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February 14, 2024

Germany, the War and the Vote

German Europeans Head to the Ballot Box
as Ukrainians Fight for Freedom: How Will
the War Shape their Vote?

Isabell Hoffmann & Catherine E. de Vries

German residents, their political party preferences and attitudes towards key Ukraine policies

In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion into Ukraine, profoundly altering EU policies and politics. The European Union and its member states have strongly supported Ukraine in its defence.

During the early stages of the war, the German government faced renewed pressure to demonstrate effective leadership amid concerns that it delivered too little, too late. The country's close economic ties to Russia, coupled with a political identity on the left that has historically favoured appeasement and pacifism, were cited as potential reasons for the government's perceived lack of decisiveness.

Against the backdrop of the upcoming European parliamentary elections, this report focuses on the correlation in Germany between individuals' political party preferences and their stance on seven key Ukraine-related policy issues:

1. *Does the European Union need a common defence policy?*
2. *Should the EU support Ukraine by delivering weapons?*
3. *Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine?*
4. *Should the EU accept Ukraine as a member state in the coming years?*

5. *Should the EU become more energy independent of Russia even if that means prices are rising even further?*
6. *Do you think economic and financial sanctions on Russia are effective or ineffective?*
7. *Do you think the reconstruction of Ukraine will be an economic opportunity or an economic burden for the EU?*

For each question, we provide an overview of the general distribution in Germany, followed by a breakdown according to political party preferences. These findings stem from a survey conducted in December 2023, encompassing nearly 13,000 EU citizens. Our dataset is representative of the EU as a whole and, more specifically, of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Spain. In Germany, we interviewed 1,834 citizens.

Please note

This report “*Germany, the War and the Vote*” is part of *an eight-part series*.

Part 1

- [The War and the Vote](#)

explores the relationship between political orientation and support for Ukraine-related policies across the EU and in seven member states.

Parts 2-8

Part 1 is complemented by *seven country reports*, each examining the correlation between political party preferences and the same set of Ukraine-related questions:

- [Belgium, the War and the Vote](#)
- [France, the War and the Vote](#)
- Germany, the War and the Vote
- [Italy, the War and the Vote](#)
- [The Netherlands, the War and the Vote](#)
- [Poland, the War and the Vote](#)
- [Spain, the War and the Vote](#)

An overview:

1. *Which political party – if any – do you feel close to?*

General distribution (GD) in Germany

2. *Does the European Union need a common defence policy?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

3. *Should the EU support Ukraine by delivering weapons?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

4. *Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

5. *Should the EU accept Ukraine as a member state in the coming years?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

6. *Should the EU become more energy independent of Russia even if that means prices are rising even further?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

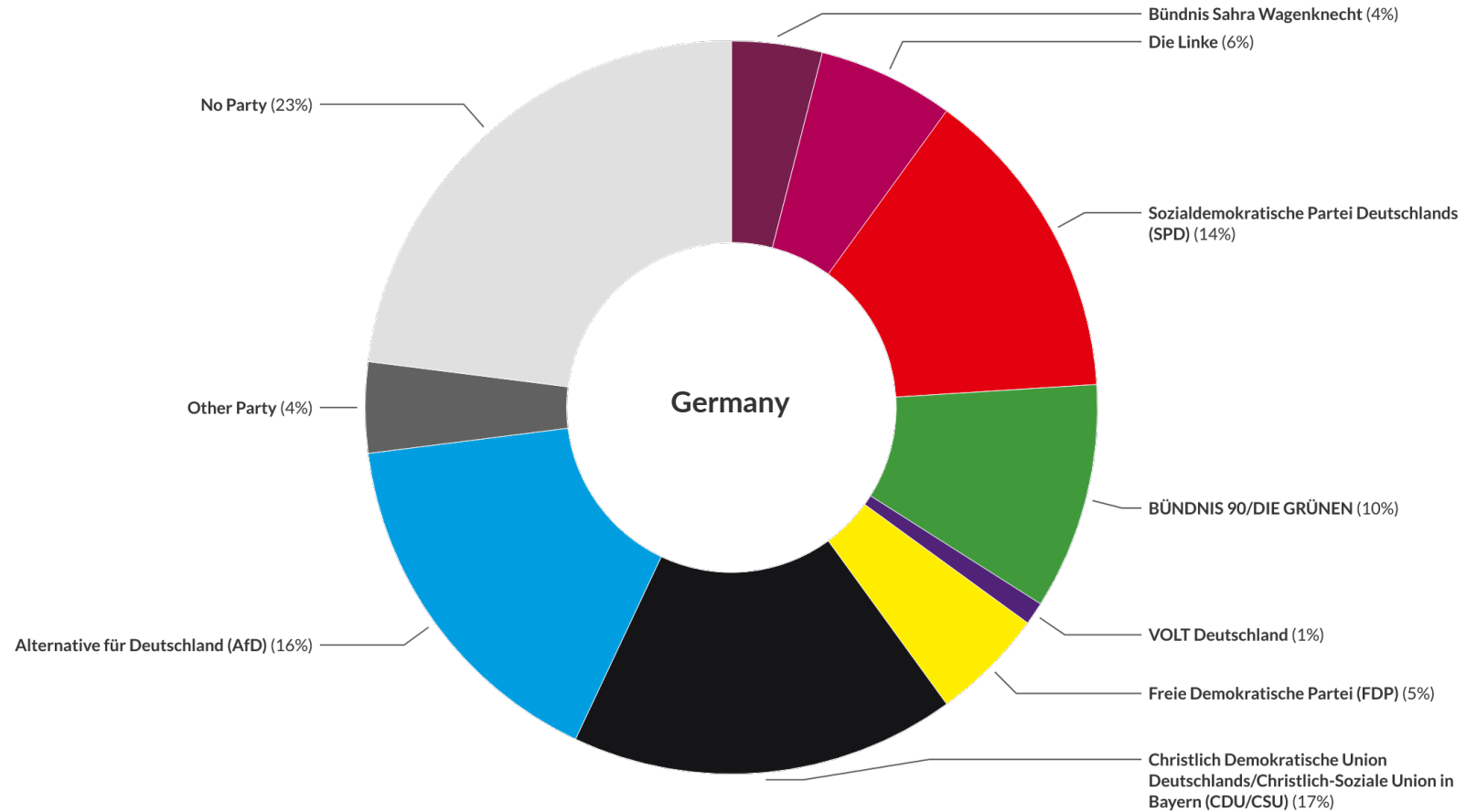
7. *Do you think economic and financial sanctions on Russia are effective or ineffective?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

8. *Do you think the reconstruction of Ukraine will be an economic opportunity or an economic burden for the EU?*

GD in Germany and by political party preferences

Germany: Which political party – if any – do you feel close to?



December 2023

Germany: Does the European Union need a common defence policy? By political party preferences

Agree Disagree

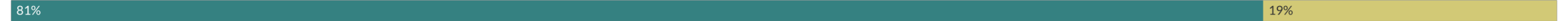
Germany

All



Parties - Germany

Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht



Die Linke



SPD



BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN



VOLT Deutschland



FDP



CDU/CSU



AfD



Other Party

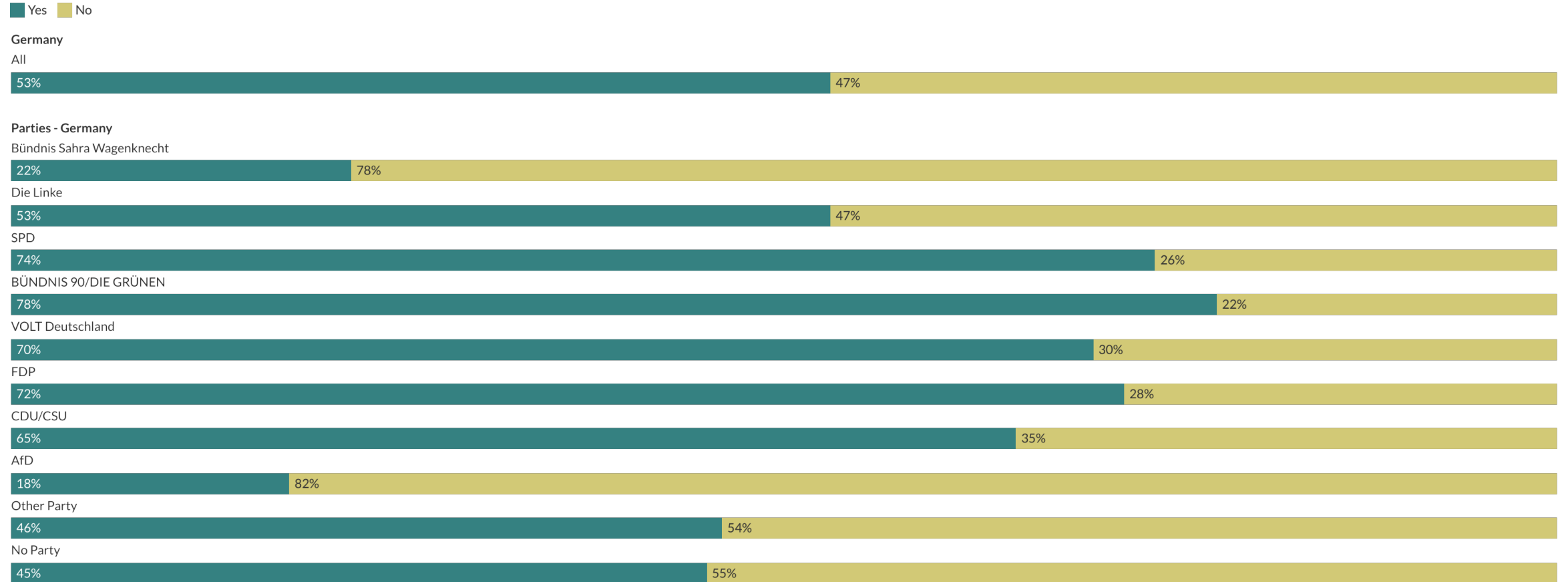


No Party



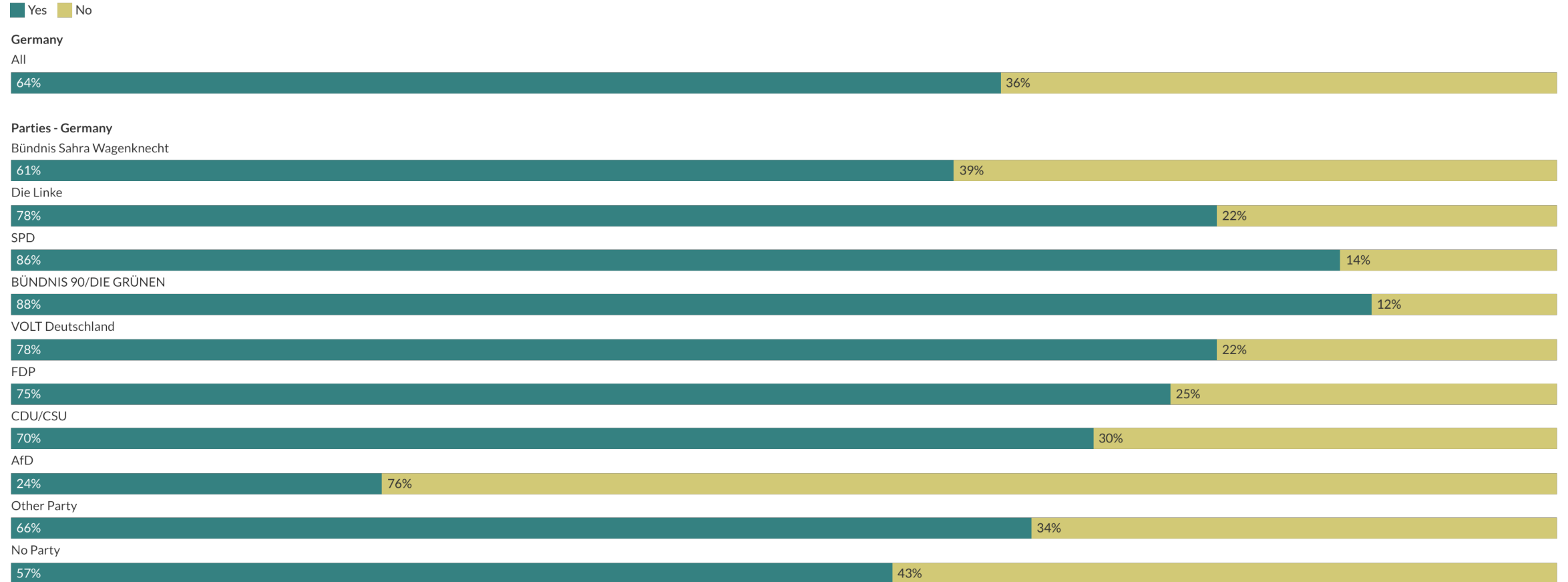
December 2023

Germany: Should the EU support Ukraine by delivering weapons? By political party preferences



December 2023

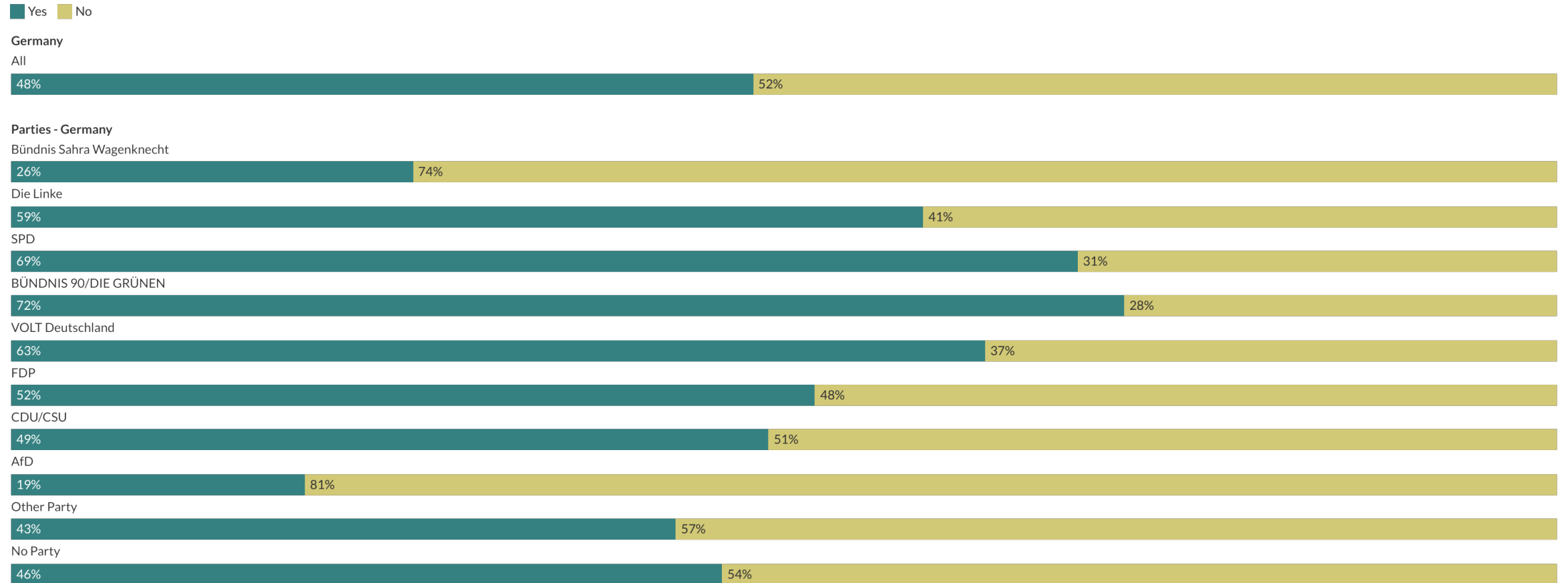
Germany: Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine? By political party preferences



December 2023

Germany: Should the EU accept Ukraine as a member of the EU in the coming years?

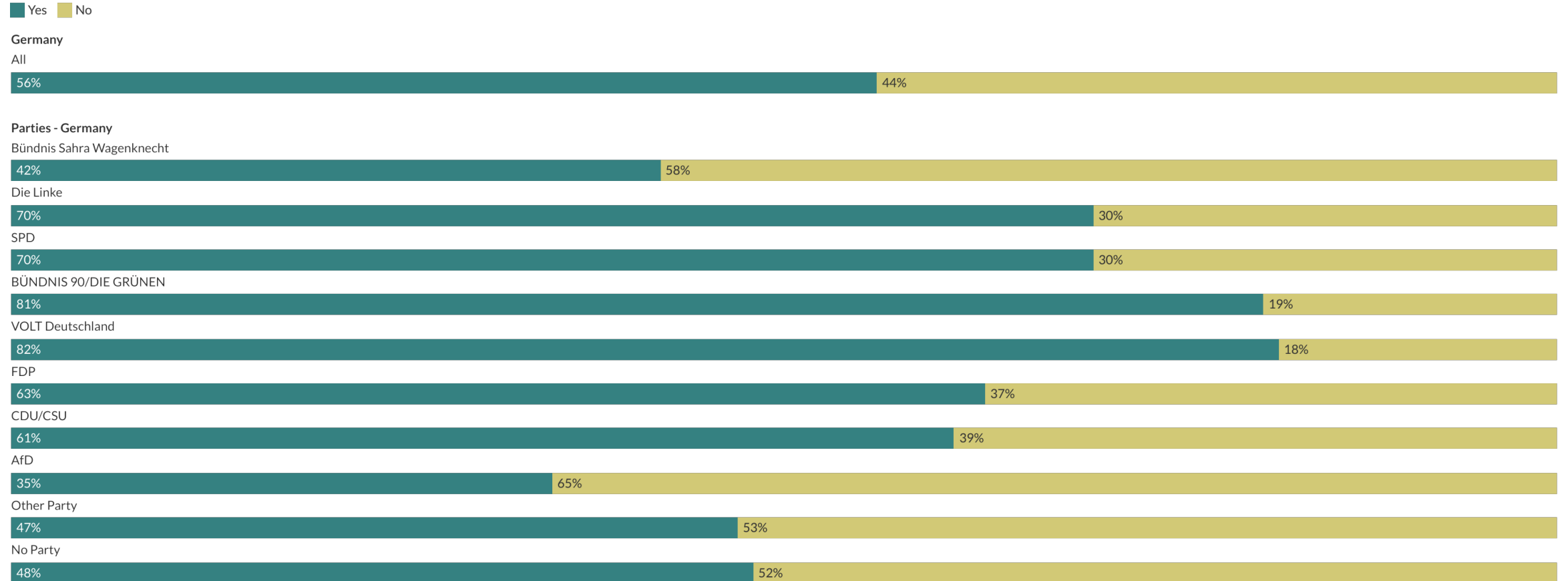
By political party preferences



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Germany: Should the EU become more energy independent of Russia even if that means prices are rising even further? By political party preferences



December 2023

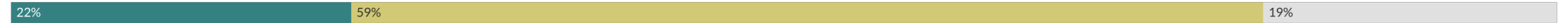
eupinions | what do you think?

Germany: Do you think economic and financial sanctions on Russia are effective or ineffective? By political party preferences

Effective Ineffective Don't know

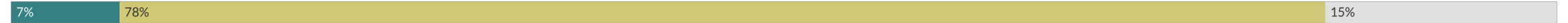
Germany

All



Parties - Germany

Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht



Die Linke



SPD



BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN



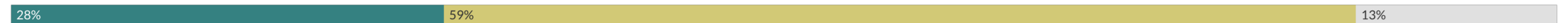
VOLT Deutschland



FDP



CDU/CSU



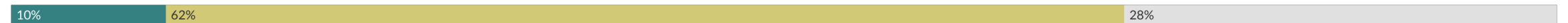
AfD



Other Party



No Party



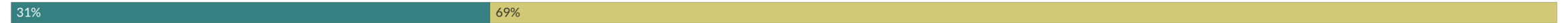
December 2023

Germany: Do you think the reconstruction of Ukraine will be an economic opportunity or an economic burden for the EU? By political party preferences

■ Economic opportunity ■ Economic burden

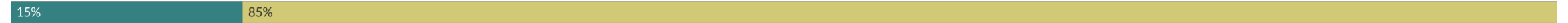
Germany

All



Parties - Germany

Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht



Die Linke



SPD



BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN



VOLT Deutschland



FDP



CDU/CSU



AfD



Other Party



No Party



December 2023

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Conclusions

As EU citizens prepare for the upcoming European Parliament elections in June, closely followed by the nomination of a new European Commission, our aim in this country report was to assess public sentiment and explore more deeply how Ukraine-related policies intersect with party preferences in Germany.

In summary, our findings are as follows:

- Strongest support for Ukraine policies comes from supporters of centre-left parties.
- Support tends to be higher in the political centre than on either end of the political spectrum.
- Overall, support is strongest among those aligned with the Green party.
- Conversely, support is weakest among those aligned with the AfD.
- Support is stronger among those aligned with the SPD compared to those aligned with the CDU/CSU.
- Among those aligned with the parties constituting the current German government coalition, we see the strongest support among the Greens, followed by those aligned with the SPD, then by the FDP.

An analysis of each graph shows the following patterns:

- **European Defence Policy:** Across all subgroups, there is strong support for the concept of a common European defence policy. Agreement exceeds 90% among supporters of the Greens, SPD, VOLT, FDP, and CDU/CSU. While those aligned with the AfD show the lowest support at 70%, those aligned with Die Linke and Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht still surpass the 80% mark. It is reasonable to assume that while a vast majority agrees on the concept, differences in political affiliation may lead to varying perspectives on the specifics of such a policy. Nevertheless, the idea garners immense support overall.
- **Weapons Delivery:** Support for weapons delivery is highest among those aligned with the Greens (78%) and SPD (74%). Conversely, support is lowest among potential AfD voters (18%), closely followed by those aligned with Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (22%). Interestingly, support is weaker among CDU/CSU supporters (65%) compared to FDP supporters (72%).
- **Refugee Acceptance:** Those aligned with the Greens (88%) and SPD (86%) show the greatest support for accepting Ukrainian refugees, while support is lowest among those aligned with the AfD (24%).
- **EU Membership for Ukraine:** Overall support for Ukraine's EU membership has declined in recent months. However, when considering party preferences, backing remains highest among those aligned with the Greens (72%) and SPD (69%) and lowest among those aligned with the AfD (19%), followed by supporters of Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (26%). Respondents who tend to vote FDP or CDU/CSU are almost evenly split, with a slight majority of FDP supporters in favour (52%) and a notable minority of CDU/CSU supporters in agreement (49%).

- **Energy Independence:** The goal of achieving energy independence from Russia garners the strongest support from those aligned with the Volt party (82%) and the Greens (81%), followed by supporters of the SPD (70%) and Die Linke (70%). Again, support is weakest among those aligned with the AfD (35%) and Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (42%). Additionally, support is generally weaker among centre-right parties (CDU/CSU and FDP) compared to centre-left parties.
- **Effectiveness of Sanctions:** A majority of Germans believe that economic and financial sanctions imposed on Russia are ineffective (59%). This sentiment is most pronounced among supporters of the AfD (85%) and Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (78%). CDU/CSU supporters also express strong scepticism, with 59% considering the sanctions ineffective. Supporters of Volt are the most optimistic, with 52% believing the sanctions are effective, followed by Green supporters at 47%.
- **Reconstruction of Ukraine:** Most Germans believe that the reconstruction of Ukraine will pose an economic burden, a sentiment echoed across most subgroups. However, there are exceptions, notably among Volt supporters, with 63% viewing it as an opportunity, and Green supporters, with 54% seeing it positively. AfD supporters (91%) and Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (85%) are most sceptical, overwhelmingly considering it a burden.

About eupinions

eupinions is an independent platform for European public opinion. We collect and analyse data on European public opinion and comment on what Europeans think about current political issues and megatrends.

Every quarter, we collect samples from each EU member state in 22 languages. Our data is representative with regard to age, gender, education and country/region.

eupinions is a Bertelsmann Stiftung project. The data is collected by Latana.

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Methodology note

The samples analysed in this report were drawn by Latana in December 2023 (n=13,299) across all 27 EU member states. Our samples take into account current population distributions with regard to age (16–70 years), gender and region/country. In order to obtain census representative results, the data were weighted using the most recent Eurostat statistics.

Any references to differences between countries in the report pertain only to the seven countries with sufficiently large sample sizes: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain.

Given the sample size and design–effect considerations, the margin of error is 0.9% at a confidence level of 95%.

Thank you!



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