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May 15, 2024

Italy, the War and the Vote

Approaching another high-stakes-low-turnout election?

Webinar IEP@BU

Catherine E. De Vries & Isabell Hoffmann

Italian 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.

In the early days of the war, the Draghi administration took a strong position of unequivocal support for Ukraine despite Italy's significant political and economic ties to Russia, which enjoy considerable public support. Upon assuming office, Giorgia Meloni's right-wing government upheld this position, disregarding the preferences of her voter base and coalition partner.

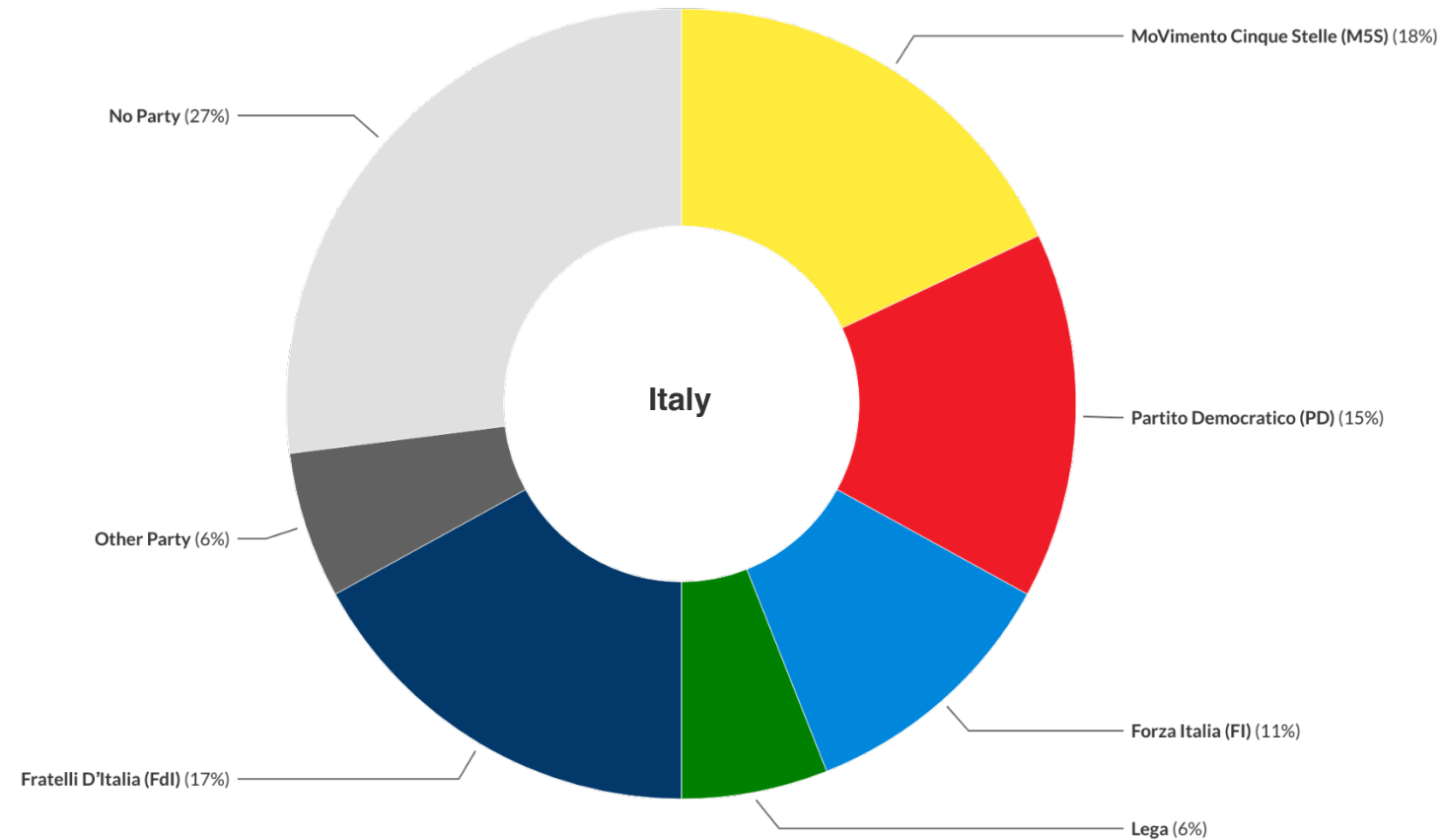
Against the backdrop of the upcoming European parliamentary elections, this report focuses on the correlation in Italy between individuals' political party preferences and their stance on seven key Ukraine-related policy issues:

- 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 Italy, 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 Italy, we interviewed 1,325 citizens.

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



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

Agree Disagree

Italy
All



Parties - Italy

M5S



PD



FI



Lega



Fdl



Other Party



No Party



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Italy: Should the EU support Ukraine by delivering weapons?

By political party preferences

Yes No

Italy

All

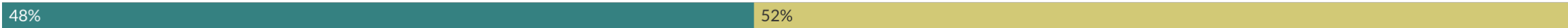


Parties - Italy

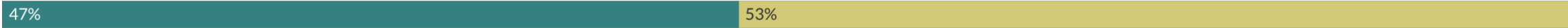
M5S



PD



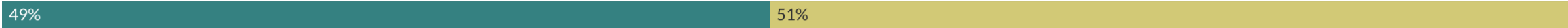
FI



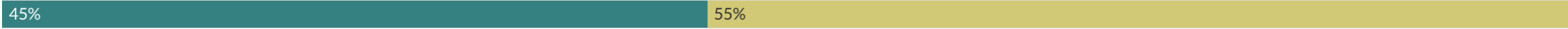
Lega



FdI



Other Party



No Party



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Italy: Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine?

By political party preferences



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Italy: Should the EU accept Ukraine as a member of the EU in the coming years? By political party preferences

Yes No

Italy
All



Parties - Italy

M5S



PD



FI



Lega



Fdl



Other Party



No Party



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

Yes No

Italy

All



Parties - Italy

M5S



PD



FI



Lega



Fdi



Other Party

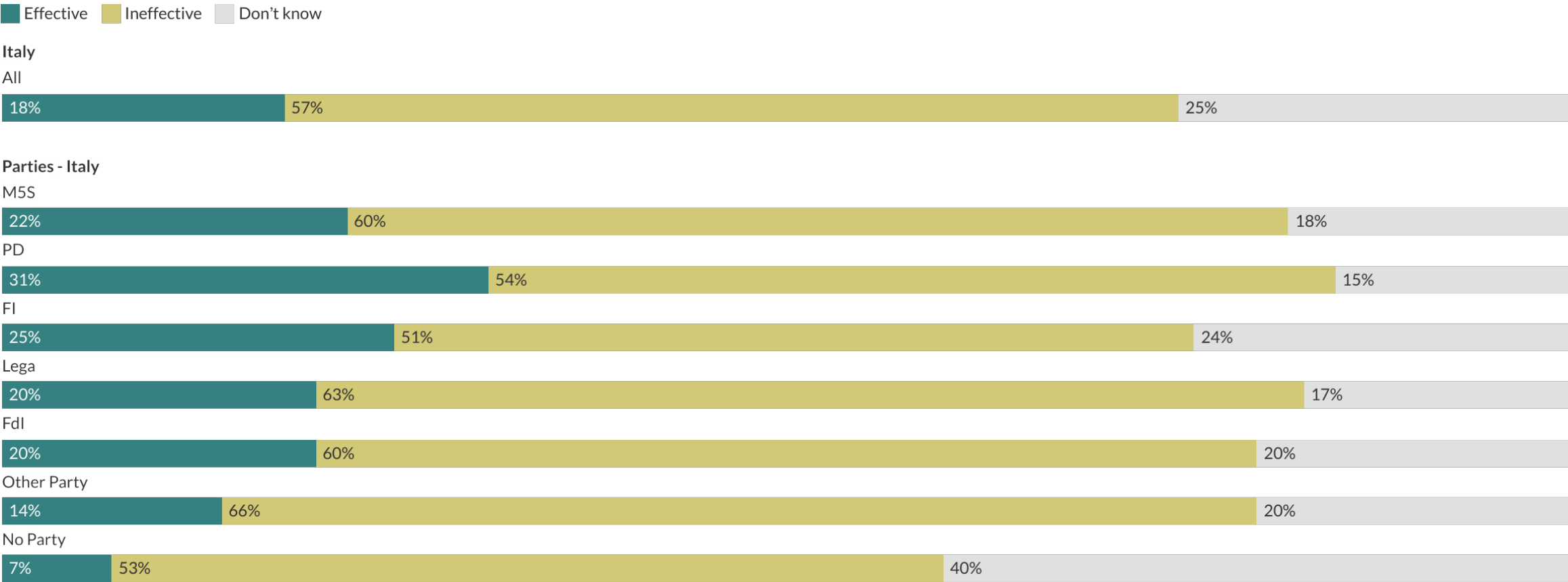


No Party



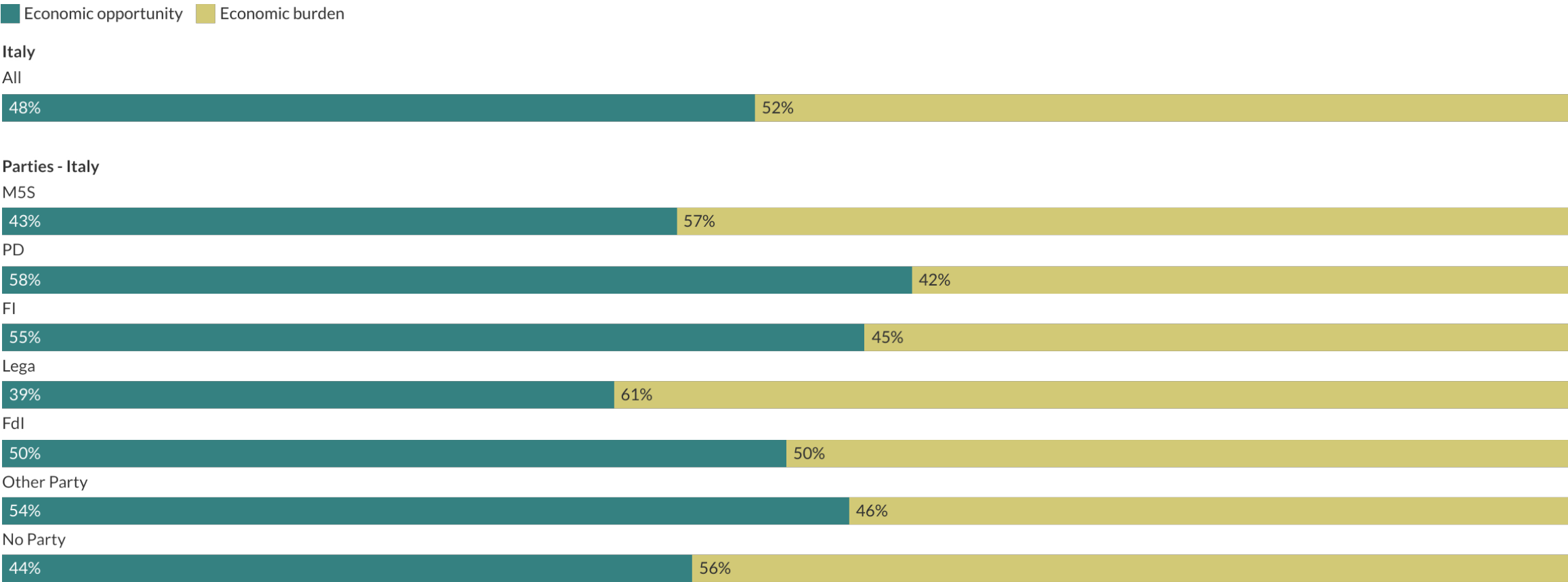
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Italy: Do you think economic and financial sanctions on Russia are effective or ineffective? By political party preferences



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



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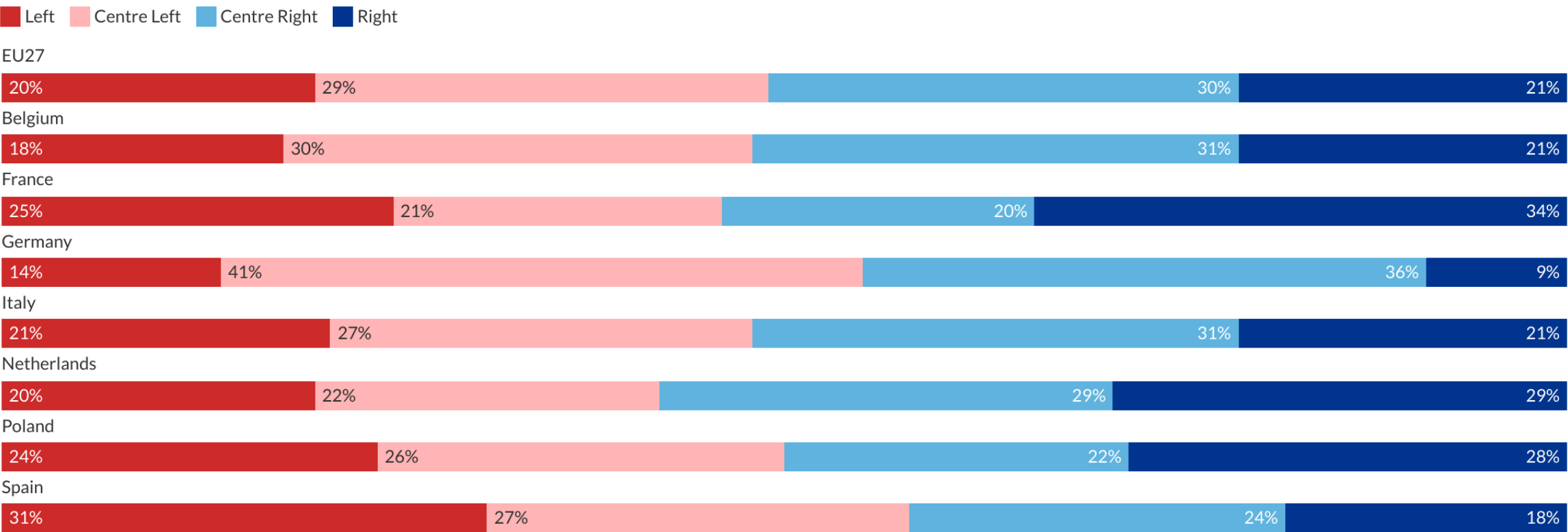
European residents, their political orientation and attitudes towards key Ukraine policies

Against the backdrop of the upcoming European parliamentary elections, this second part focuses on the correlation in the EU and in seven member states between individuals' political orientation on a left right-wing scale 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?*
5. *Do you think the reconstruction of Ukraine will be an economic opportunity or an economic burden for the EU?*

Please note: This is a selection. For the full report please visit:

Think about your political orientation:
Where do you position yourself on the political left-right-spectrum?



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Does the European Union need a common defence policy?

■ EU defence - Yes ■ EU defence - No

EU27



Belgium



France



Germany



Italy



Netherlands



Poland

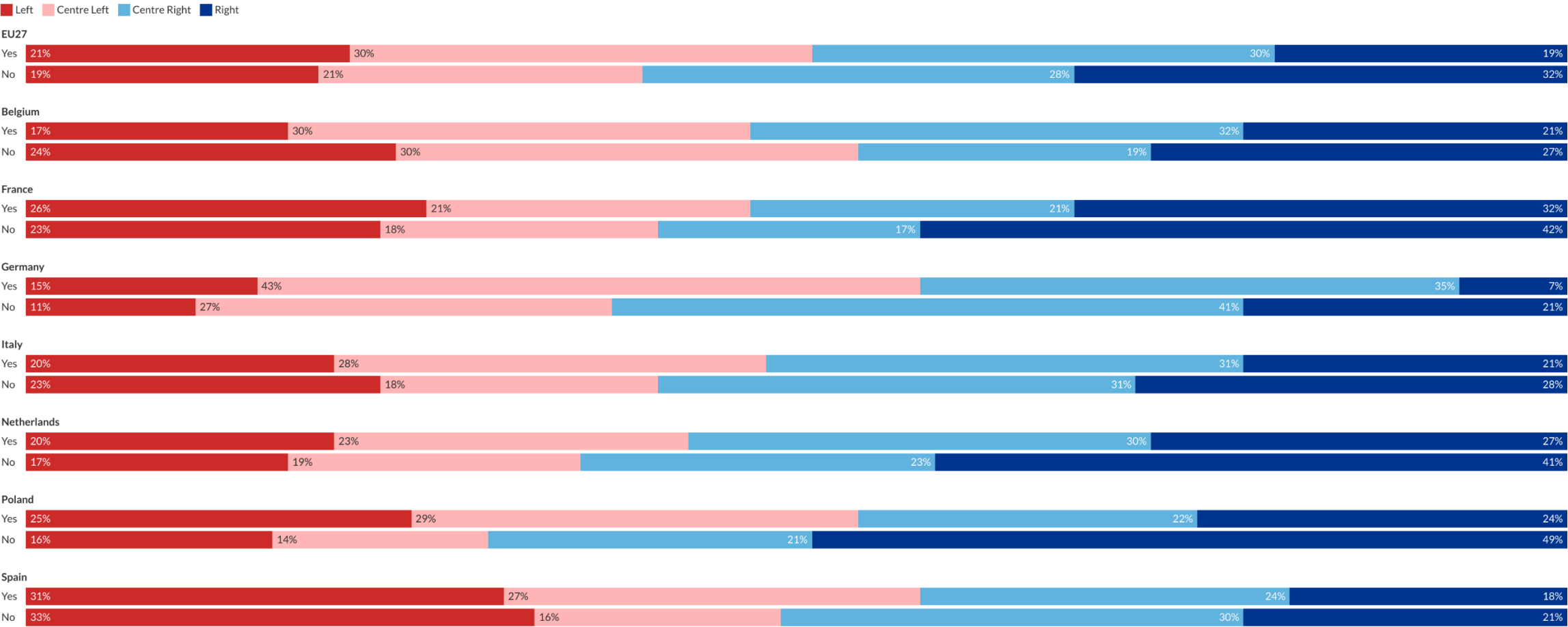


Spain



December 2023

Does the European Union need a common defence policy?
By political orientation



December 2023

Should the EU support Ukraine by delivering weapons?

■ Yes ■ No

EU27



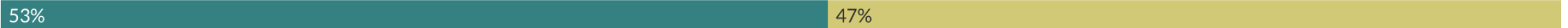
Belgium



France



Germany



Italy



Netherlands



Poland

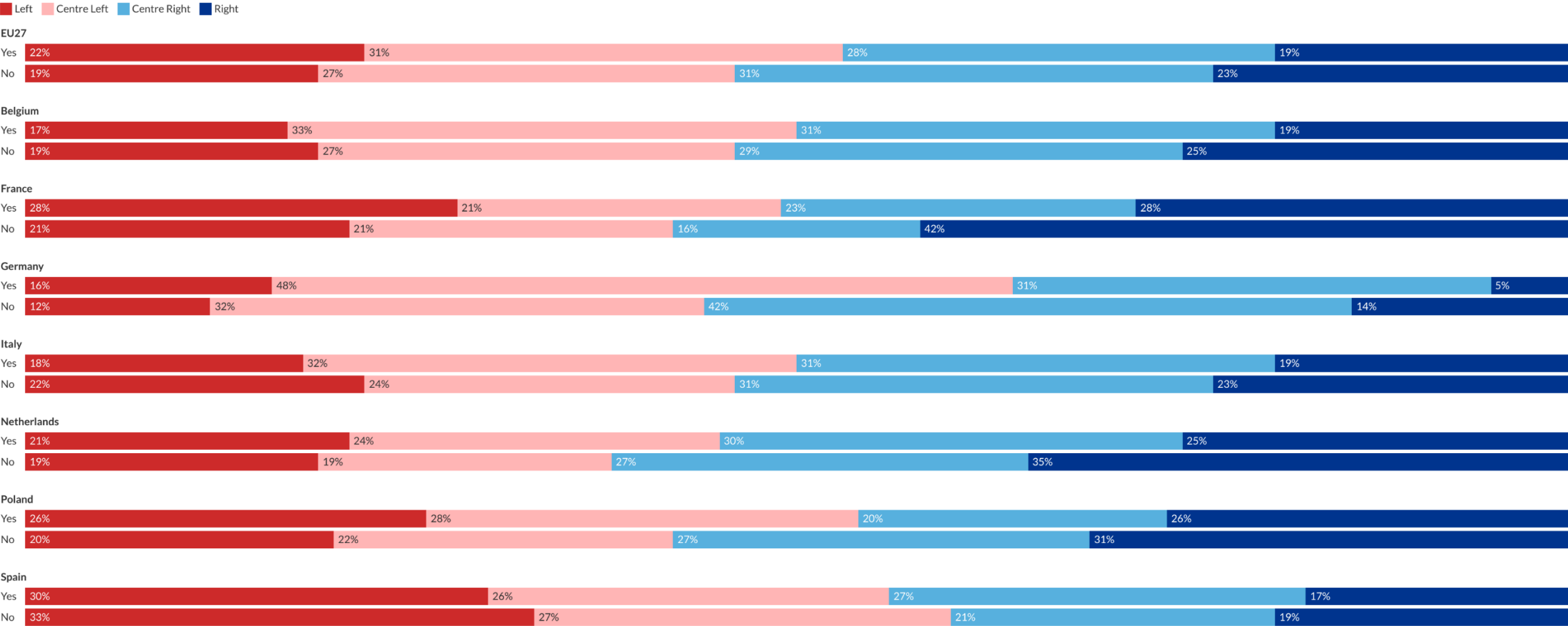


Spain



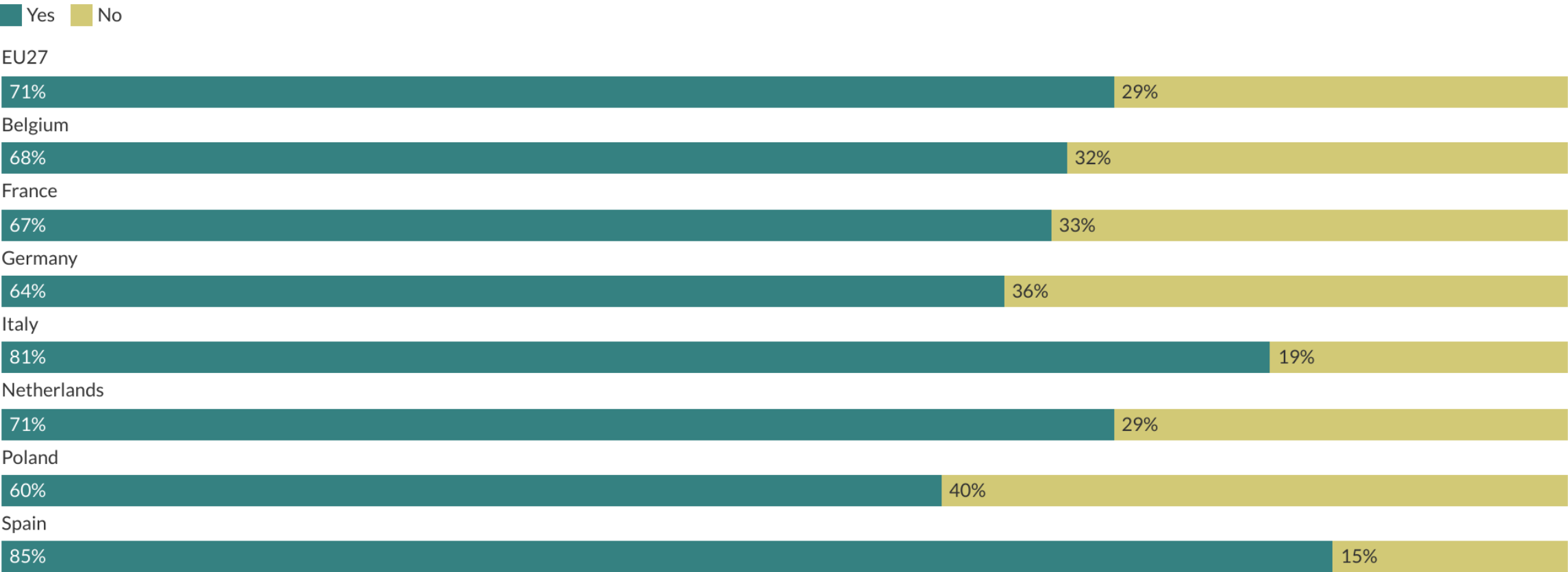
December 2023

Should the EU support Ukraine by delivering weapons?
By political orientation



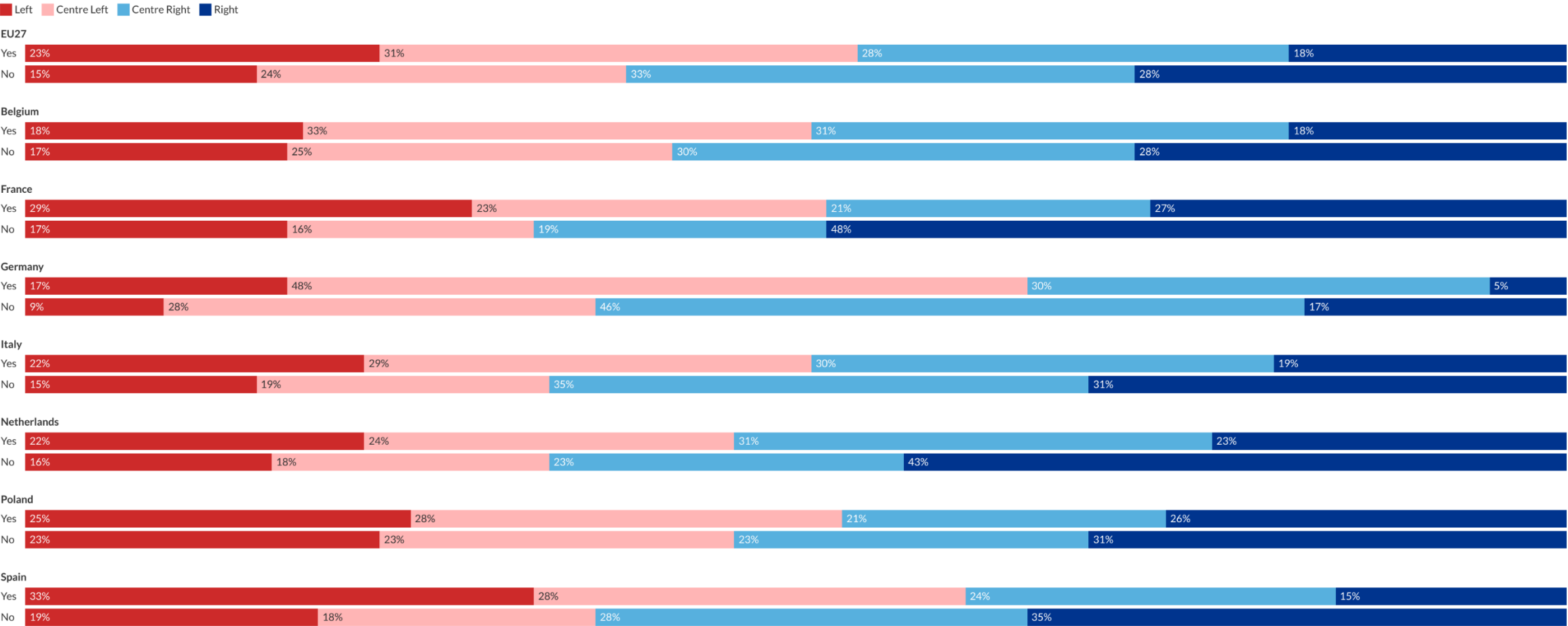
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Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine?



December 2023

Should your country accept refugees from Ukraine?
By political orientation



December 2023

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

■ Economic opportunity ■ Economic burden

EU27



Belgium



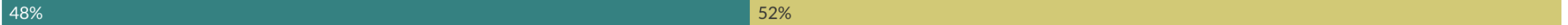
France



Germany



Italy



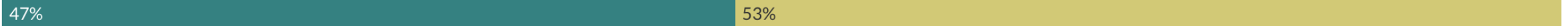
Netherlands



Poland

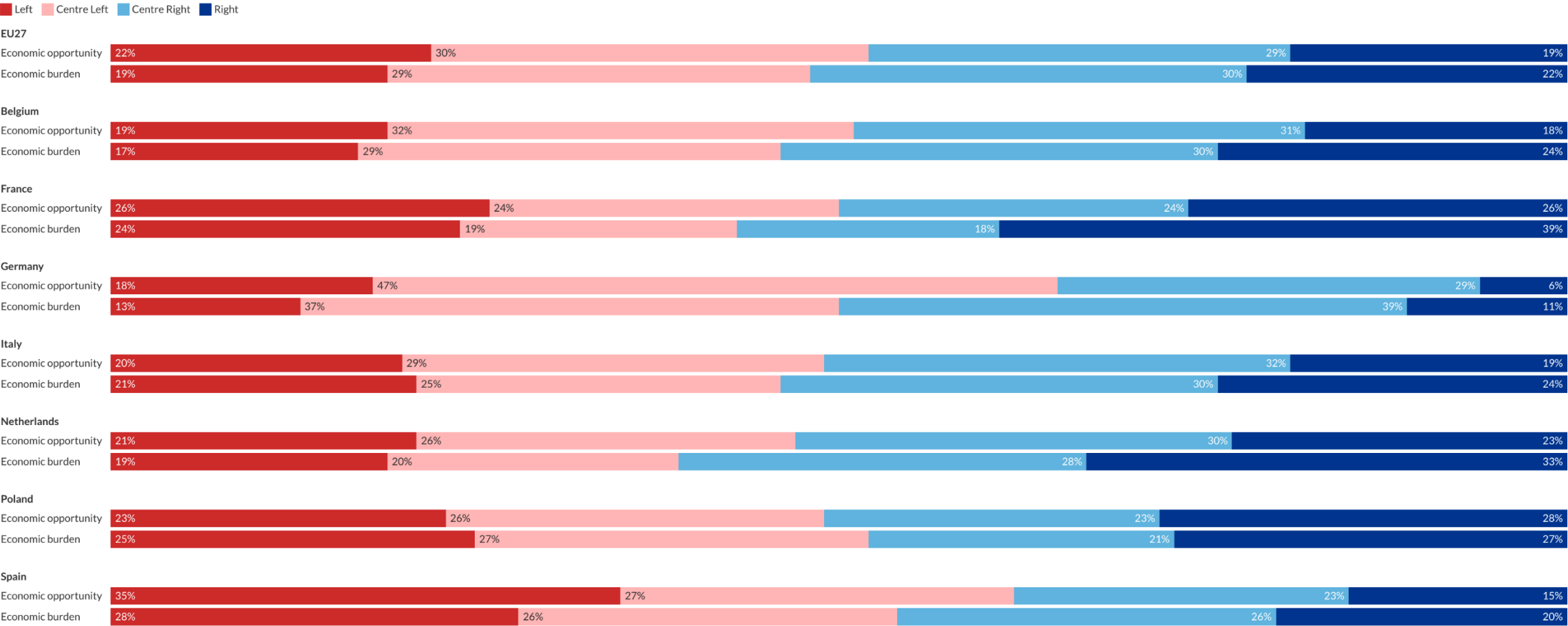


Spain



December 2023

Do you think the reconstruction of Ukraine will be an economic opportunity or an economic burden for the EU?
By political orientation



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 Italy.

In summary, our findings are as follows:

- There is no prevailing majority stance on the delivery of weapons to Ukraine. Supporters of FdI and FI are split, with a slight tendency towards rejecting the delivery of weapons.
- There is more support in the political centre than on either end of the political spectrum.
- Overall, support is strongest among those aligned with the PD.
- Overall, support is weakest among those aligned with Lega.
- Overall, support is stronger among FI and FdI adherents than among Lega adherents.
- Among those aligned with parties within the current Italian government coalition, support is strongest among FI adherents, followed by FdI and Lega adherents.

An analysis of each graph shows the following patterns:

- **European Defence Policy:** Support for a unified European defence policy is very strong (90%) across all subgroups in Italy. More than 90% of each party's adherents endorse the concept. While there is vast support for the idea, individuals across different political affiliations may disagree on the specifics of what a common defence policy should entail.
- **Weapons Delivery:** A clear majority of Italians (60%) opposes the EU delivering weapons to Ukraine. Support for weapons delivery is strongest among those affiliated with the FdI (49%), PD (48%) and FI (47%). Support is lowest among those aligned with Lega (39%) and M5S (35%).
- **Refugee Acceptance:** Support for accepting Ukrainian refugees is highest among those who back the PD (93%). Though still high, support is lowest in the Italian context among Lega adherents (78%).
- **EU Membership for Ukraine:** Overall, support for Ukraine's EU membership has seen a downturn in recent months. The strongest support for Ukraine's EU membership comes from those who prefer the PD (80%). It is lowest among FdI supporters (65%), followed by Lega and M5S supporters (67% each).
- **Energy Independence:** Those aligned with the PD (81%) show the strongest support for energy independence from Russia, followed by those who prefer the FdI (70%) and M5S (69%). Once more, support is weakest among Lega adherents (65%).

- Effectiveness of Sanctions: A majority of Italians (57%) believe that economic and financial sanctions imposed on Russia are ineffective. Regardless of their party affiliation, a majority of supporters from each party have little faith in sanctions. This belief is particularly strong among supporters of Lega (63%), Fdl (60%), and M5S (60%).
- Reconstruction of Ukraine: A slim majority (52%) of Italians believe that the reconstruction of Ukraine will be an economic burden. This sentiment is shared by supporters of Lega (61%) and M5S (57%). Supporters of Fdl are divided (50%/50%), while supporters of PD (58%) and FI (55%) see it more as an opportunity.

Please note

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

Part 1

- The War and the Vote

delves into the correlation of political orientation and support for Ukraine policies in the EU as well as seven member states.

Parts 2-8

Part 1 is complemented by **seven country reports**, each focusing on political party preferences in correlation with the same Ukraine-related questions:

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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 [data science](#) project. The data is collected by Latana.

Visit [eupinions.eu](#) for further information!

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%.

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