



**Program for
Public Consultation**

Affiliated with the School of Public Policy, University of Maryland



KIEV
INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTE of
SOCIOLOGY

The Ukrainian People on the Current Crisis

March 9, 2015



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OVERVIEW

Since the state of Ukraine was founded in 1991, there has been tension between the regions of Ukraine over its relations with the outside world. The Western and Northern regions, where Ukrainian is the dominant language, have been drawn more to Europe. The Eastern and Southern regions, where Russian is the dominant language, have been drawn more to Russia. Outside powers have played a role in this dynamic. The European Union has encouraged Ukraine to become more engaged with the EU. Russia has very directly pressured Ukraine to not move toward the EU, and has pressed for the inclusion of Ukraine in a Eurasian trading bloc together with Belarus. Tensions have built to the point that large-scale violence has broken out that has taken thousands of lives.



As this crisis has developed outside governments—Russia, Germany, France and the United States—have increasingly played a dominant role. The language of East-West confrontation has become foreground.

The Ukrainian people have played an increasingly marginal role. Little is known about how the Ukrainian people now feel about the centrifugal pulls they experience toward the EU and Russia. In the Donbass region of the country rebel groups have taken hold of large areas. Little is known about whether these groups really represent the people in these areas. Russia presents itself as defending the interests of the Russian-speaking people in the East, but it is not clear whether people there appreciate the effort. Negotiations between Russia, Germany and France have resulted in the Minsk agreements, but little is known about whether they have popular support.

To give the Ukrainian people a greater voice, the Program for Public Consultation, affiliated with the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, collaborated with the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) on an in-depth survey of the Ukrainian population, including oversamples of the Donbass region in both rebel-held areas and government-controlled areas.

The survey was conducted in two waves. The first wave of 1,005 Ukrainian adults was conducted by face-to-face interviews nationally (including rebel-held areas; not including the Crimea) over February 13-24. A second wave oversampled the Donbass region, conducting telephone interviews, with 203 respondents in Ukrainian-controlled Donbass and 200 respondents in rebel-held Donbass March 3-5. The margin of error for the country as a whole is +/- 3.1 percent, with larger percentages for the regions and areas.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

UKRAINE'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND RUSSIA

Preferred Option for Ukraine's Relation With the EU and Russia

Overall, there is no majority position on whether Ukraine should move closer to the EU or Russia. Just under half favor moving closer to the EU; one third prefers having equally strong relations with the EU and Russia; while just one in eight prefer having stronger relations with Russia. Views vary sharply by region. A large majority in the Western and Northern regions wants to move closer to the EU. In the South and the East the most common position is that Ukraine should have equally strong relations with the EU and Russia. Even in the rebel-held areas, a majority does not favor a closer relation to Russia.

Rating Scenarios: Moving Closer to EU or Russia

Besides probing their preferences, respondents were asked to rate separately possible future directions in terms of whether they were acceptable, unacceptable or just tolerable. This provides insight into the potential for flexibility in response to options that are not the most preferred. Less than half in the South and East rated moving toward the EU acceptable, but half or more found it at least just tolerable. However, in the rebel-held areas three in five said it was unacceptable. On moving closer to Russia, an overwhelming majority in the West and North found it unacceptable, as did a more modest majority in the South. In the East just under half found it acceptable to move closer to Russia, though a majority found it at least tolerable. In the rebel-held areas a large majority found moving toward Russia acceptable.

Rating Scenarios: Ukraine Affirming a Neutral Position Between EU and Russia

Three in five would find at least tolerable for Ukraine to affirm neutral position between the EU and Russia. Large majorities found it at least tolerable in the North, South and East and the rebel-held areas as well. The West, however, is divided with just under half finding it at least tolerable and the same number finding it unacceptable.

Rating Scenarios: Joining the EU

Overall, a bare majority rated joining the EU as acceptable, though two thirds rated it as at least tolerable. In the South less than half rated it as acceptable, but six in ten rated it as at least tolerable. In the East just four in ten rated it as at least tolerable, though about half rated it as unacceptable. In the rebel-held areas two thirds rated it as unacceptable.

Rating Scenarios: Joining the Eurasian Customs Union

A large majority rejects as unacceptable joining the Eurasian Customs Union, including clear majorities in the South as well as the West and North. In the East a modest majority found it at least tolerable, but only 4 in 10 found it acceptable. Not even in the rebel-held areas does a majority have a positive view.

Rating Scenarios: Joining NATO

Overall, four in ten rate joining NATO as acceptable and a bare majority sees it as at least tolerable. Clear majorities rate it as unacceptable in the South, the East, and the rebel-held areas. While a large majority says it would be acceptable in the West, only a bare majority says so in the North.

Committing to Not Join NATO

Respondents were asked about the possibility of committing to not join NATO as part of a deal wherein Russia agrees to not interfere in the internal affairs of Ukraine. Overall, a plurality was opposed. A majority favored the idea in the East. A majority opposed the idea in the West, as did a plurality in the North. The South was divided.

IEWS OF THE CURRENT CONFLICT***Using Force Against Rebels***

Overall, just less than half approve of the government using military force to try to regain territory held by separatist groups in eastern Ukraine. Majorities favor it in the West and North, views are divided in the South, and a large majority opposes it in the East.

Minsk Agreement

Large majorities in all regions approve of the September 2014 Minsk agreement, which was the basis for the February Minsk Agreement. In both rebel-held areas and Ukrainian-controlled Donbass, large majorities approve of the agreement.

The US Potentially Providing Arms to Ukraine Government

A slight majority favors the United States providing military equipment to the Ukrainian government, including majorities in the West and North. Views are divided in the South and a majority is opposed in the East.

VIEWS OF THE ROLE OF OUTSIDE PLAYERS IN THE CONFLICT

Views of Russia's Role

Vladimir Putin's role in current crisis is viewed negatively by large majorities in all regions except the East where he is viewed negatively by a modest majority, and in rebel-held areas where a majority approve of him. Very large majorities in all regions say they believe that Russian military personnel are engaged in the military conflict in east Ukraine. Very large majorities in all regions reject Putin's position that Russia has the right to intervene in other countries to protect Russian citizens and Russian speakers; the rebel-held areas are divided. Large majorities overall and in the West, North and South insist that Ukraine should stand up to any Russian effort to dictate to it, while in the Eastern region a bare majority believes that Ukraine needs at least to be accommodating to Russia.

Views of the US Role

Views are divided on how President Obama is dealing with the current crisis, with pluralities positive in the West and North, and pluralities negative in the South and Eastern regions. More broadly, a plurality of Ukrainians has a positive view of US influence in the world, including large majorities in the West and North. Views lean only slightly positive in the South, and lean negative in the East.

Views of the European Role

In terms of how they are dealing with the crisis in Ukraine, German Chancellor Angela Merkel receives plurality positive assessments in all regions--as does French President Francois Hollande, with the exception of the East, where views are divided. EU officials are viewed positively by pluralities in all regions except the East. More broadly, a modest majority of Ukrainians have a positive view of the EU, Germany, and France. Views are majority positive in the Western and Northern areas, but more mixed in the Southern and Eastern areas, including the rebel-held areas.

ASSESSING POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF THE CONFLICT

Preferred Future for Ukraine

Overall, six in ten Ukrainians prefer to see Ukraine remain one nation governed as it is now. This is true of large majorities in the Western, Northern and Southern areas. In the East two thirds supports maintaining Ukraine as a nation, but these divide, with one third favoring being governed as now and one third giving greater autonomy to *rayons* within the Donbass region. One in five in the East favor some form of secession for the Donbass. In the rebel-held areas half favor keeping Ukraine one country, with a third favoring greater autonomy for parts of the Donbas and one sixth no change; four in ten favor secession, with a quarter favoring annexation by Russia.

Rating Scenarios: Ukraine Remaining One Nation Governed As it is Now

When asked to rate possible future scenarios in terms of how acceptable, tolerable or unacceptable it would be, a majority overall says that it would be acceptable for Ukraine to remain one nation governed as it is now. This is true in the West, North, and South as well, and in the East it is the most common response. However, in the rebel-held territories a majority says this would be unacceptable.

Rating Scenarios: Greater Autonomy for Certain Donbass Rayons

The scenario of preserving Ukraine's unity but allowing greater autonomy to certain areas of Donetska and Luganska is not rated as acceptable by a majority of Ukrainians, but a majority would find it at least tolerable. This true of all major regions as well, with the most positive attitudes in the East. In the rebel held areas a majority does find it acceptable.

Rating Scenarios: Secession of the Donbass Region

Scenarios with the Donbass region seceding are rejected as unacceptable by large majorities overall and in all regions except the East. In the East a modest majority rejects secession followed by Russian annexation, but the option for secession followed by independence gets a divided response. In the rebel-held areas, less than half rate as acceptable the options for secession, though majorities find them tolerable.

OTHER ISSUES***International Economic Reform Efforts***

Asked how much confidence they have in the EU, the United States, and the IMF to help reform the Ukrainian economy, views were divided between those with a lot or some confidence, and those with not very much or none. Majorities were positive in the Western and Northern regions, while negative views were held by a plurality in the South and a majority in the East.

Views of Kiev Government

Views of President Petro Poroshenko are divided, with pluralities in the West and North approving of how he is dealing with the crisis, and pluralities disapproving in the South and East. Very large majorities disapprove in the rebel-held areas. A plurality approves of the ending of Viktor Yanukovich's presidency, with large majorities approving in the West and North, and modest majorities disapproving in the South and East. In all regions the Yanukovich government is rated as highly corrupt. The current government generally gets better ratings, but is still widely seen as quite corrupt.

Crimea

The most common position in all regions is that Ukraine should not accept the loss of Crimea, but Ukraine has so many problems now that it should not make getting Crimea back right away a top priority.

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FULL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Note: Because the responses from the Western and Northern regions are nearly always within the margin of error of each other, they are mostly reported below in aggregate. When there is a substantive difference, this is identified. Likewise, the Ukrainian-held areas of the Donbass region are rarely significantly different from the Eastern region as a whole, and thus are only occasionally specified. However, all of these disaggregated findings are available in the questionnaire with the findings at: www.public-consultation.org/studies/Ukraine_0315.pdf

UKRAINE’S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND RUSSIA

Preferred Option for Ukraine’s Relation With the EU and Russia

Overall, there is no majority position on whether Ukraine should move closer to the EU or Russia. Just under half favor moving closer to the EU; one third prefers having equally strong relations with the EU and Russia; while just one in eight prefer having stronger relations with Russia. Views vary sharply by region. A large majority in the Western and Northern regions wants to move closer to the EU. In the South and the East the most common position is that Ukraine should have equally strong relations with the EU and Russia. Even in the rebel-held areas, a majority does not favor a closer relation to Russia.

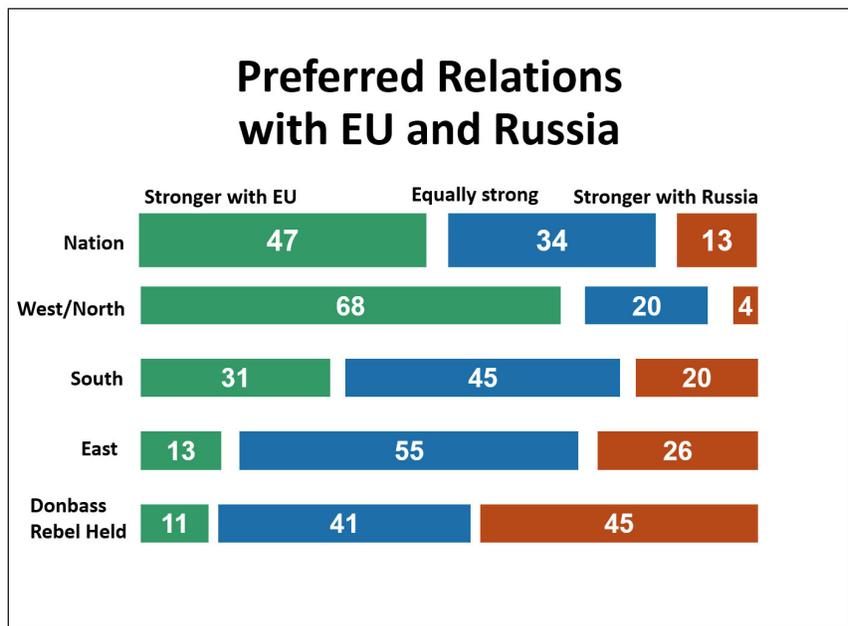
Respondents were asked, “If it were up to you, which course should Ukraine take?” and offered three options:

- Have stronger relations with the European Union than with Russia
- Have stronger relations with Russia than with the European Union
- Have equally strong relations with the European Union and Russia

Forty-seven percent chose having stronger relations with the EU than with Russia; 34% chose equally strong relations with both; and only 13% chose having stronger relations with Russia than with the EU.

The divisions by region were very sharp. Seven in ten (68%) in the Western and Northern regions chose having stronger relations with the EU than with Russia.

In both the East and the South the dominant position is that Ukraine should have equally strong relations with the EU and Russia—a position held by 55% in the East and 45% in the South. However, in the East a slightly larger number favored being closer to Russia (26%) than the EU (13%), while in the South



slightly more favored being closer to the EU (31%) than Russia (20%).

Interestingly, even in the rebel-held areas of the Donbass, less than half (45%) preferred moving closer to Russia. A majority either said that Ukraine should have equally strong relations with both (41%), or that relations should be stronger with the EU (11%).

Other Surveys

Recent findings from polls of other organizations are largely consistent with these findings of the current survey. Several past polls from other organizations have posed a related question, asking respondents to choose between joining the EU or joining the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) proposed and favored by Russia. In May 2014—a few months after Yanukovich’s departure—KIIS found a 47% plurality in favor of joining the EU, with 27% preferring the ECU, and 26% declining to answer either way. Regional differences were very sharp. Eighty-two percent in the West and 57% in Northern Ukraine preferred the EU. In the East, 63% preferred the ECU, while in the South there was no settled view, with 37% preferring the ECU and 28% the EU (35% declined to answer).

IRI asked questions on this topic eight times between November 2011 and March 2014. When asked “If Ukraine was able to enter only one economic union..” and then given the two choices of the EU or the ECU, IRI found no majority view until March 2014—after the end of Yanukovich’s presidency. For the first seven polls, on average, 39% chose the EU while another 39% chose the ECU.

In March 2014, weeks after Yanukovich’s departure, IRI found a 52% majority preferred joining the EU (ECU 27%). Here too the regional division was extremely sharp. Ninety percent of the West and 70% of Northern Ukraine preferred the EU. In the South, 37% preferred the ECU and 29% the EU, with a third (34%) declining to make this choice. Fifty-nine percent of the East preferred the ECU and only 20% chose the EU.

Rating Scenarios: Moving Closer to EU or Russia

Besides probing their preferences, respondents were asked to rate separately possible future directions in terms of whether they were acceptable, unacceptable or just tolerable. This provides insight into the potential for flexibility in response to options that are not the most preferred. While only minorities in the South and East and rebel-held areas prefer to be closer to the EU than Russia, half or more found it at least tolerable to move closer to the EU. In no region or area does a majority prefer to be closer to Russia, but in the East a majority finds it at least tolerable and in the rebel-held areas a large majority finds it acceptable. An overwhelming majority finds it unacceptable in the West and North, as does a more modest majority in the South.

While the above-discussed questions asked respondents to choose their preferred direction for Ukraine, the study also asked respondents to rate separately how they would feel about “possible general directions that Ukraine could go in the future.” They were asked on a 0-to-10 scale, on which 0 meant not at all acceptable, 5 meant just tolerable and 10 meant very acceptable. The aim of this question is not to

ask respondents for their preference so much as for their response were the course of action to be pursued.

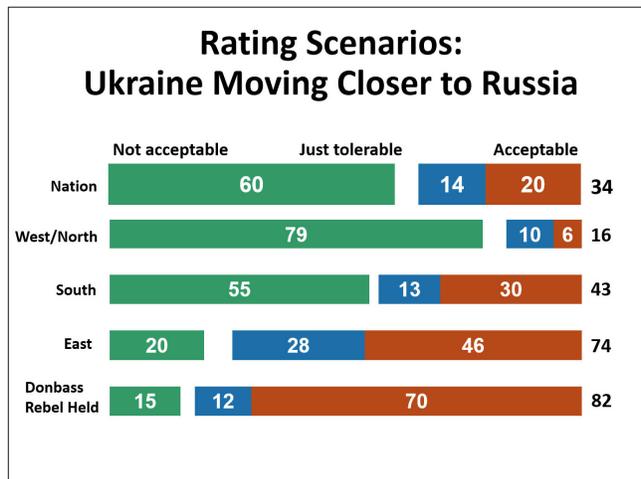
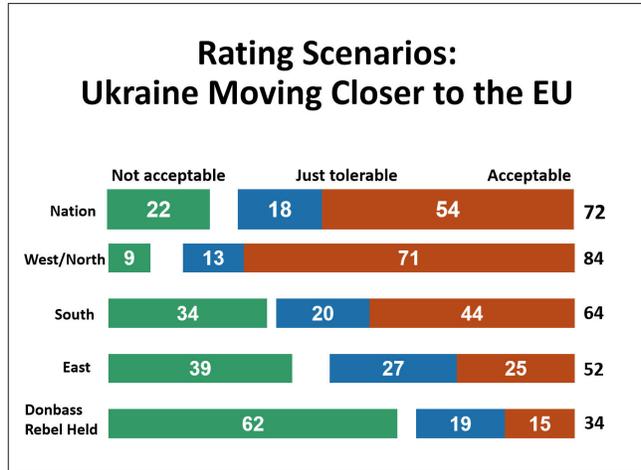
Asked about moving closer to the EU, overall a modest majority of 54% gave this an acceptable rating (6 or higher), and another 18% found it just tolerable (5). Only 22% actually saw this direction as unacceptable (0-4). Not surprisingly, in the Western and Northern regions 72% said it was acceptable to move closer to the EU.

Views were much more mixed in the South and East. Moving closer to the EU was found acceptable by 44% in the South and 25% in the East. However, when those who called this outcome just tolerable are added, 64% in the South and 52% in the East said they could at least tolerate moving closer to the EU.

Views in the rebel-held areas were sharply different. Three in five (62%) rejected moving closer to the EU as unacceptable. However, in Ukraine-controlled Donbass views were very similar to the rest of the East and 59% thought moving closer to the EU would be either acceptable (30%) or tolerable (29%).

When Ukrainians rated the prospect of moving closer to Russia, a majority gave it a 0-4 rating of unacceptable—60%. Thirty-four percent found it tolerable (14%) or acceptable (20%). In the West and North 79% said it was unacceptable.

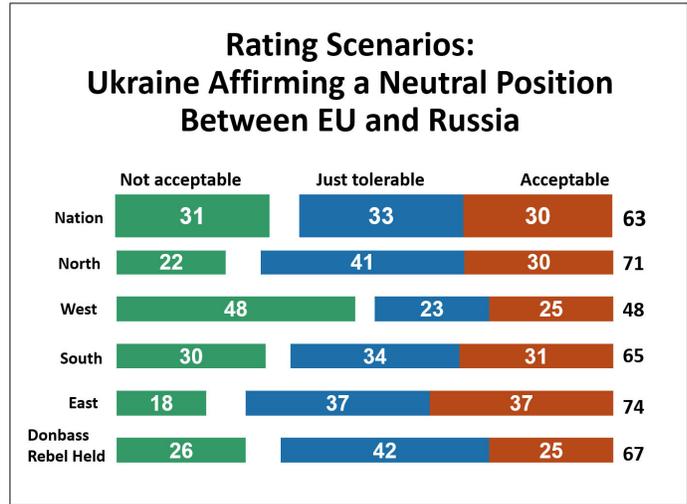
Interestingly, a majority of 55% in the South also said it was unacceptable. In the East, though, only 20% had the same view. However, less than half said it was acceptable (46%). Another 28% said it would be tolerable. In the rebel-held areas, 70% said was it acceptable—but in Ukraine-controlled Donbass just 33% shared this view (tolerable, 30%).



Rating Scenarios: Ukraine Affirming a Neutral Position Between EU and Russia

Overall, nearly two in three would find at least tolerable for Ukraine to affirm a neutral position between the EU and Russia. Large majorities see it as at least tolerable in the North, South and East and in the rebel-held areas as well. The West, however, is divided, with just under half finding it at least tolerable and the same number finding it unacceptable.

Though it is not a popular position when the people are asked their preference, of all the scenarios offered, the greatest potential consensus lies in the option of “Ukraine affirming a neutral position between the European Union and Russia.” Overall, 63 percent said they could find this at least tolerable (acceptable 30%, just tolerable 33%). A third (31%) found it unacceptable.



There was no region in which a majority found neutrality acceptable, but in each region a substantial number found it just tolerable--such that in no region was it unacceptable to a majority.

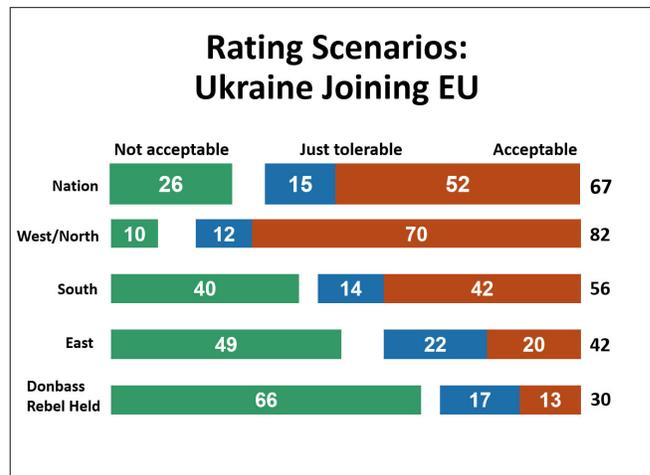
Majorities in three of the four regions found neutrality at least tolerable—in the North, 71%; the South, 65%; and the East, 74%. Even in the rebel-held areas 67 percent found it at least tolerable. The West, however, was divided between those who would find it at least tolerable (48 percent) and those saying it would be unacceptable (48 percent). This was a rare case in which the West and the North differed substantially.

Rating Scenarios: Joining the EU

Overall, a bare majority rated joining the EU as acceptable, though two thirds rated it as at least tolerable. In the South less than half rated it as acceptable, but six in ten rated it as at least tolerable. In the East just four in ten rated it as at least tolerable, though about half rated it as unacceptable. In the rebel-held areas two thirds rated it as unacceptable.

Asked to rate how they would feel about Ukraine joining the EU on a 0-to-10 scale, a bare majority of 52% said this would be acceptable (6-10), and another 15% called it just tolerable (5). Twenty-six percent said joining the EU was not acceptable (0-4).

Again, there were sharp regional variations. In the South, 42% found it acceptable, and another 14%



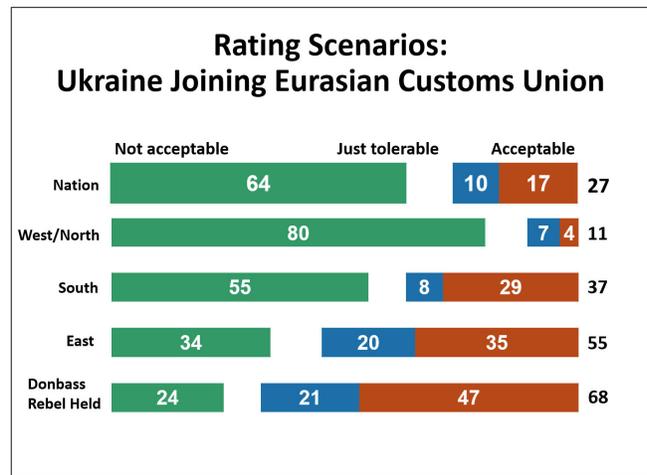
called it tolerable for a total of 56%. Forty percent said it was not acceptable. In the East, 42% rated joining the EU as acceptable (20%) or just tolerable (22%), while 49% said it was unacceptable. In rebel-held areas two thirds (66%) called joining the EU unacceptable—though in Ukraine-controlled Donbass this was only 36%. Not surprisingly, in the Western and Northern regions 71% said it was acceptable.

Rating Scenarios: Joining the Eurasian Customs Union

A large majority overall rejects as unacceptable joining the Eurasian Customs Union, including clear majorities in the South as well as the West and North. In the East a modest majority found it at least tolerable, but only four in ten found it acceptable. Not even in the rebel-held areas does a majority have a positive view.

Overall, a clear majority of 64% rated joining the ECU as unacceptable (0-4). Only 27% called it acceptable (17%) or just tolerable (10%).

While there was great variance across regions, none of the four regions showed enthusiasm. Large majorities found it unacceptable in the West and North (80%), as did 55% in the South. In the East, 35% said joining the Customs Union was acceptable and another 17% gave the idea a score of 5, making 55% who saw it as tolerable or better. In rebel-held areas, about half (47%) called it acceptable and another 21% tolerable. In Ukraine-controlled Donbass, a quarter (23%) called it acceptable and another 33% tolerable, roughly similar to the East as a whole.

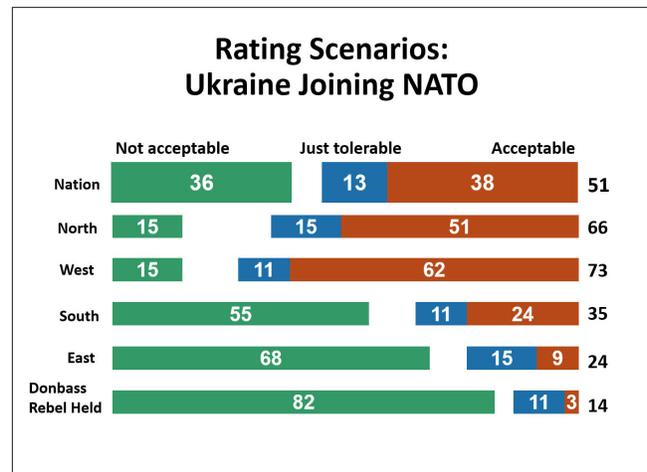


Rating Scenarios: Joining NATO

Overall, four in ten rate joining NATO as acceptable and a bare majority sees it as at least tolerable. Clear majorities rate it as unacceptable in the South, the East, and the rebel-held areas. While a large majority in the West says it would be acceptable, only a bare majority does so in the North.

For the nation as a whole, 38% rated joining NATO as acceptable while another 13% said it would be just tolerable—a total of 51% rating it as at least tolerable. Thirty seven percent rated it as unacceptable.

This finding is roughly consistent with IRI’s March 2014 question, “If a referendum were held today on Ukraine joining NATO, how would you vote?” A 44% plurality said they would vote no; 34% said they would vote yes.



In the current poll, clear majorities rated joining NATO as unacceptable in the South (55%) and the East (68%) and rebel-held areas (82%).

Interestingly, a clear majority found it acceptable in the West (62%), but only a bare majority (51%) did so in the North.

Committing to Not Join NATO

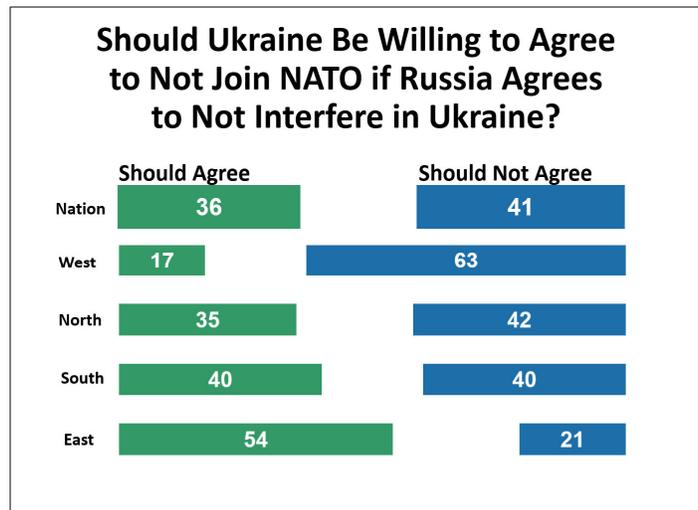
Respondents were asked about the possibility of committing to not join NATO as part of a deal wherein Russia agrees not to interfere in the internal affairs of Ukraine. Overall, a plurality was opposed. A majority favored the idea in the East. A majority opposed the idea in the West, as did a plurality in the North. The South was divided.

Respondents were presented the idea of Ukraine and Russia making an agreement in which Ukraine would commit not to join NATO in return for Russian concessions. The question asked:

Russia has stressed that it wants to Ukraine to commit to not join NATO. Do you think that Ukraine should be willing to make the following agreement:

- Ukraine agrees to not join NATO
- Russia agrees to not interfere in the internal affairs of Ukraine
- The OSCE monitors Russia's compliance with the agreement with observers on the Ukrainian-Russian border

Overall, a slim plurality of 41% opposed Ukraine making such an agreement, while 36% thought Ukraine should do so (a high 22% declined to answer). In the East a 54% majority thought Ukraine should be willing to make the agreement. In the West a 63% majority rejected the idea. The North uncharacteristically differed from the West, with just 42% opposing the idea and 35% in favor. In the South respondents were evenly divided.



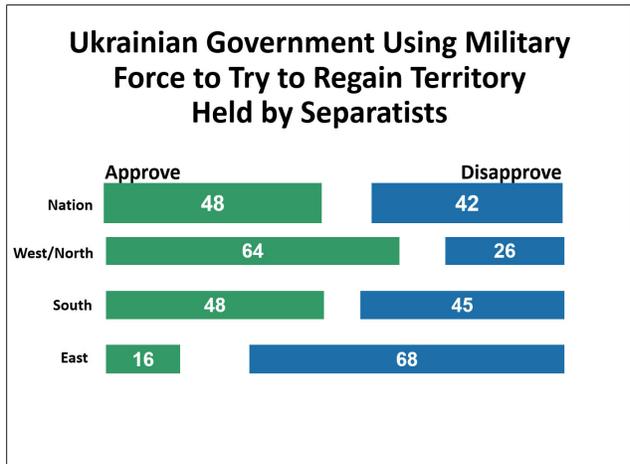
VIEWS OF THE CURRENT CONFLICT

Using Force Against Rebels

Overall, just less than half approve of the government using military force to try to regain territory held by separatist groups in eastern Ukraine. Majorities favor it in the West and North, views are divided in the South, and a large majority opposes it in the East.

The use of force by the Ukrainian government to recover territory is a difficult issue on which to seek a national consensus. Overall, 48% approved of “using military force to try to regain territory held by separatist groups in eastern Ukraine,” while 42% disapproved.

However, views vary widely by region. In the North and West, 64% approved of using military force (26% disapproved). The South was about evenly divided, with 48% approving and 45% disapproving. In the East, two thirds (68%) disapproved and only 16% approved.



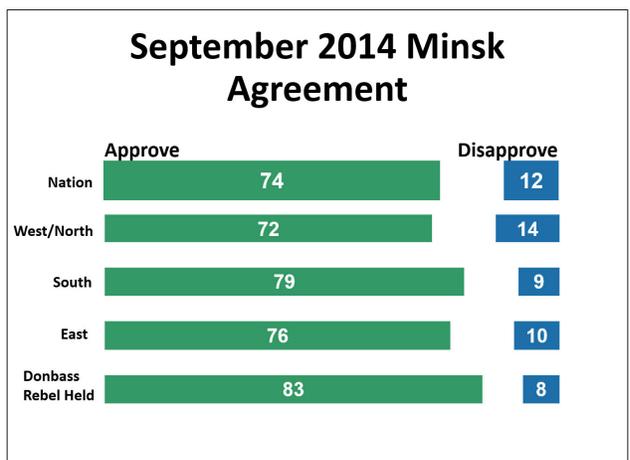
Minsk Agreement

Large majorities in all regions approve of the September 2014 Minsk agreement, which was the basis for the February Minsk Agreement. In both rebel-held areas and Ukrainian-controlled Donbass, large majorities approve of the agreement.

The poll went into the field the very day that the second Minsk agreement was made, and thus it was not possible to insert a question about it. But respondents were asked whether they approved of the Minsk Agreement of September 2014, which was the basis for the second Minsk agreement. The agreement was described as follows:

As you may know, in September 2014 the Minsk Agreement was signed by Ukraine, Russia, the OSCE and the governments of Donetsk and Lugansk. It called for an immediate ceasefire to be monitored by the OSCE, greater autonomy for the oblasts, permanent monitoring of the Ukraine-Russian border by the OSCE and other provisions.

A large majority approved of the agreement (74%, 40% strongly). Only 12% disapproved.



Robust majorities in all regions approve. Regionally, the North and West were about the same as nationwide opinion. The South approved the most strongly of any region (79%, 51% strongly). In the

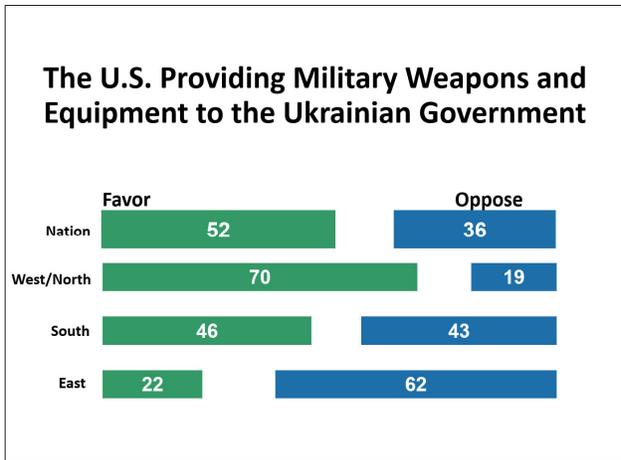
East also, 76% approved (50% strongly). In rebel-held areas, four in five (83%) approved; Ukrainian-controlled Donbass was about the same (85%).

The US Potentially Providing Arms to Ukraine Government

A slight majority favors the United States providing military equipment to the Ukrainian government, including majorities in the West and North. Views are divided in the South and a majority is opposed in the East.

On the issue of the US supplying weapons to Ukraine’s military, overall a slight majority were in favor. Fifty-two percent favored it (34% strongly), while 36% were opposed.

Here again, views vary widely by region. The US providing arms was supported by large majorities in the West (77%, 57% strongly) and in the North (61%, 35% strongly). The South was divided, with 46% in favor and 43% opposed. In the East, 62% were opposed (53% strongly) and only 22% were in favor.

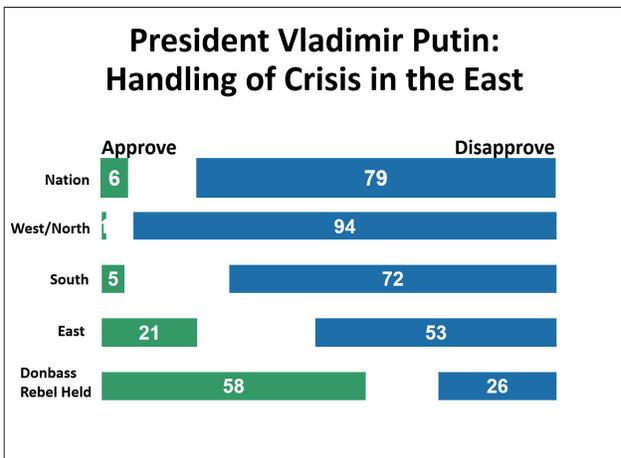


VIEWES OF THE ROLE OF OUTSIDE PLAYERS IN THE CONFLICT

Views of Russia’s Role

Vladimir Putin’s role in the current crisis is viewed negatively by large majorities in all regions except the East, where he is viewed negatively by a modest majority, and in rebel-held areas where a majority approve of him. Very large majorities in all regions say they believe that Russian military personnel are engaged in the military conflict in east Ukraine. Very large majorities in all regions reject Putin’s position that Russia has the right to intervene in other countries to protect Russian citizens and Russian speakers; the rebel-held areas are divided. Large majorities overall and in the West, North and South insist that Ukraine should stand up to any Russian effort to dictate to it, while in the Eastern region a bare majority believes that Ukraine needs at least to be accommodating to Russia.

In the current poll over three quarters (79%) of Ukrainians disapprove of how Russian president Vladimir Putin is “dealing with the crisis in eastern Ukraine.” Only 6% approved. Disapproval reaches near-unanimous levels in the West and North (94%), but is also very broad in the South (72%). In



the East, a lesser 53% disapproved, but approval reached only 21%. In rebel-held areas three in five approved of Putin's approach.

Similarly, Pew found in spring 2014 that 73% of Ukrainians had low levels of confidence in Putin "to do the right thing regarding world affairs" (with those having no confidence at all, at 57%), while 23% expressed confidence.

In the current poll, more broadly, three in five Ukrainians (64%) thought that Russia's influence in the world is mainly negative. Only 14% saw Russia as a positive actor, and there is no major region where this positive assessment number rose higher than 35%. In the West and Northern regions, an overwhelming majority (85%) saw Russia's influence as negative. In the South a plurality held a negative view (21% positive; 42% negative), while the East is divided (35% positive; 38% negative); in these regions large numbers also declined to answer. Only in rebel areas did a majority have a positive view of Russia's influence (67%).

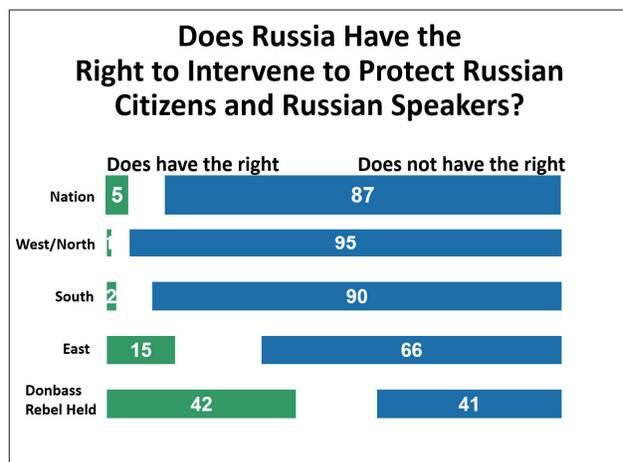
Similarly, a Pew survey in spring 2014 found 67% of Ukrainians calling "the kind of influence [Russia is] having on how things are going in Ukraine" bad (very bad influence, 49%), with only 22% calling it good.

When KIIS has asked Ukrainians their views about Russia per se, as opposed to its influence on the world or Ukrainian affairs, views are less negative⁴but have nonetheless grown much more negative in recent years. From 2008 until the February 2014 events that ended Yanukovich's presidency, Ukrainians' general attitudes toward Russia were broadly positive, with well over four out of five being favorable. KIIS' frequent trend question found an average 91% favorable over 2008-2010. From November 2011 to November 2012, favorable attitudes were at a slightly lower plateau, with an average of 83%. However, February to December 2014 saw a precipitous drop of 41%.

In December 2014—nine months after Yanukovich's departure--only 37% expressed a favorable attitude toward Russia, while 47% expressed an unfavorable attitude. Attitudes varied widely across the four regions: 70% unfavorable in the west; 50% in Northern Ukraine (29% favorable); 50% favorable in the South (46% unfavorable); and 51% favorable in the East as a whole (33% unfavorable).

That Russian military personnel are active in east Ukraine is not a matter of real controversy among Ukrainians. Asked, "Do you believe or not that military personnel from Russia are engaged in the military conflict in east Ukraine?" 77% said they did believe this (54% strongly). Only 13% did not believe it. The majority view that Russian soldiers are engaged was held by 88% in the North and West, 72% in the South, and 62% in the East.

The argument made by Putin in 2014 that Russia has a right to intervene to protect Russian citizens and Russian speakers is widely rejected. An overwhelming majority of 87% said that Russia does not have such a right; only 5% said that Russia does. Even among Russian speakers only 9% said Russia has this right. Among regions, only the East showed any meaningful differences from the nation as a whole, with 66% saying Russia does not



have this right and 15% saying it does. In rebel-held areas, however, views were divided: 42% said Russia has this right and 41% said it does not.

Large majorities overall and in the West, North and South insist that Ukraine should stand up to any Russian effort to dictate to it, while in the Eastern region a majority believes that Ukraine needs to be accommodating to Russia. Respondents were offered three statements and asked to choose one:

- Russia does not have the right to tell Ukraine what to do and Ukraine must stand up to Russia whenever it tries to do so.
- Ukraine should maintain autonomy from Russia, but it also needs to recognize that Russia is so powerful that it will need to accommodate some of its wishes.
- It is in Ukraine's best interest to draw closer to Russia and it is natural and appropriate for Ukraine to align itself with Russia's goals.

Overall, two thirds (68%) chose the first option, that Ukraine must stand up to Russia. About a fifth (17%) chose the second option, that there is a need to accommodate Russia. Only 8% said Ukraine should align itself with Russia's goals.

In the West and North, 84% said Ukraine must stand up to Russia. The South was very close to overall national opinion. The East was different: 51% said either that there is a need to accommodate Russia (27%), or that Ukraine should align itself with Russia (24%). A third (35%) said Ukraine must stand up to Russia. In rebel-held areas, a plurality of 44% said Ukraine should align itself with Russia's interests, and another 15% said Ukraine needs to accommodate Russia; 26% said Ukraine must stand up to Russia.

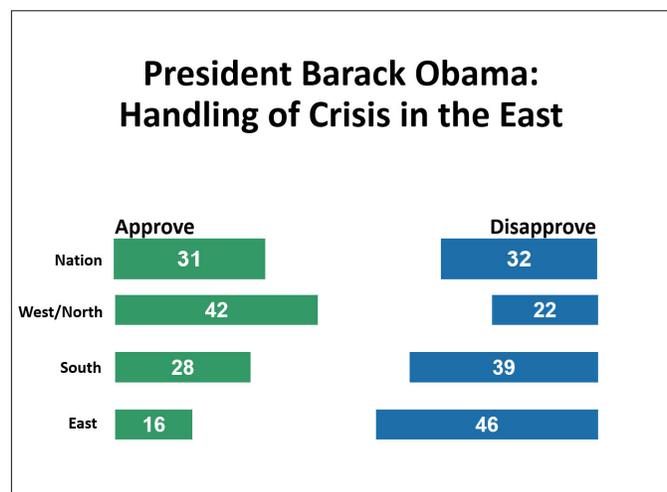
Views of the US Role

Views are divided on how President Obama is dealing with the current crisis, with pluralities positive in the West and North, and pluralities negative in the South and Eastern regions. More broadly, a plurality of Ukrainians has a positive view of US influence in the world, including large majorities in the West and North. Views are divided in the South, and majority negative in the East.

The Ukrainian public is divided about how US President Obama is doing in "dealing with the crisis in eastern Ukraine": 31% approved and 32% disapproved of his performance.

The West and North gave plurality approval of Obama's efforts, at 43 to 20% and 37 to 24% respectively. In the South, more disapproved than approved (39 to 28%), and in the East almost half (46%) disapproved and only 16% approved.

When asked whether the United States' influence in the world is mainly positive or negative, a 45% plurality regarded it as positive, while 24% regarded it as negative.



At the same time, the differences among regions are considerable. While 62% in the West and North had a positive view (negative, 10%), in the South views were divided (29% to 28%), and distinctly negative in the East (52% negative, 19% positive).

Views of the European Role

In terms of how they are dealing with the crisis in Ukraine, German Chancellor Angela Merkel receives plurality positive assessments in all regions--as does French President Francois Hollande, with the exception of the East, where views are divided. EU officials are viewed positively by pluralities in all regions except the East. More broadly, a modest majority of Ukrainians have a positive view of the EU, Germany, and France. Views are majority positive in the Western and Northern areas, but more mixed in the Southern and Eastern areas, including the rebel-held areas.

A plurality of respondents (40% to 20%) said they approved of how German Chancellor Angela Merkel is dealing with the conflict. For French President Francois Hollande, it was a similar 38% to 20%; and for EU officials in general, it was 36% to 20%.

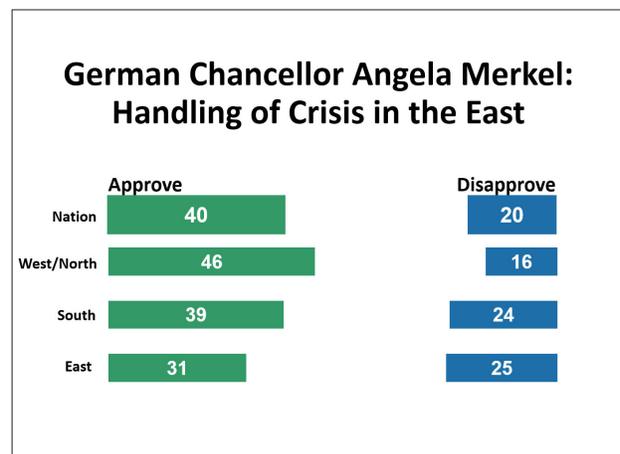
Across the regions, the balance was mostly favorable for all three. The exception was in the East, where the view of EU officials' actions was unfavorable (26% disapprove to 19% approve), while for Hollande it was divided.

More broadly, Ukrainians are rather positive about the influence of the EU, Germany and France on world affairs. Overall, 57% rated the EU's influence as mainly positive and only 10% called it negative, though many declined to make a choice. The view of Germany was similar (57% positive, 7% negative) as was that of France (54% positive, 7% negative), despite current Russian propaganda associating Germany with its Nazi past.

Across the regions there is no particular divide on this point. For views of the EU, while 71% in the West and North saw it as positive, those in the South who took a position were positive (48% to 12%) as were those in the East (31% to 23%). In the rebel-held areas, views of the EU were negative (41% to 21%). Views of France and Germany follow a similar pattern by region.

About half of Ukrainians are skeptical about the strength of the EU's efforts in trying to build a stronger relationship with Ukraine—and this is true both in regions that have positive views of the EU, and in regions that do not. Respondents were asked whether they thought the EU “has gone too far in trying to draw Ukraine closer to the EU; has not done enough to draw Ukraine closer to the EU; or has struck the right balance.” Fifty-three percent said the EU has not done enough to draw Ukraine closer to the EU, while only 9% said it has gone too far. Nineteen percent said it has struck the right balance.

In the Western and Northern regions, 57% said the EU has not done enough; in the South, 51% agreed, as did 48% in the East. Across the country very few criticized the EU by saying it “has gone too far”; the



highest was in the South, at only 14%. Respondents in rebel-held areas were identical to the East as a whole on this question.

ASSESSING POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF THE CONFLICT

Preferred Future for Ukraine

Overall, six in ten Ukrainians prefer to see Ukraine remain one nation governed as it is now. This is true of large majorities in the Western, Northern and Southern areas. In the East two thirds supports maintaining Ukraine as a nation, but these divide, with one third favoring being governed as now and one third giving greater autonomy to rayons within the Donbass region. One in five in the East favor some form of secession for the Donbass. In the rebel-held areas half favor keeping Ukraine one country, with a third favoring greater autonomy for parts of the Donbas and one sixth no change; four in ten favor secession, with a quarter favoring annexation by Russia.

Respondents were asked to specify their preference for Ukraine’s future among the following four options:

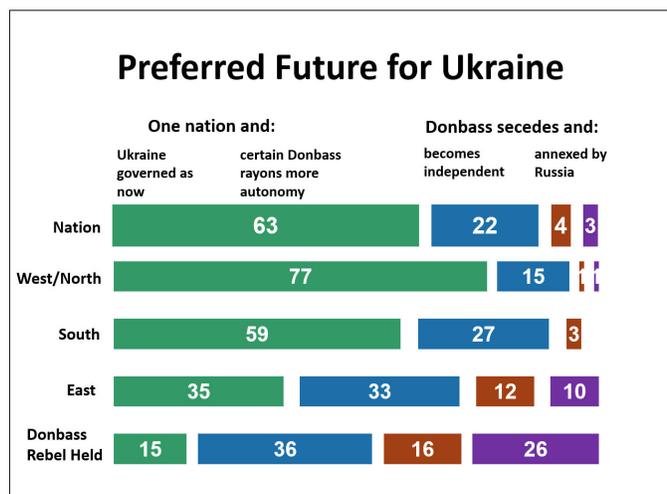
- Ukraine remains one nation, governed as it is now
- Ukraine remains one nation, but certain *rayons* [areas] of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts receive greater autonomy
- The Donbass region secedes from Ukraine and becomes independent
- The Donbass region secedes from Ukraine and is annexed by Russia

Over three in five (63%) chose “Ukraine remains one nation, governed as it is now.” A fifth chose greater autonomy for certain areas of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts within Ukraine. Only 7% chose either secession scenario, with 4% choosing an independent Donbass and 3% Donbass annexed to Russia.

In the West and North 77% chose Ukraine “governed as it is now,” and 59% did so in the South as well; there 27% supported some greater autonomy in parts of Donbass, but other choices got miniscule support.

In the East, 68% supported one or the other version of Ukrainian unity, with 35% choosing “governed as it is now” and 33% choosing extending some autonomy. Only a fifth supported the Donbass seceding (with independence, 12%; with annexation by Russia, 10%).

In rebel-held areas 51% supported some form of Ukrainian unity, either extending some autonomy (36%) or keeping Ukraine “governed as it is now” (15%). But four in ten (42%) selected some form of secession, with 26% preferring being annexed by Russia and 16% having the Donbass being independent.



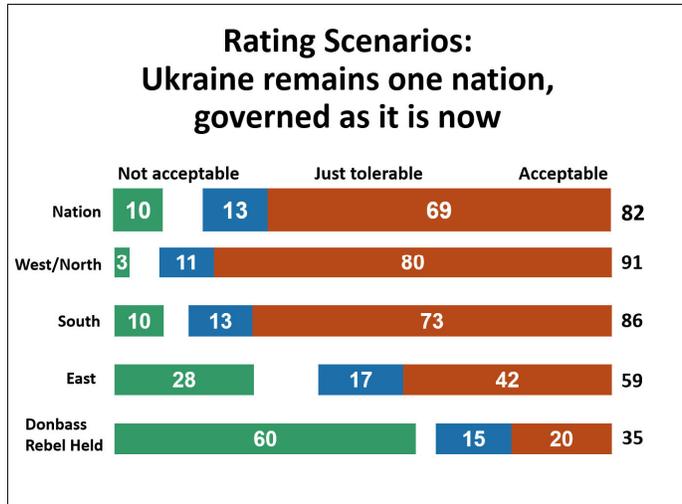
Rating Scenarios: Ukraine Remaining One Nation, Governed As it is Now

When asked to rate possible future scenarios in terms of how acceptable, tolerable or unacceptable it would be, a majority overall says that it would be acceptable for Ukraine to remain one nation governed as it is now. This is true in the West, North, and South as well, and in the East a majority would find it at least tolerable. However, in the rebel-held territories a majority says this would be unacceptable.

Respondents were also asked to rate the four scenarios discussed above independently, not in terms of their preference, but in terms of how they would “feel if each... happened,” answering on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning not at all acceptable, 10 meaning very acceptable, and 5 meaning just tolerable.

By far the most popular option—both in numbers and in regional consensus—was, that “Ukraine remains one nation, governed as it is now.” Sixty-nine percent gave this an acceptable rating (6-10); 51% gave it a 10. In the West and North, 80% gave it an acceptable rating, and in the South 73% did. In the East 42% found it acceptable and another 17% tolerable; only 28% said it was unacceptable.

In rebel-held areas, 60% called it unacceptable while 35% said it was tolerable (15%) or acceptable (20%).

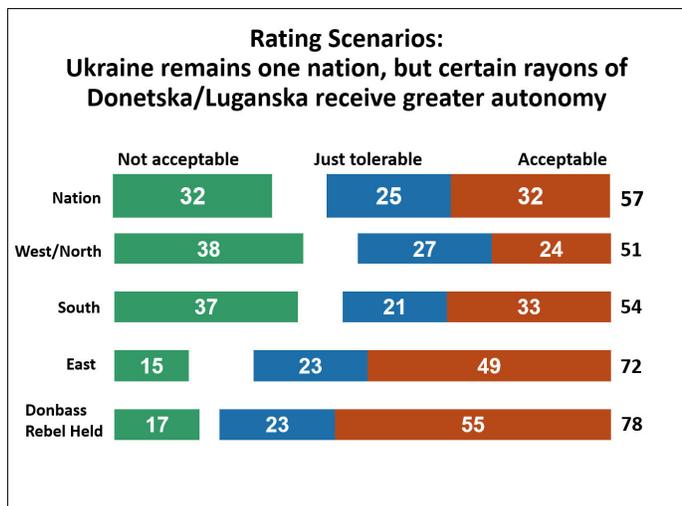


Rating Scenarios: Greater Autonomy for Certain Donbass Rayons

The scenario of preserving Ukraine’s unity but allowing greater autonomy to certain areas of Donetska and Luganska is not rated as acceptable by a majority of Ukrainians, but a majority would find it at least tolerable. This true of all major regions as well, with the most positive attitudes in the East. In the rebel held areas a majority does find it acceptable.

The next option—Ukraine remaining one nation while granting some autonomy to areas in Donetska and Luganska—had much less appeal, but it was at least tolerable to majorities in every region. Overall, 32% found it acceptable and another 25% said it would be just tolerable—thus 57% found it at least tolerable. It was unacceptable to 32%.

In the West and North, granting some autonomy was acceptable to 24% with another 27% finding it tolerable—thus 51% found it at least tolerable. Thirty-seven percent said it was unacceptable.



Interestingly, the West had a substantially larger percentage saying that this was unacceptable (44%) than did the North (30%).

The South was very similar to Ukrainian opinion as a whole: 33 percent found it acceptable and 54% at least tolerable. In the East, the highest number in the four regions (49%) rated it acceptable and another 23% tolerable (72% at least tolerable); only 15% said it was not acceptable.

In rebel-held areas a majority of 55% said this was acceptable, and an additional 23% said it was tolerable—thus in this area the highest number (78%) found it tolerable or better.

Rating Scenarios: Secession of the Donbass Region

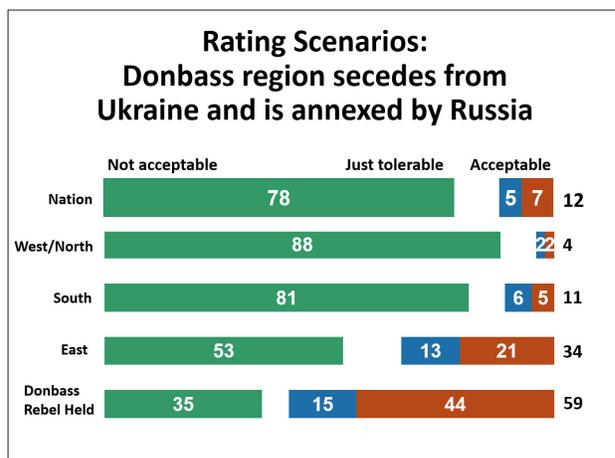
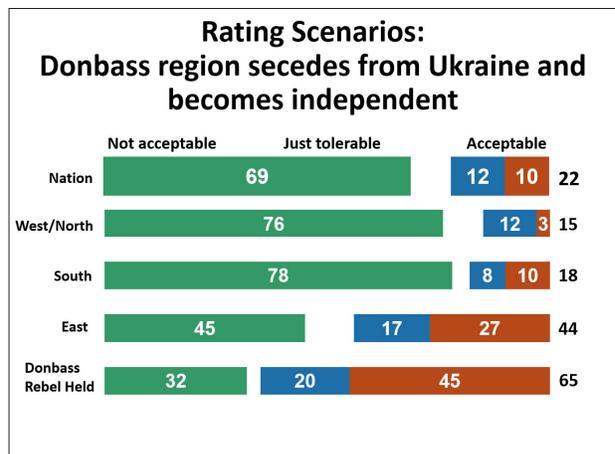
Scenarios with the Donbass region seceding are rejected as unacceptable by large majorities overall and in all regions except the East. In the East a modest majority rejects secession followed by Russian annexation, but the option for secession followed by independence gets a divided response. In the rebel-held areas, less than half rate as acceptable the options for secession, though majorities find them tolerable.

The third scenario—secession and independence of the Donbass area—was rejected by seven in ten respondents (69%). Only 22% thought it just tolerable (12%) or acceptable (10%). In the North, West, and South, three in four called it unacceptable.

The final scenario—in which Donbass secedes and then is annexed by Russia—was the least popular, with 78% saying it is unacceptable (tolerable 5%, acceptable 7%). Eighty-eight percent in the West and North, and 81% in the South, rated it as unacceptable.

Views in the East were more complex. The scenario of Donbass seceding and being annexed by Russia was found unacceptable to a modest majority (53%). Only 34% found the idea acceptable (21%) or tolerable (13%). But the scenario of secession and independence for the Donbass elicited a more divided response: 45% said it was unacceptable, while 44% saw it as either acceptable (27%) or tolerable (17%).

Interestingly in the Ukrainian areas of the Donbass secession was rejected more emphatically—61% rejected as unacceptable secession leading to independence and 64% rejected secession leading to Russian annexation.



However, in the rebel-held areas views were quite different. Forty five percent said that secession leading to independence was acceptable, with another 20% saying it would be tolerable (total 65% at least tolerable). For secession leading to Russian annexation views were essentially the same--44% acceptable, 15% tolerable (total 59% at least tolerable).

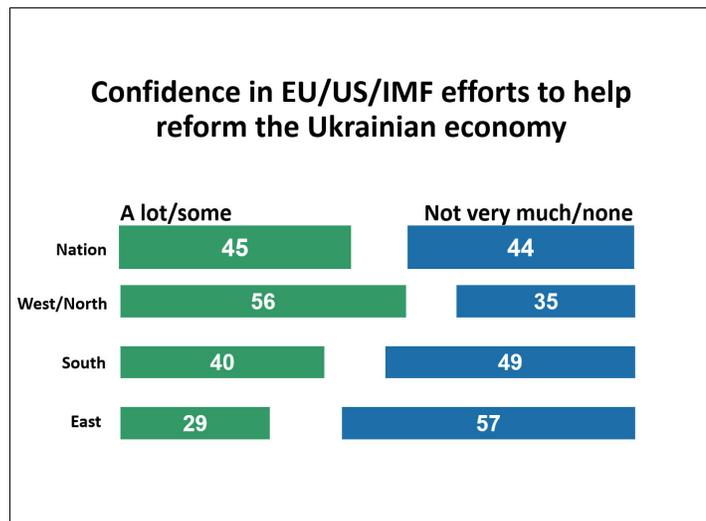
OTHER ISSUES

International Economic Reform Efforts

Asked how much confidence they have in the EU, the United States, and the IMF to help reform the Ukrainian economy, views were divided between those with a lot or some confidence, and those with not very much or none. Majorities were positive in the Western and Northern regions, while negative views were held by a plurality in the South and a majority in the East.

Ukrainians were asked about their level of confidence “in the efforts of the European Union, the United States and the International Monetary Fund to help reform the Ukrainian economy.” Overall, views are evenly divided. Forty-five percent expressed some or a lot of confidence in the IMF, EU and US. Forty-four percent expressed little confidence.

In the West and North, a majority of 56% expressed confidence in the IMF, EU and US relative to economic reform, while 35% expressed weak confidence. In the South, half (49%) lacked confidence, while 40% expressed confidence. In the East, lack of confidence in the IMF, EU, and US was a majority view (57%); 29% expressed confidence.



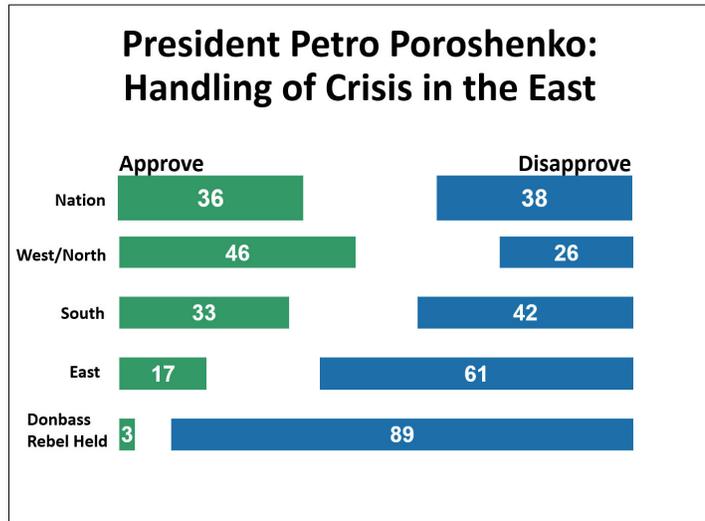
Views of Kiev Government

Views of President Petro Poroshenko are divided, with pluralities in the West and North approving of how he is dealing with the crisis, and pluralities disapproving in the South and majorities disapproving in the East. Very large majorities disapprove in the rebel-held areas. A plurality approves of the ending of Viktor Yanukovich’s presidency, with large majorities approving in the West and North, and modest majority disapproving in the South and a large majority disapproving in the East. In all regions the Yanukovich government is rated as highly corrupt. The current government generally gets better ratings, but is still widely seen as quite corrupt.

While President Poroshenko has a definite base of support, he is not a uniting figure at this stage. Nationally, 38% disapproved and 36% approved of how he is “dealing with the crisis in eastern Ukraine.”

In the West and North he has clear plurality support (46 to 26%). In the South, a plurality disapprove (42 to 33%). And in the East, three fifths disapprove of his performance while only one in five approve (61% to 17%). In the rebel-held areas, 89% disapprove.

The ending of Yanukovich's presidency in the tumultuous events of February 2014 is still controversial. Nationally, 48% approve of Yanukovich's going, while 38% do not. In the North and West, seven in ten (69%) approve while only 19% do not. But in both the South and the East, majorities hold the opposite view: 52% disapprove in the South (35% approval) and 72% disapprove in the East (13% approval).



Whatever all the issues raised by Yanukovich's departure, it is a point of national consensus that his administration was corrupt. Asked to assess the level of corruption of Yanukovich's government on a 0-to-10 scale (with 0 meaning not corrupt at all, and 10 meaning extremely corrupt), the mean score was 9.5, with 93% giving it a score between 6 and 10. There was no meaningful regional variation.

Respondents were asked to assess the level of corruption of Poroshenko's government in the same way, and were only somewhat less critical, giving a mean score of 7.7. Means scores ranged from 7.0 in the West to 8.3 in the East. Thus these assessments of corruption at least serve as a clear point of consensus throughout the Ukrainian public.

Crimea

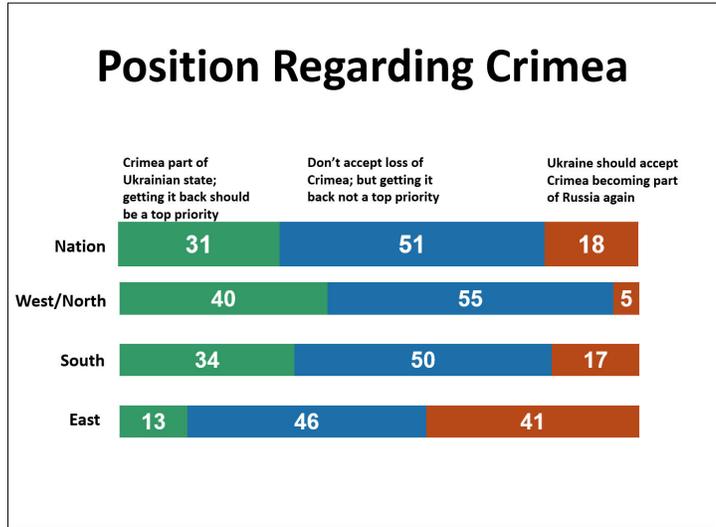
The most common position in all regions is that Ukraine should not accept the loss of Crimea, but Ukraine has so many problems now that it should not make getting Crimea back right away a top priority.

Respondents were presented three positions Ukraine could take toward the Crimea and asked which position is closer to their own. These were:

- The Crimea is part of the Ukrainian state and Ukraine should make it a top priority to get it back as soon as possible.
- Ukraine should not accept the loss of Crimea, but Ukraine has so many other problems that it should not make getting Crimea back right away a top priority.
- Given the number of ethnic Russians living in Crimea and its history, Ukraine should accept Crimea becoming part of Russia again.

A 51% majority chose the middle option of Ukraine biding its time for now. Thirty-one percent wanted to make the recovery of the Crimea a top priority. Only 18% thought Ukraine should accept the Russian annexation of Crimea.

In the West and North only 5% chose accepting the annexation, but a 55% majority chose not making the Crimea a top priority, while 40% did. The South's views were about the same as those in Ukraine as a whole. In the East the most commonly held view was to not make the Crimea a top priority (46%), but 41% thought Ukraine should accept the Russian annexation (make recovery a top priority: 13%).





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KIEV INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE of SOCIOLOGY

Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) is one of the leading research companies in Ukraine with a quarter century of experience conducting survey research and is a pioneer in the establishment of sociological research standards in Ukraine. KIIS is a private Ukrainian company which works in collaboration with the National University of the Kiev-Mohyla Academy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Catherine Kelleher played a key role in the development and analysis of the survey. Invaluable suggestions were also made by William Taylor, Steven Pifer, Hannah Thoburn, Amy Gordon, I.M. Destler and Nancy Gallagher.

Production of the report was managed by Allison Stettler with assistance from Antje Williams and Meaza Getachew.