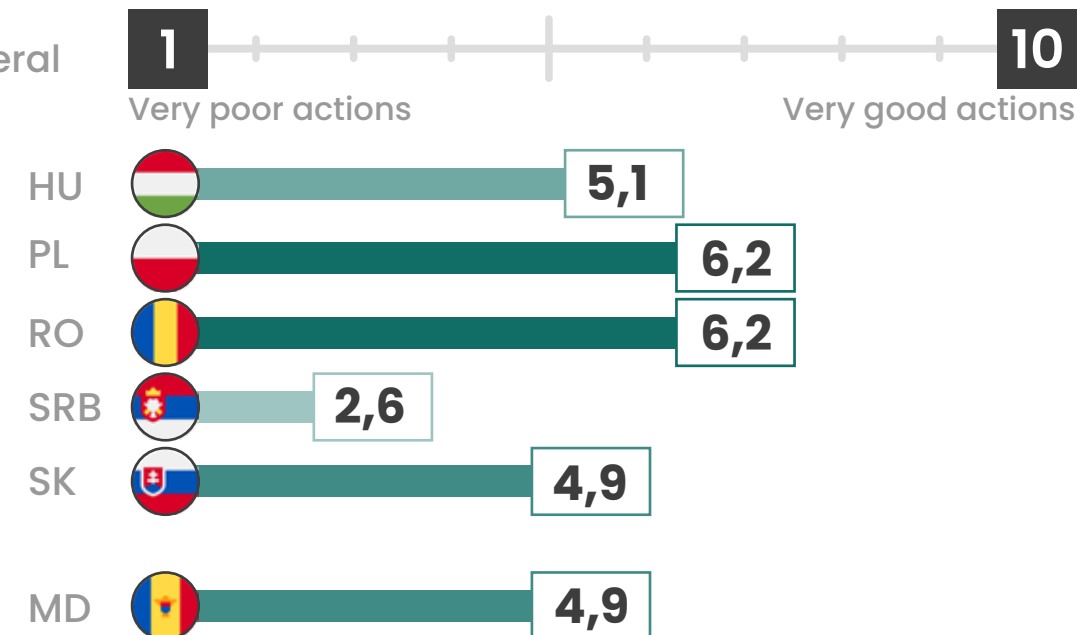


What do you think about the actions of each of these leaders in relation to the war in Ukraine?

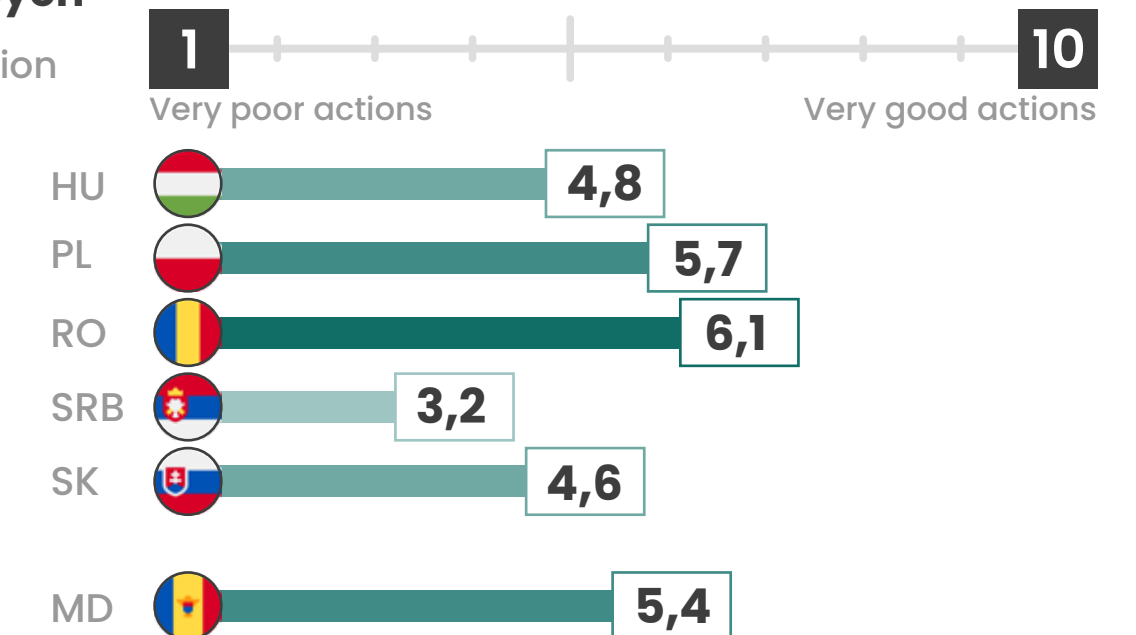
Volodymyr Zelensky
President of Ukraine



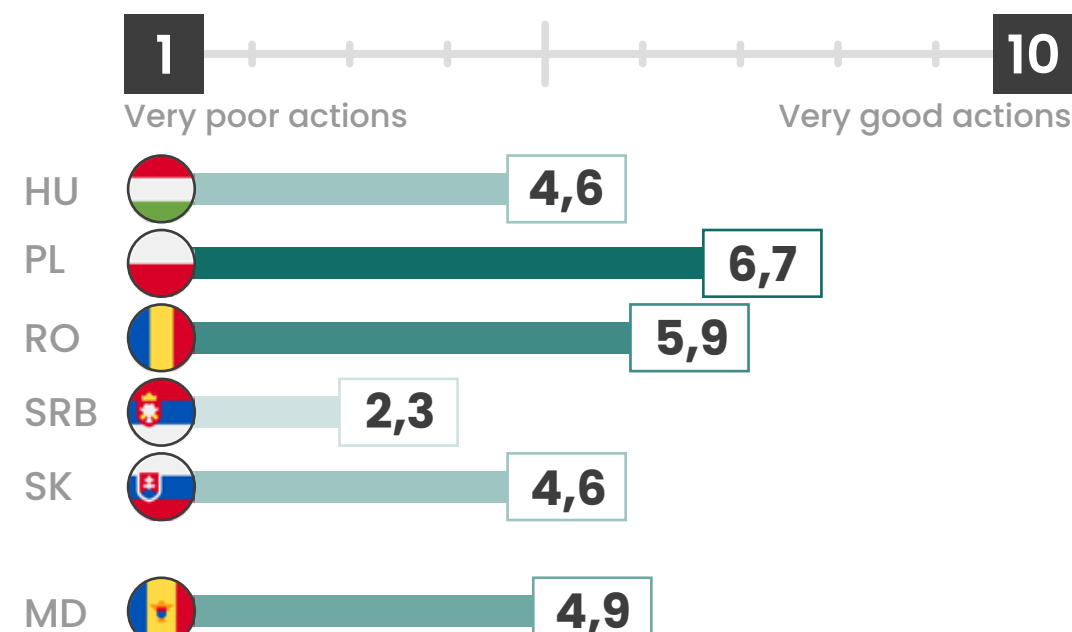
Jens Stoltenberg
NATO Secretary General



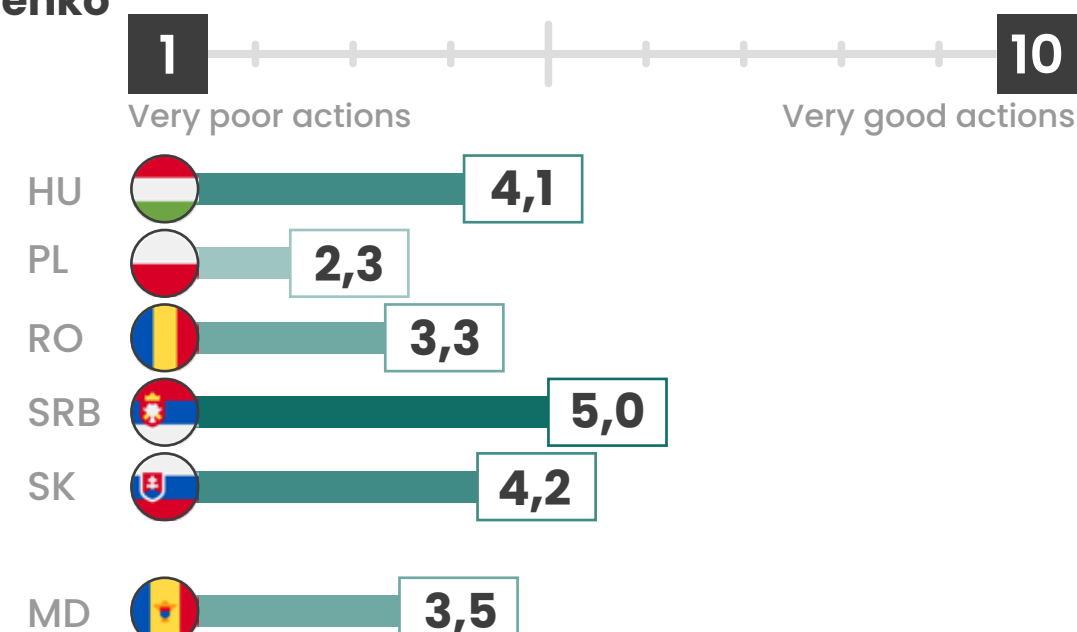
Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission



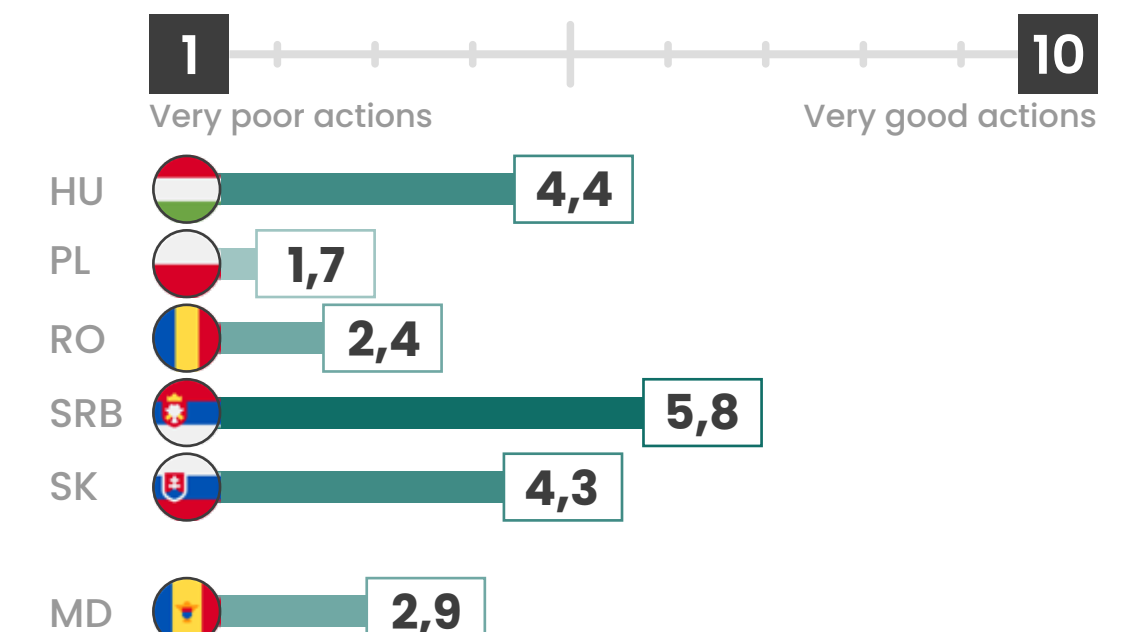
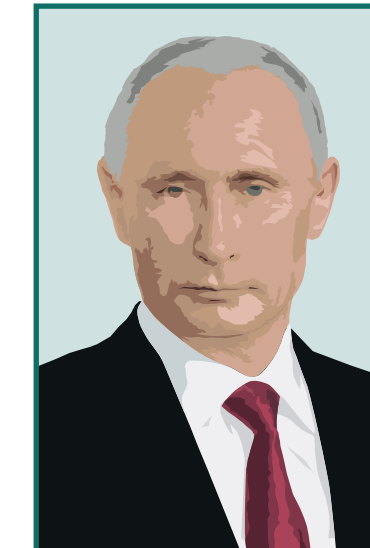
Joe Biden
President of the USA



Aleksandr Lukashenko
President of Belarus



Vladimir Putin
President of Russia



We have a similar story when rating the leaders with the highest degree of involvement in this war:

The Poles with an extremely good view about Ukrainian president's war related actions; the highest president Biden rating from all surveyed countries, also decent scores for Jens Stoltenberg and Ursula von der Leyen. Abysmal ratings for Lukashenko and obviously for Putin.

The Romanians gave similar ratings, with Zelensky as the clear winner, followed by NATO, EU and USA leaders, Belarusian and Russian presidents far behind, with a smaller distance between first and last placed.

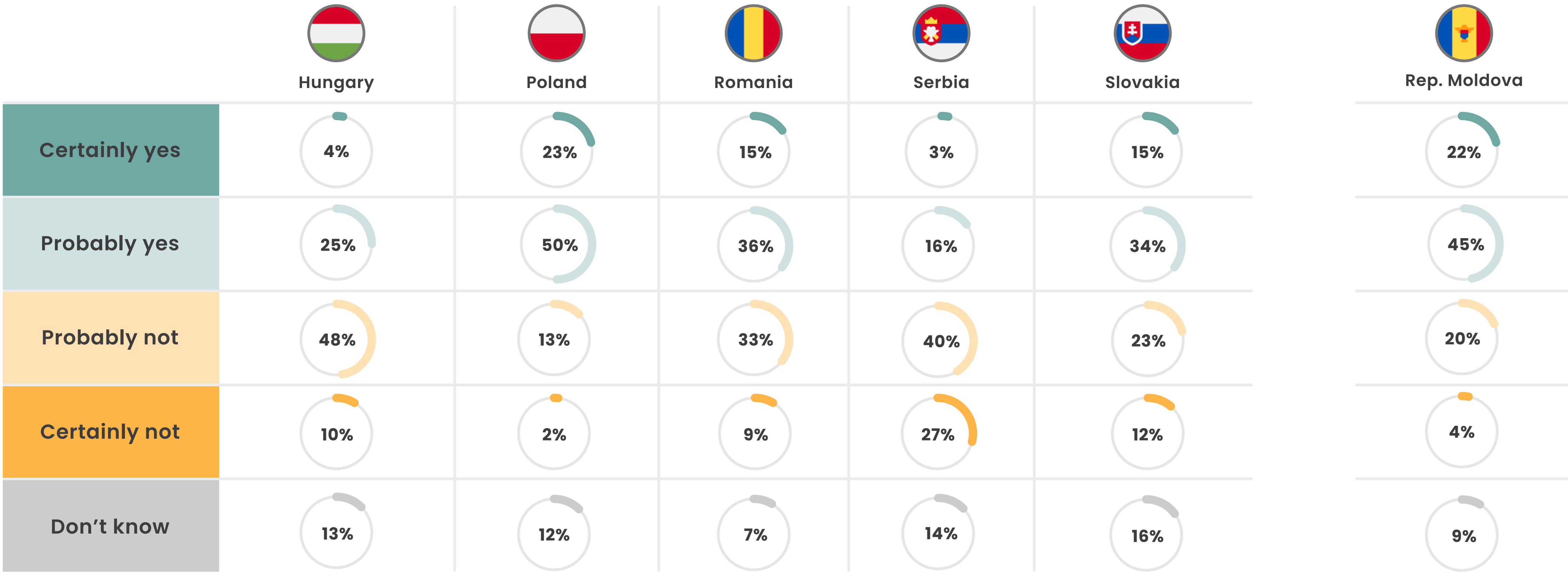
The Slovaks barely rate the Ukrainian president better than the other, the distances are visibly smaller; moreover, Putin is not alone on the last place.

The Hungarians' scores are even more tightly grouped, Zelensky's advantage over Stoltenberg is insignificant and Putin climbs in the hierarchy, leaving Lukashenko alone on the last place.

The Serbians again have a completely opposite view compared to Poles and Romanians: Ukrainian and Western leaders poorly rated, Putin is the best regarded, while Lukashenko also scores decently.

The Moldavian youth with a similar hierarchy with the Romanians and Poles, but scores are packed closer – lower for Zelensky and higher for Putin.

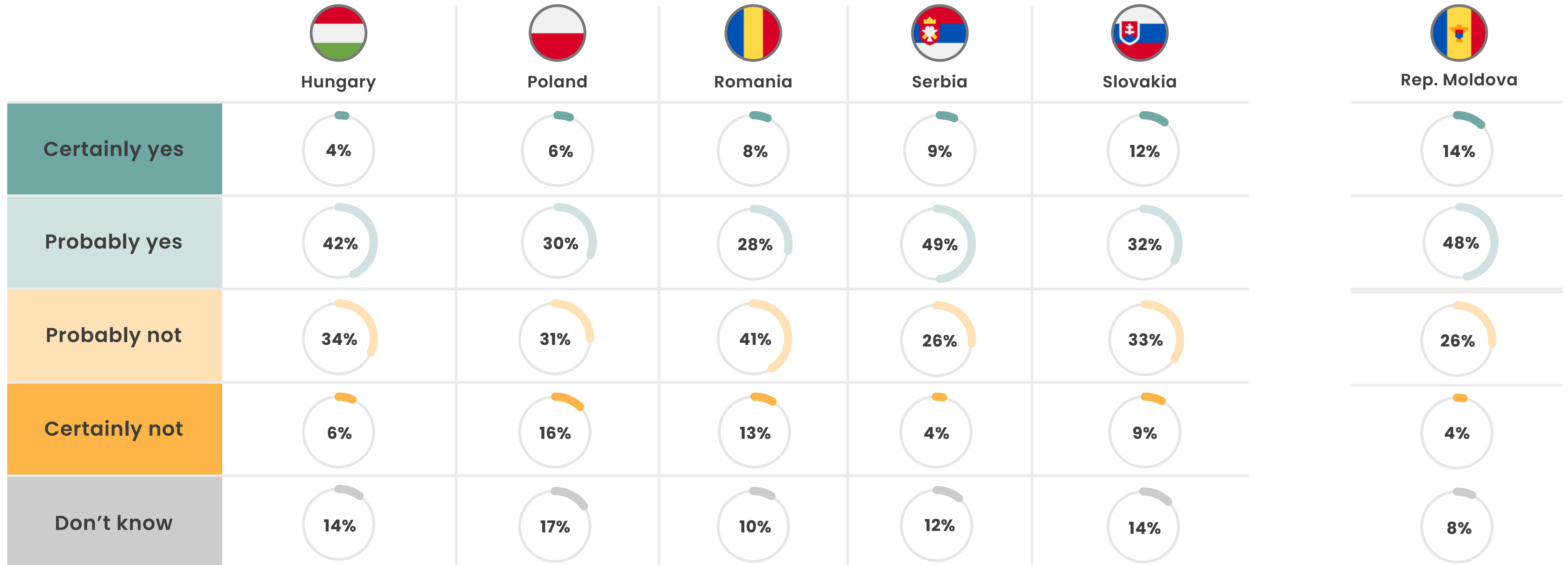
Do you think Ukraine will withstand the Russian attack?



Poles are by far the most optimistic about Ukraine’s chances of withstanding the Russian invasion. Romanians and Slovaks with a slim but significant majority in favor of Ukraine holding on; there’s a higher degree of uncertainty about the war’s outcome in Slovakia, so the overall opinion is less balanced here. Hungarians give Russians far more chances to succeed in the war. Serbs are overwhelmingly believing that Russians will win.

The Moldavian youth is also very optimistic about Ukraine’s chances of holding on, maybe hoping for a happy end due to the close proximity of the war zones.

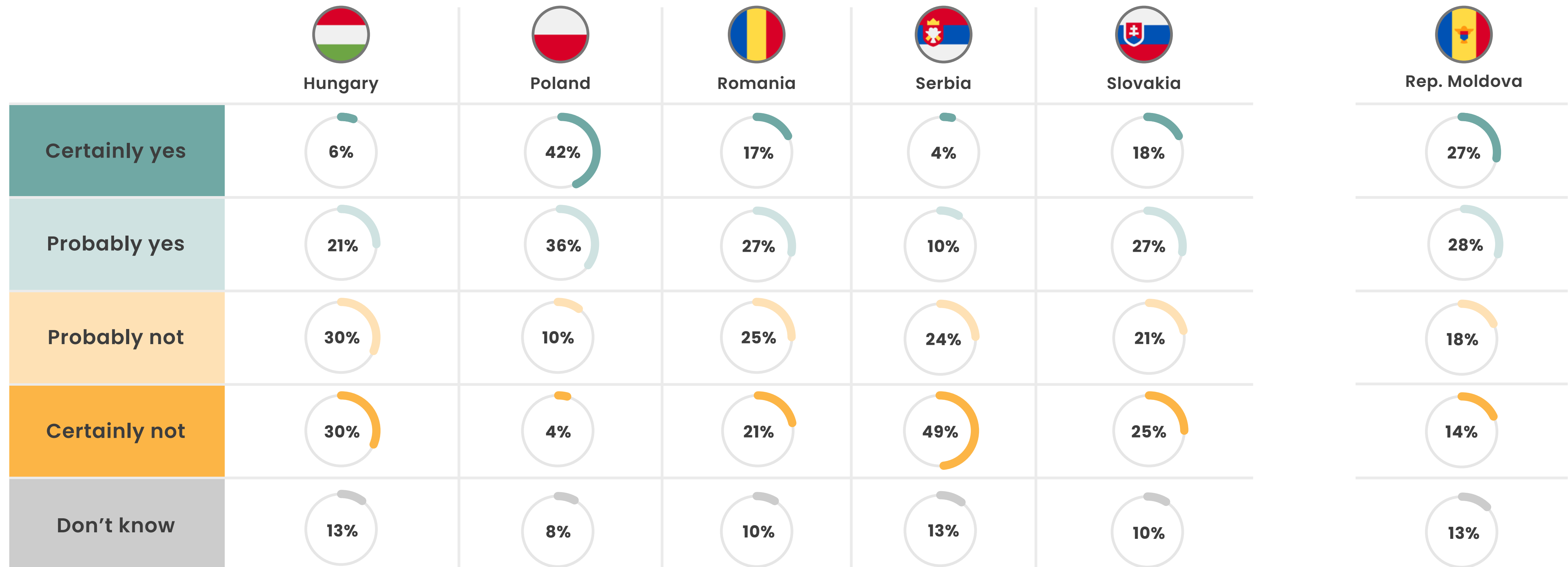
Do you think that the peace negotiations will have a positive outcome?



Poles are pretty skeptical, Romanians even more so about the peace negotiations outcome. Slovaks and Hungarians are split between peace talks succeeding or not. Serbs are mostly believing that the negotiations will result in a positive solution.

Interestingly, the Moldavian youth is very optimistic about a positive outcome for the negotiations, very close to Serbs' opinion rather than to Poles' or Romanians' as in other cases – it seems like hope is driving as well the opinion in this matter.

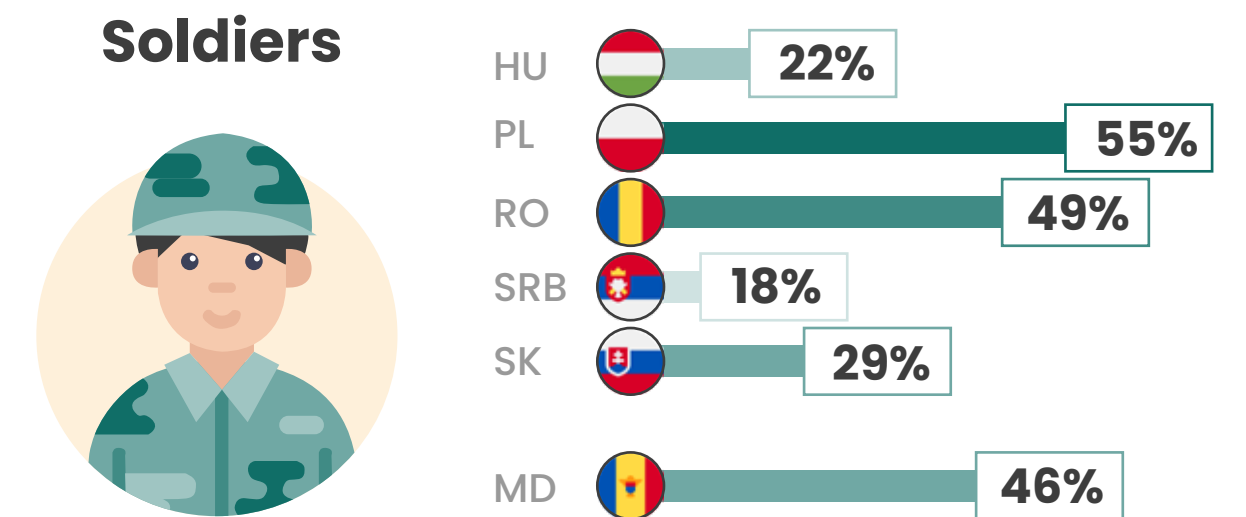
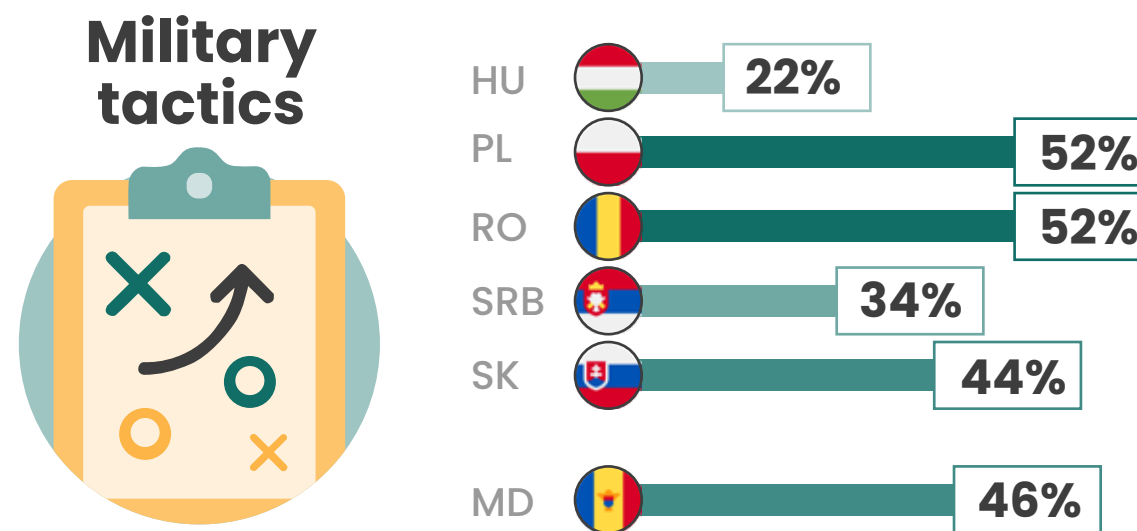
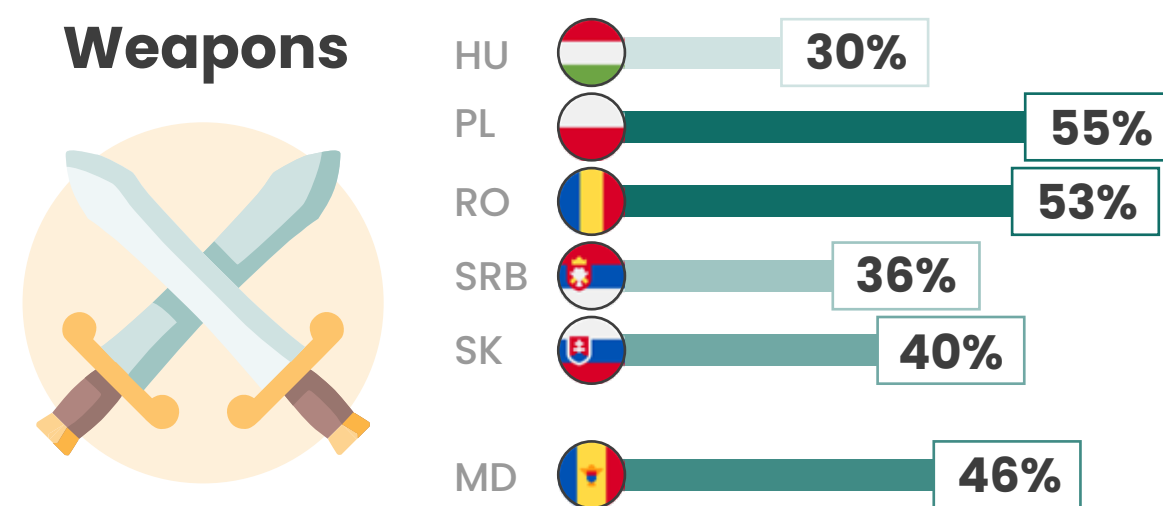
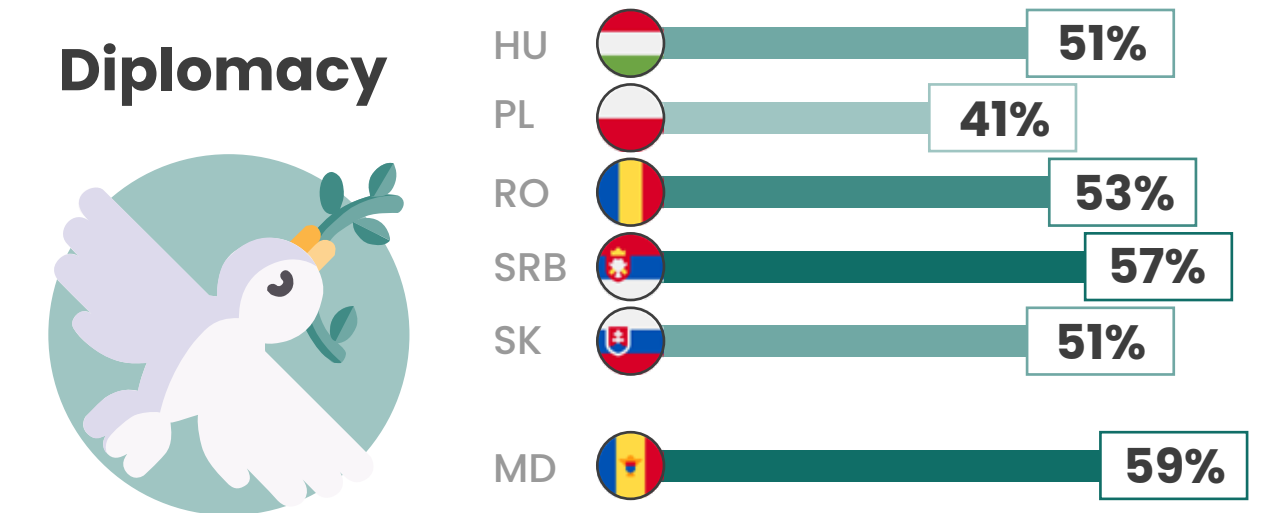
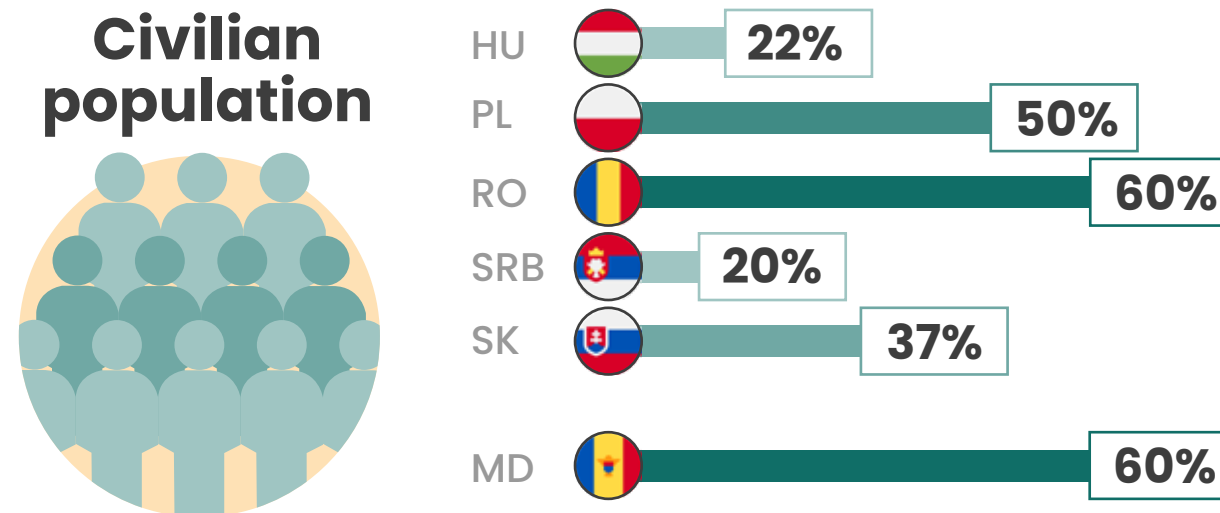
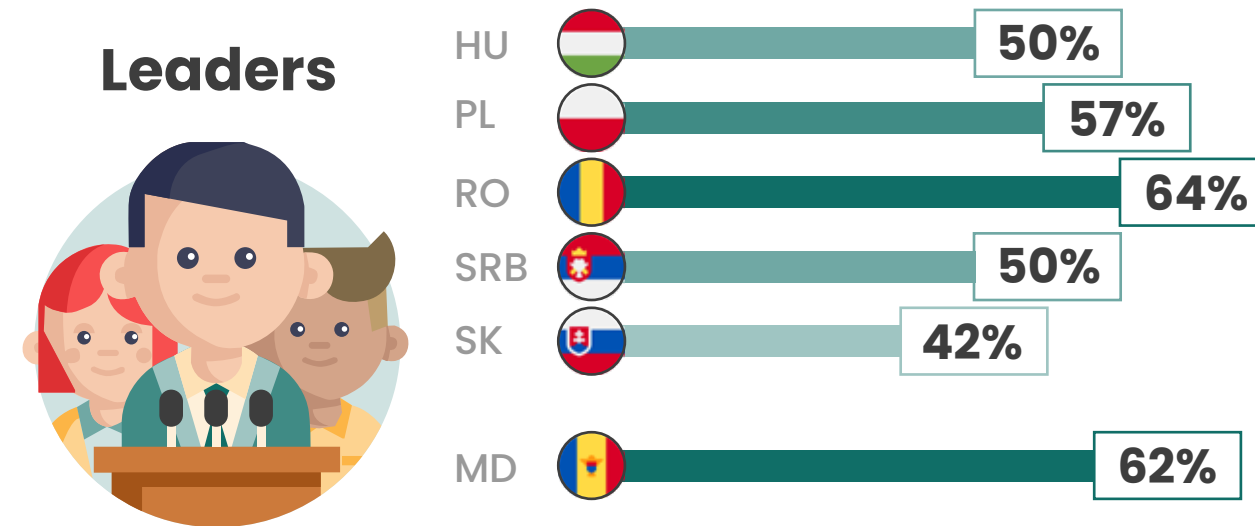
Do you think that Ukraine is fighting for the future of the entire Europe?



Poles overwhelmingly believe that this war is also about Europe's future. Romanians and Slovaks are split in this matter. Most Hungarians think that the war is not so important for the future of Europe after all. Finally, Serbs overwhelmingly believe that this war is not also about the future of Europe.

Most of the Moldavian youth are also believing that this war will influence the Europe's future.

What do you think wil significantly influence the fate of the war in Ukraine?



Poles and Romanians share mostly similar opinions, with the majority of both seemingly considering the overall morale (if we look at the importance of Leaders and Civilians) and the military factors (Weapons, Tactics and Soldiers) to be crucial for the fate of war. There are some differences though – Romanians mention Civilians and Leaders clearly more often than military factors, while Poles mention all of them at about the same level, give or take; Romanians also consider Diplomacy significantly more relevant than the Poles do.

Hungarians and Serbs seems to think that the most relevant aspects for the war are Leaders and Diplomacy, and the least relevant are Civilians. Both are also placing a quite low emphasis on military tactics, especially Hungarians. It's intriguing to see the relatively few mentions of military factors by the Serbs, which themselves have been involved in Yugoslav wars; who knows, maybe time helped sooth the memories or maybe they don't want to think about it.

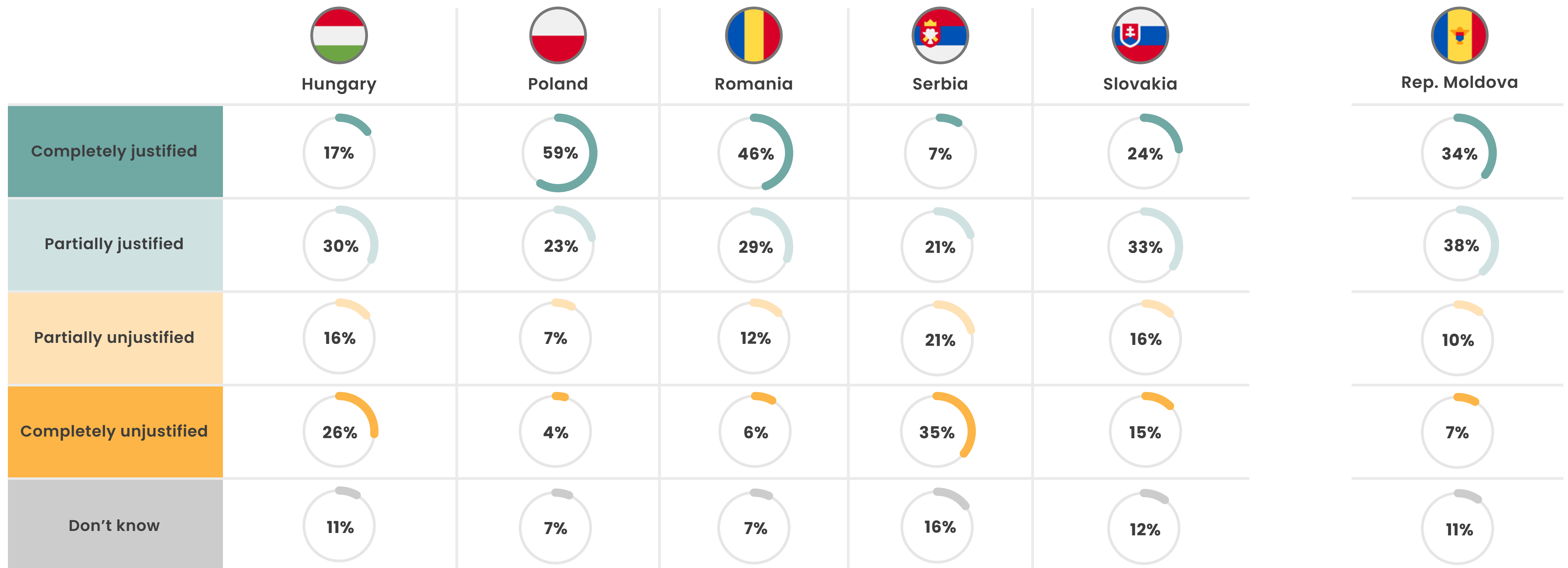
Slovaks opinion is a peculiar mix – they place the lowest importance from all countries on Leaders, but more importance on Civilians and military factors (although still pretty low for Soldiers) than Hungarians and Serbs.

The Moldavian youth has a very similar view with the Romanians, with fewer mentions of the military factors and more mentions of Diplomacy.

Speaking of Diplomacy, it's a special case: all but Poles seems to think it is still a relevant factor, relatively speaking, even the most relevant for the Serbs. The relative positioning of Diplomacy compared to military factors looks strongly influenced by the beliefs in Ukraine's chances of withstanding the attack and in the positive outcome of the negotiations.

Attitudes about certain international reactions to the Russian invasion

To what extent do you consider the military aid to Ukraine by other countries (EU, USA, Sweden, etc.) to be justified?

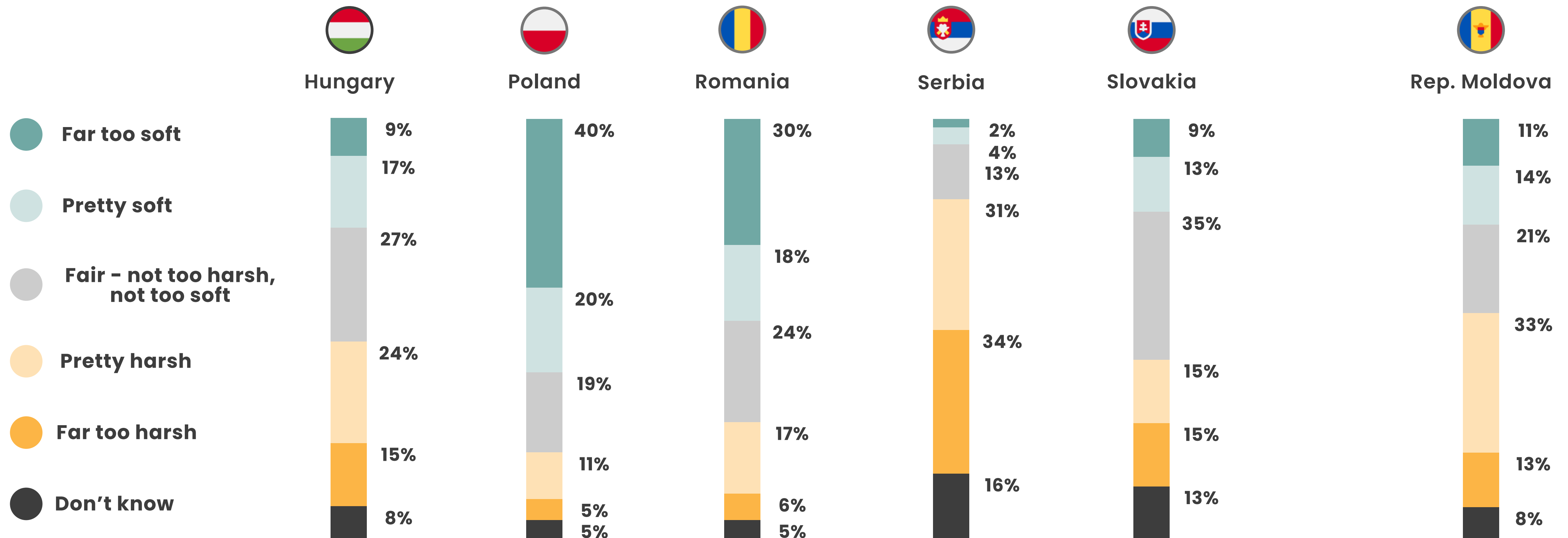


Here we have a clear progression – from the Poles who are overwhelmingly in favor of international military aid, to the Serbs who are clearly against it.

The Moldavian youth is also very approving of the military aid, at a similar level with Romanians.

Attitudes about certain international reactions to the Russian invasion

What do you think about the sanctions imposed on Russia by the international community?



The same progression – from the Poles who are overwhelmingly in favor of international sanctions, to the Serbs who are clearly against them.

Interestingly, the Moldavian youth seems split on the sanctions issue – maybe because Russia is still a major commercial partner for Moldova and the sanctions have a significant impact on Moldovians welfare.

Attitudes about certain international reactions to the Russian invasion

Do you think Ukraine should be admitted in the European Union through an emergency procedure?

Do you think Ukraine should be admitted in NATO through an emergency procedure?



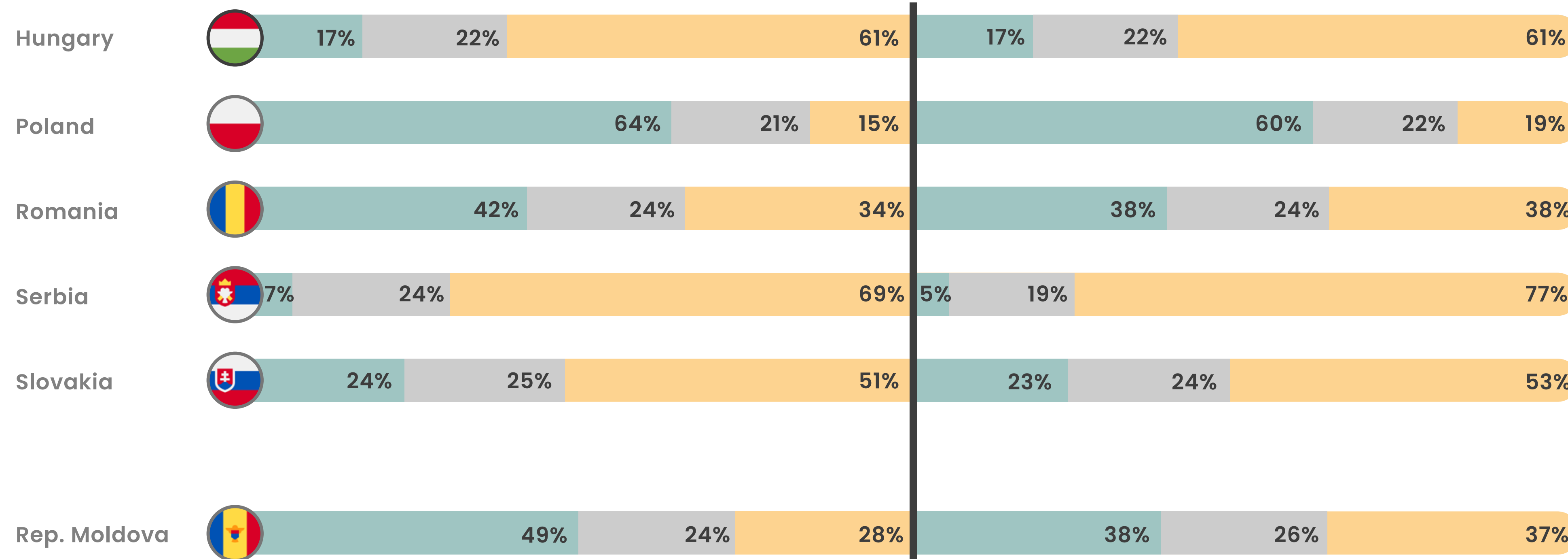
Yes



Don't know



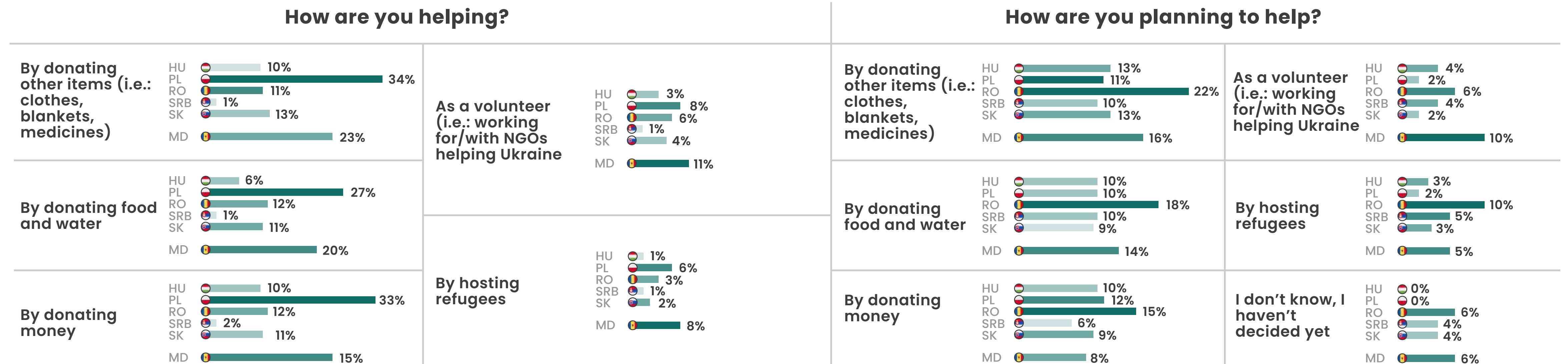
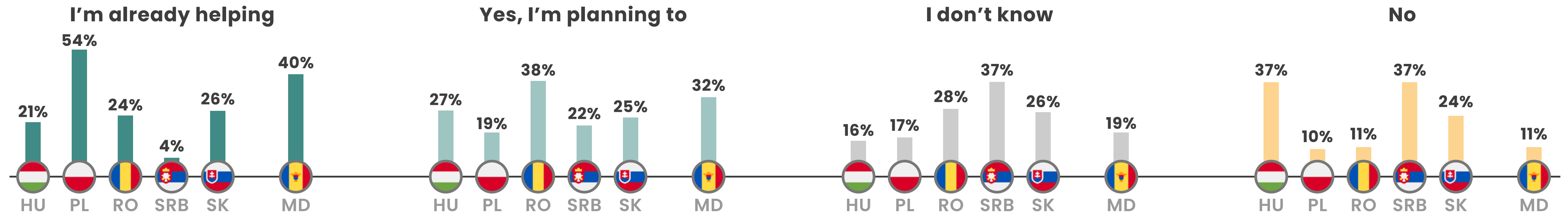
No



Same progression here – from the Poles who are overwhelmingly in favor of Ukraine's rapid integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, to the Serbs who are clearly against it (no wonder considering Serbia is not a member of any of them and the resentment towards NATO since Kosovo war bombings).

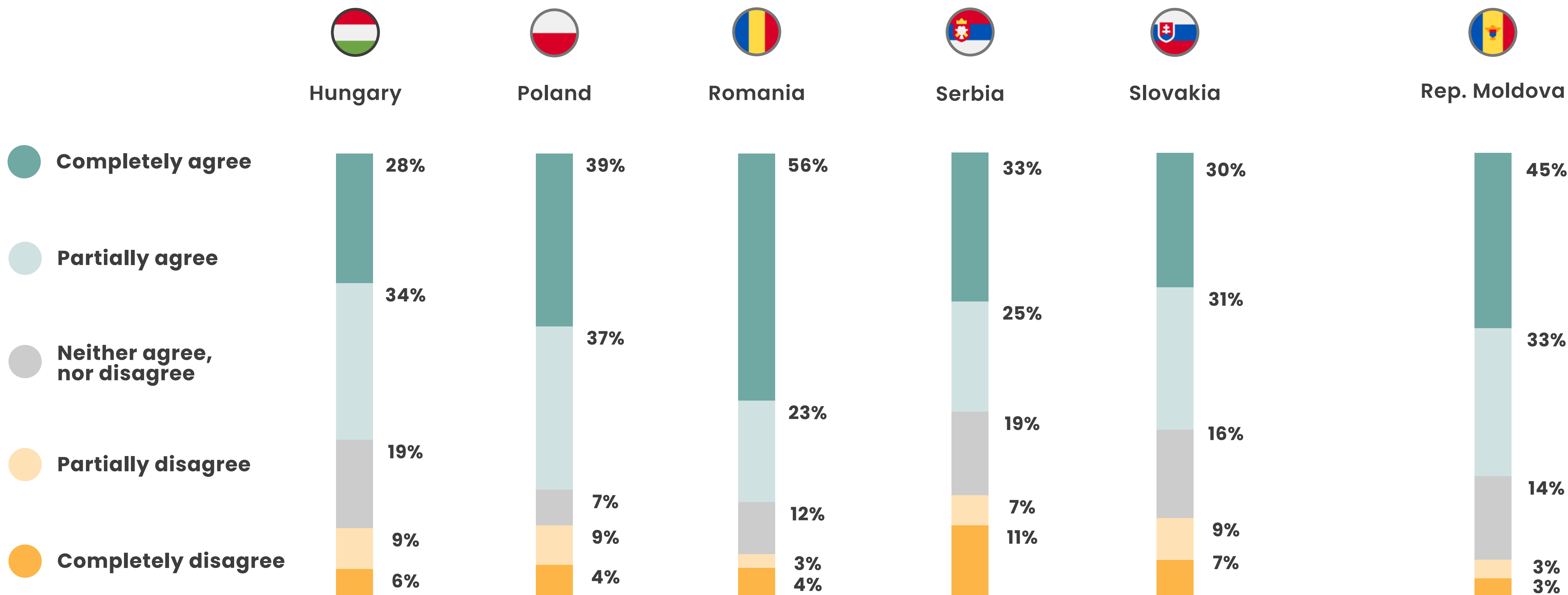
Interestingly, the Moldavian youth is very supportive of the idea, at about the same level with Romanians, although Moldova is also not in EU neither in NATO. This is, probably, a very generous attitude and a selfish one at the same time – the Moldavian young people could very well hope that Moldova will enter the fast track of admission, together with Ukraine.

Are you thinking of helping the Ukrainian people in any way?



Same pattern here – from the Poles who are overwhelmingly helping or willing to help Ukrainians, to the Serbs who are not too keen to help. The Moldavian youth is also overwhelmingly involved in favor of helping Ukrainians, second only to the Poles. It's a telling sign of the support for Ukraine as both countries are already hosting many refugees coming from their neighbor and there's obviously a strain on both countries resources (as in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania too, which are also hosting many refugees). By contrast, Serbia hosts virtually no refugees (to be fair, it is quite far from the conflict) and still there's very low willingness to help. Donating various items, food & water or money are the most usual ways of helping. Although less common, volunteering and hosting refugees are not negligible.

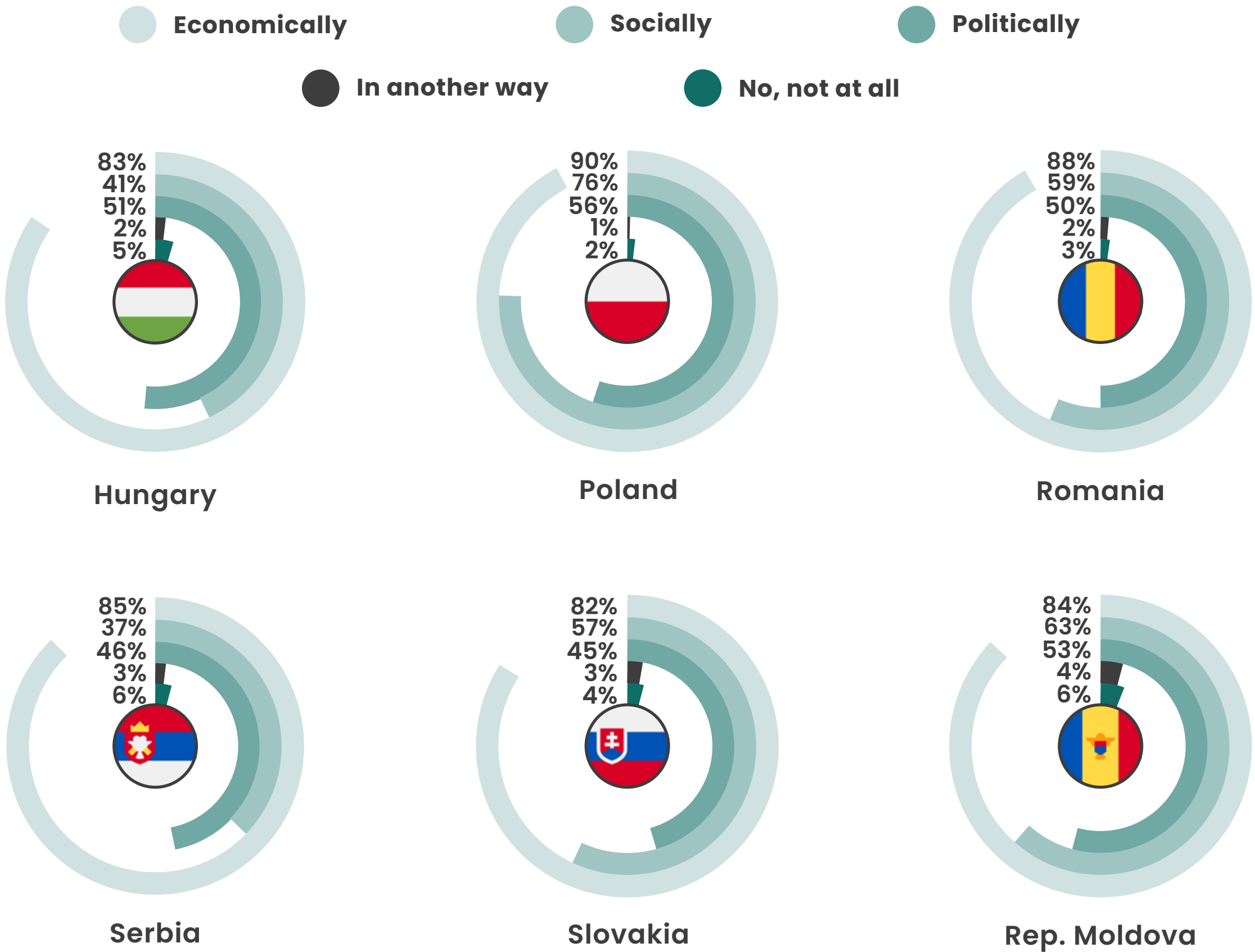
Do you agree or not that your country should accept Ukrainian refugees?



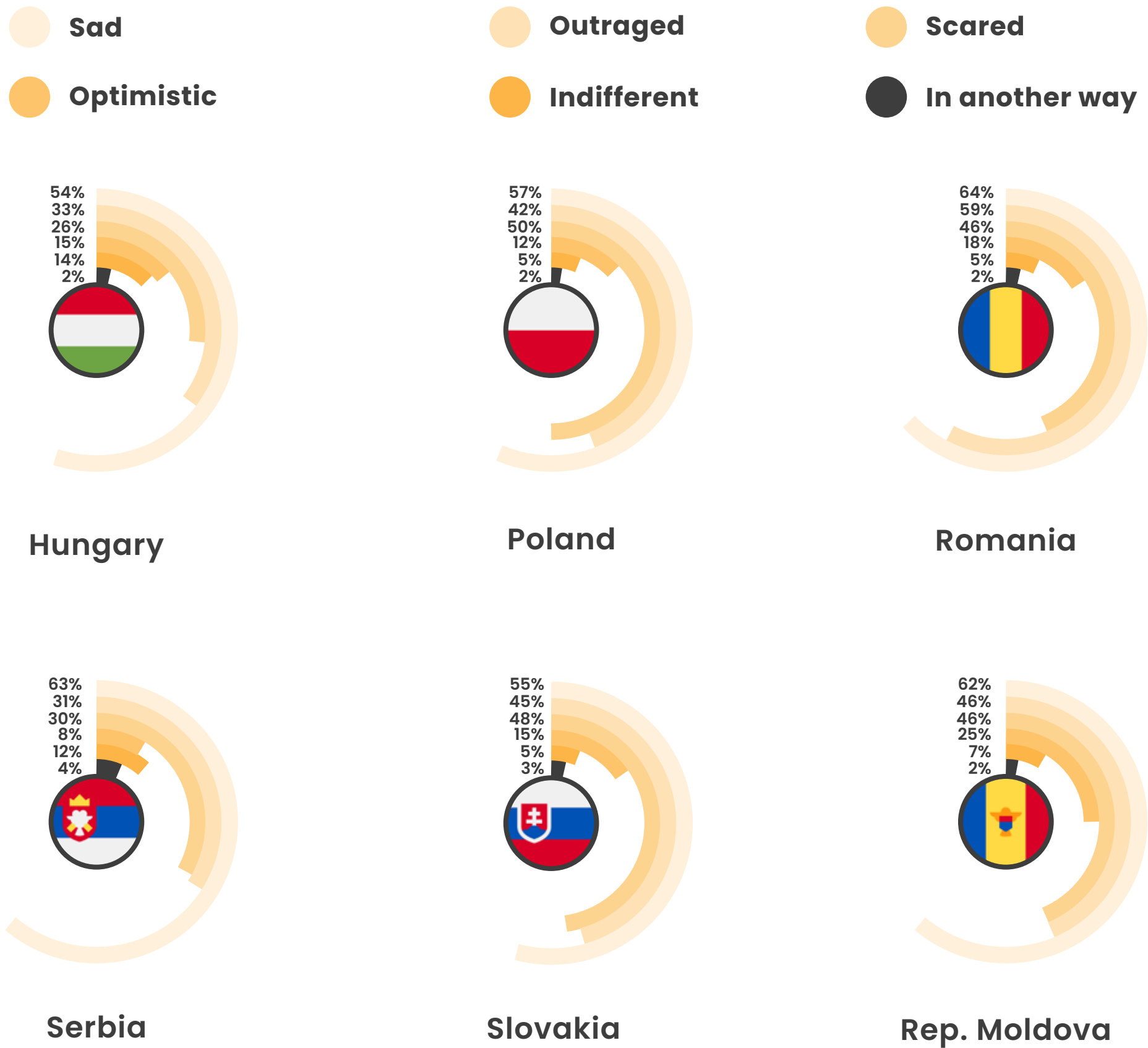
Regardless of the view on combatants, it seems like the plight of other human beings has struck a sensible cord – there are very few people against hosting refugees in their country, even if they are not willing to help themselves. Romanians are the most open to this idea, more so than the Poles – as their country is hosting more than half of the Ukrainian refugees, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, is very likely the Poles are closer to a saturation point and feel other countries should do more to share this burden.

The Moldavian youth are also very open to receiving refugees – also very laudable considering Moldova has the highest share of refugees relative to its own population.

Do you think the war in Ukraine will impact in any way your country's situation?



How do you feel about the war in Ukraine?



Regardless of the proximity to the war and the opinion about it and the parties involved, everybody feels that the war will impact their own country – mainly economically, but politically and socially as well.

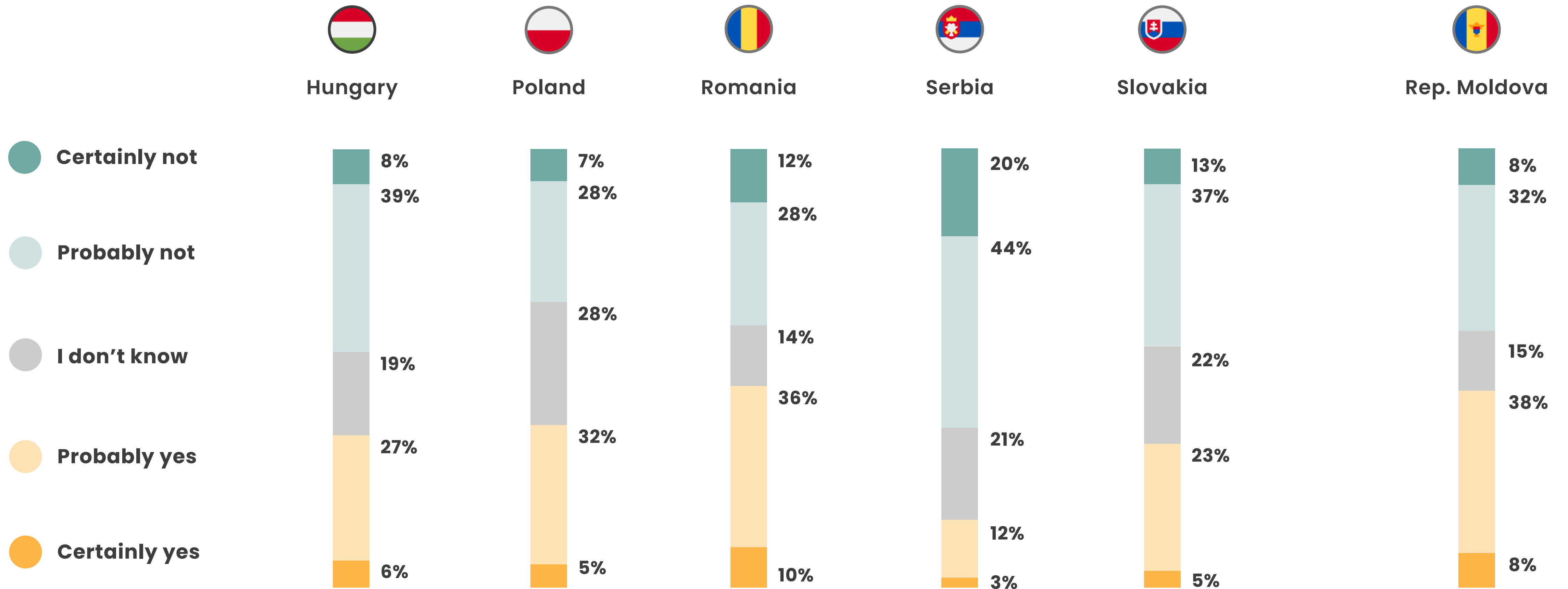
The Vast majority of people, regardless of the country, are emotionally impacted by the war in Ukraine. There are some notable differences – the countries least supportive of Ukraine (Hungary and especially Serbia) have the highest proportion of Indifferent people and also the lowest proportion of people feeling Outraged and/or Sad about the conflict.

Romanians are particularly Outraged about this war.

The Moldavian youth is the most Optimistic – consistent with their beliefs in a positive outcome through peace talks and the emphasis on Diplomacy.

Perception about possible future evolution of the crisis

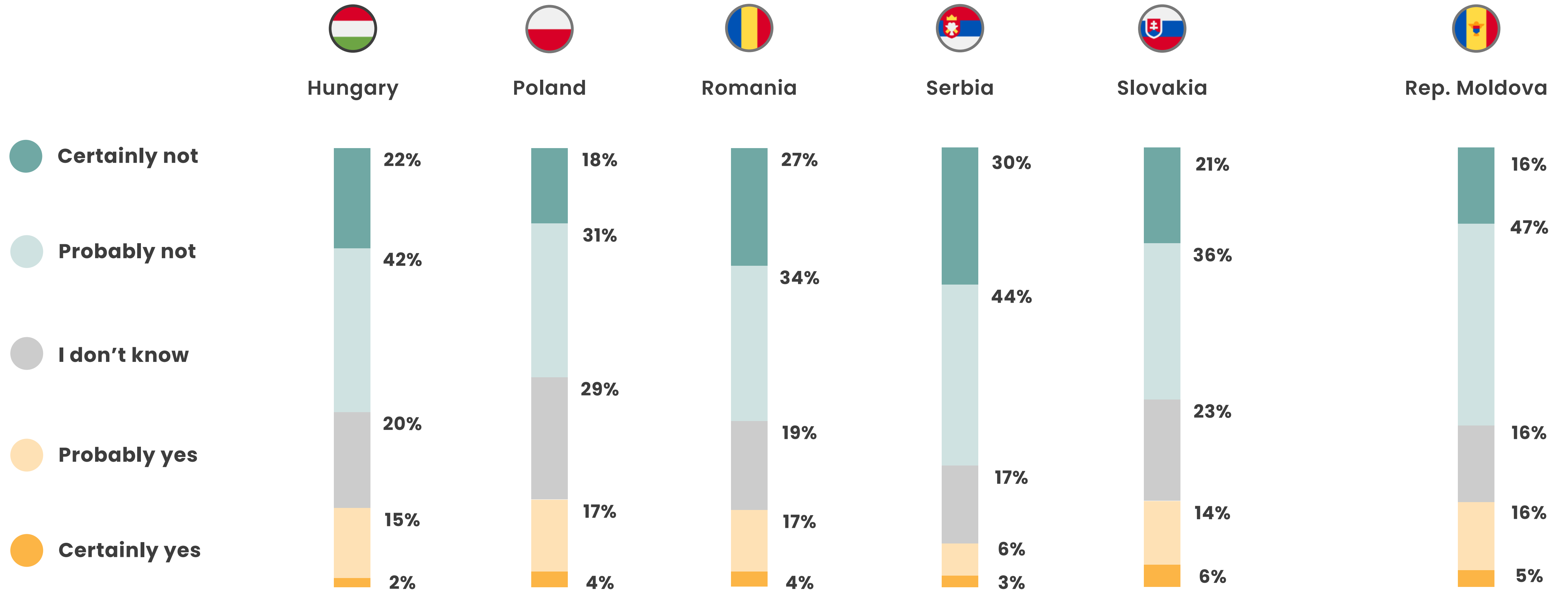
What do you think, will the war spread or not to the surrounding countries, maybe even to your country?



There is a significant degree of uncertainty about the possible war spill in other countries. Poles are equally divided about the war spread. There are many more Romanians believing that the war spread will likely happen, although there are almost an equal number believing it will not – the difference is not significant. Moving on, about half Slovaks and Hungarians think that the war will stay confined, significantly more than the opposite view. Finally, the Serbs are by far the least worried about this, quite normal if we think that they are further away from the conflict zone and share no border with Ukraine..

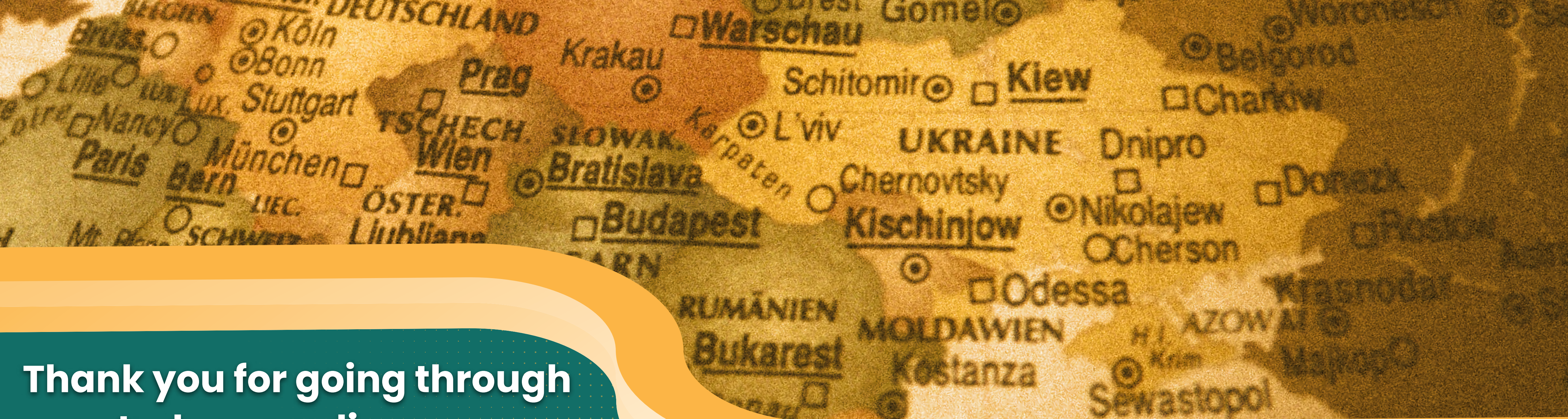
The Moldavian youth are pretty worried, in a similar manner with Romanians, despite their stated optimism.

Perception about possible future evolution of the crisis
What do you think, will nuclear weapons eventually be used or not?



There is a significant degree of uncertainty about the possibility of war evolving into something uglier. Here we see again the progression, from Poles with barely half of people with positive view and the highest degree of uncertainty, to Serbs which are far more optimistic. Romanians are in between these two, with opinions quite similar with those of Slovaks and Hungarians.

The Moldavian youth are also mostly optimistic, around the middle ground as the Romanians. It's worth noticing there are enough people believing it's possible the war to degenerate into something unthinkable until very recently.



Thank you for going through
our study regarding:

WAR IN UKRAINE

A COMPARATIVE COUNTRY ANALYSIS

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