

Gallup Nordic/Novus: On the view of international leaders and the security in Europe and Ukraine

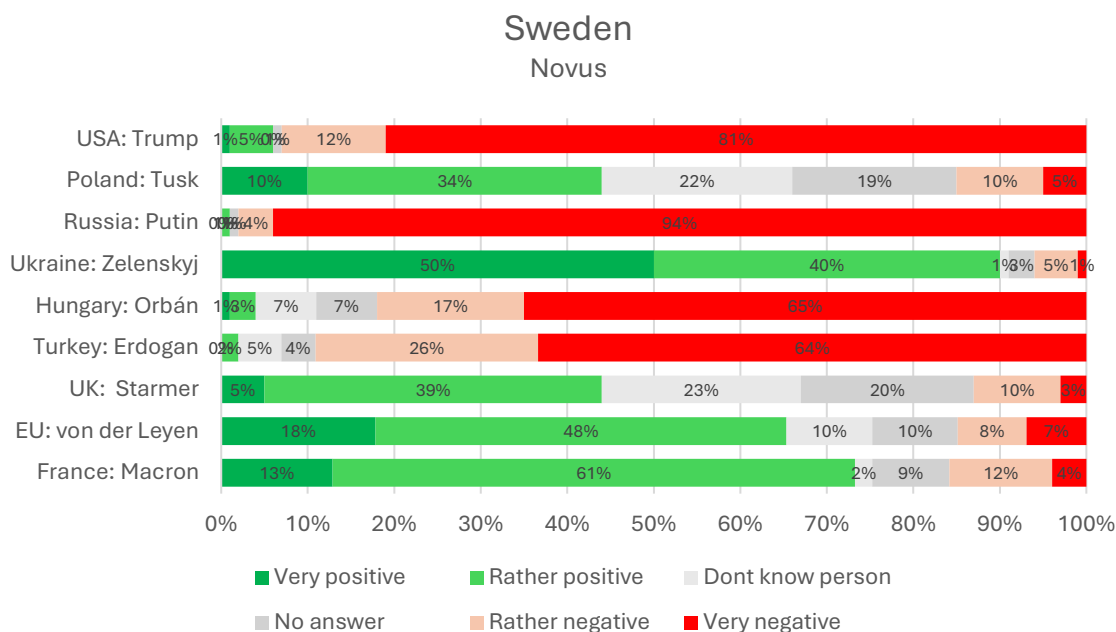
Background

Gallup Nordic/Novus have conducted this research on their own initiative, this is an issue of international interest, and it has also been subject to misinformation that need to be combatted by showing a real view of the Swedish population. In communication with Tetiana Skrypchenko Deputy Director of Rating Group, we have mirrored some of their questions and added some more relevant to a Swedish context.

Survey results and analysis

The survey is compared where the same questions are asked with the Ukrainian research company Rating group about the view on similar issues in Ukraine.

What is your attitude towards the following international leaders?



81 % of the swedes have a very negative view of Trump and 12 % have a rather negative view, totaling to 93 % having a negative view, the only world leader in our study that have a larger the negative view of the swedes is about Putin, where an overwhelming 94 % have a very negative view and in total 98 % have a negative view.

The reasons for that is really no surprise, although the swedes are surprised about the rapid shift on Trump and US official view on the war in Ukraine, the swedes knew that the world would be more unstable, in a Novus/Gallup Nordic poll in sept 2024, 74 % of the swedes thought the stability of the world would decrease in the world if Trump was elected president. And they were clearly not wrong. The other Nordic countries population thought the same, (75 % Denmark., 73 % Norway, 75 % Finland.)

And if the Nordic countries were allowed to vote in the US election Harris would have won, worth noting here is that the Nordics remember the international instability in regard to trade, NATO, and general instability that Trump created in the world, this is not about US national policies, but the international power that the US president have. For instance, on Ukraine, destabilizing international trade just to mention a few issues.

Last time Trump was president the Swedes actually feared the US as a superpower to almost the same extent as Russia and China, not a place swedes are used to se US, who we always have considered a friend and ally, not just

from a security perspective but also cultural, almost every swede is practically bilingual with English at the second language educated in school for student starting at about 8 years old, (French, German, Spanish as a optional third being from school education).

Back to the research results, Ukrainian president Zelensyj is the world leader that has the highest positive view from swedes, 50 % very positive, and 40 % rather positive, totaling to 90 % positive view, in stark contrast to the 90 % negative view that Trump and Putin have in the Swedes eyes.

The Ukrainians defending their own country against a aggressive nation is not lost to Swedes, and the support is really high, 75 % of the swedes support Ukraine. Add to that the fact that Zelenskyj in meetings with trump and interviews also refer to him representing his people and being a democratically elected president for all his people really strengthen the support for his role.

The president of France, Macron is also viewed very positive, 13 % very positive, and 61 % rather positive, totaling to 74 % of the swedes having a positive view of him.

EU: Von der Leyen is interesting, swedes have a quite positive view on her, but she is seldom covered in Swedish media, and most likely do the swedes have a very limited view of her, since the EU president is not publicly elected, probably the view from the swedes perspective is based on the EU support to Ukraine more than anything else.

Same with UK Starmer, but probably even more, he came into the swedes public knowledge when he had meetings with Trump and the strong support for Ukraine. My analysis is that when UK left EU and the populist movement in relations to that, the UK lost a lot of positive support from the swedes. Similar issue with Poland's Tusk, a person not really in the Swedish media coverage before the Trump led US rapid shift in relations to Ukraine. Tusk having roughly the same positive support as Starmer. Very few swedes having a negative view on them, but a large population about 40 % who do not know.

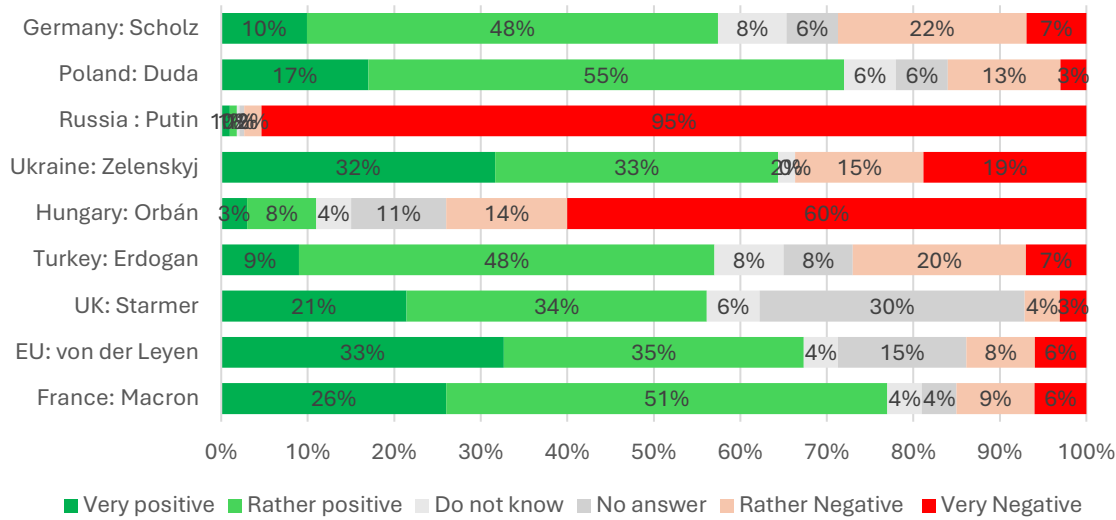
But US showing that it can not be trusted the way we used to is opening up a new era for European leadership, with leaders like Macron, von der Leyer, Starmer and Tusk, seen in a very positive view from the Swedish population. Because the recent election in Germany, we did not German Scholz.

Something that the Swedish news media should take into consideration, toning down the massive US coverage and more focus on European news.

The negative view of Erdogan is worth noting, this is probably mainly in relations to his stalling of the Swedish NATO application, that really annoyed the Swedish population in polls we did during that process.

Orbán is more multi-faceted than Erdogan, partly because of their stalling of the NATO application, but Hungary and Orbán have repeatedly sided on the Russian side in EU negotiations, and there has been a lot of criticism about the democratic validity of his position. When Swedes are asked what they think is best about Sweden, Democracy is on number one, second is our welfare system (social security, free access to school and healthcare etc) and third free access to nature (Allemansrätten). Such a fundamentally rooted view on democracy, so deep that it is often overlooked and being taken for granted, (some polls misunderstanding how deep this is because it is the foundation of the Swedish society) any signs of a non-democratic regime is something that swedes strongly react negative to.

Ukraine Rating Group

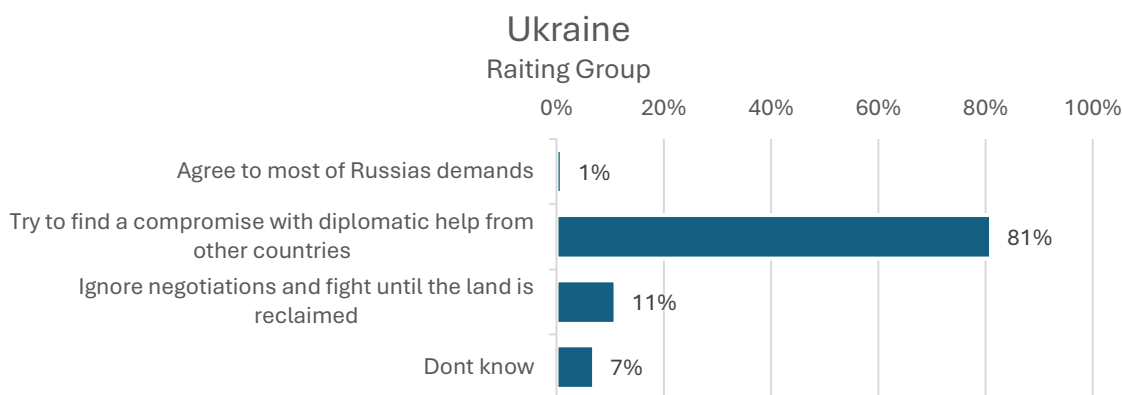
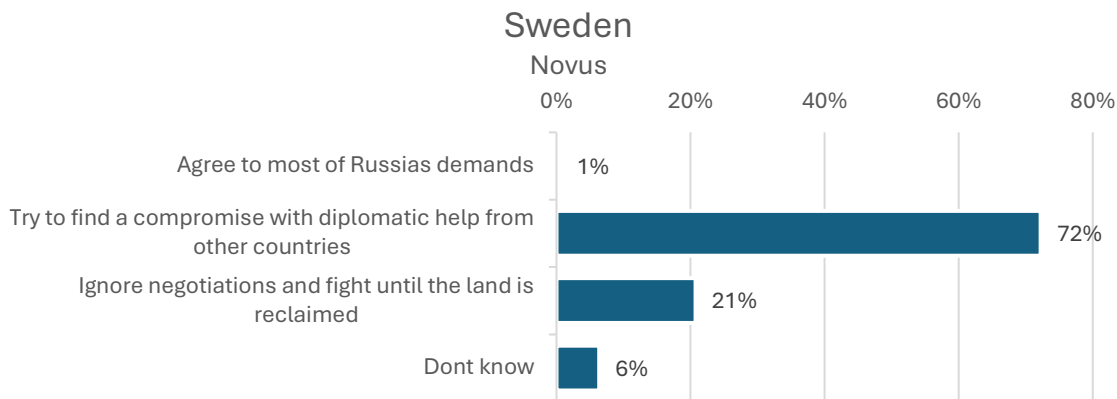


Looking at the Ukrainian poll by Rating Group, who (quite understandably) did not include US: Trump, there are similarities in the view on Orbán and Putin, but Erdogan is viewed in a much more positive light. Turkey weapons early had a critical role in the Ukrainian defense, best well known probably was the Turkish drone Bayraktar, and most likely this has provided a positive boost to a struggling Turkish economy. But the same time Turkey also is dependent on Russian relations, so they are doing a balancing act. But from this poll Ukrainians see Erdogan in as positive view as Scholz, with almost 30 % having a negative view.

The Rating Group report is also interesting from so many more aspects, the view on Zelenkyj is leaning heavily towards positive, but there is more to the national politics in Ukraine, just as there is to US politics or Sweden for that matter. More in the Ukrainian view of this in their report, that can be found following this link for parts not covered in this comparison:

[Attitudes toward specific European leaders - Ukraine - Research](#)

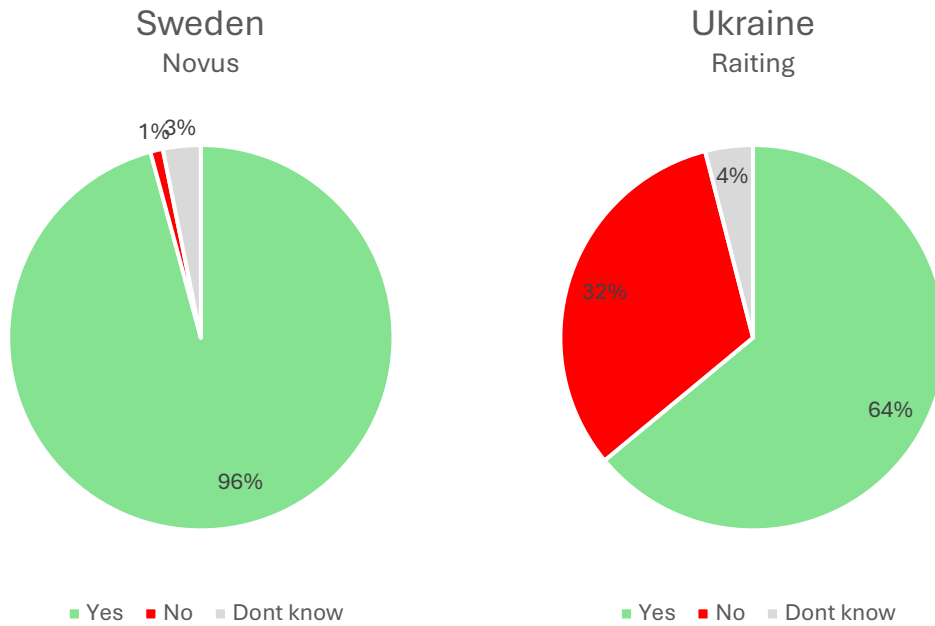
Which of the following do you think would be the best end to the war in Ukraine?



In large the Swedes and Ukrainians agree on this question, worth mentioning is that a smaller population in Ukraine want to ignore negotiations. It is of course much easier to be tough on this issue in Sweden than in Ukraine who have defended their country for a little more than three years now. But looking at the Swedish view on the Ukrainian situation there is no doubt that a big majority of the Swedes are behind them in their fight to defend their country.

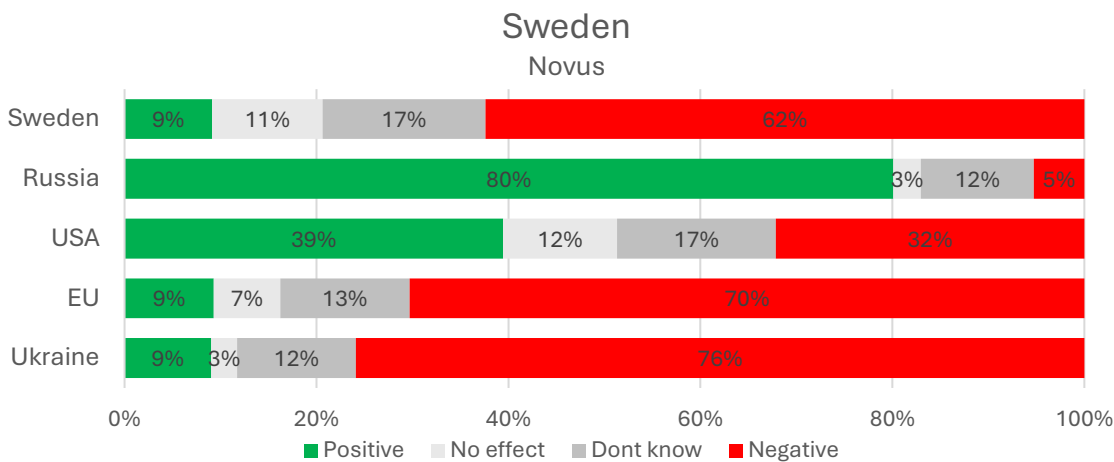
Do you think Ukraine should be involved in negotiations with Russia for peace?

(Do you support Ukraine engaging in direct negotiations with Russia to end the war? *Ukraine question*)



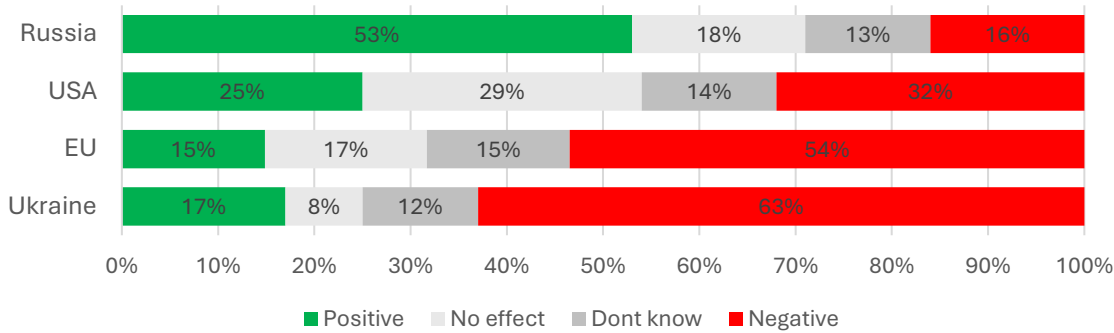
It's not quite the same question, but broadly comparable, what differs here is that 32% of Ukrainian citizens don't want to negotiate, but a lot of this probably has to do with not trusting Russia if there aren't international security guarantees to ensure that Russia maintains its part of the negotiations, and the fact that Russia and Ukraine have been doing negotiations that then have been broken by Russia.

If the US and Russia start to open up for trade and talks, how do you think it will affect:



The Swedes think that the major beneficiary of trade and talk between US and Russia is Russia, if US would benefit or not is a more or less split view among the Swedish population. Almost as many (32%) think it would be negative to US as positive (39%). For Sweden, EU and Ukraine the swedes with a large majority think it would be negative with US and Russia now opening up for trade and talks. Since Russia is clearly the aggressor in Ukraine, leading to large sanctions from actors like USA, Canada, EU, Japan and Australia against Russia.

Ukraina Rating



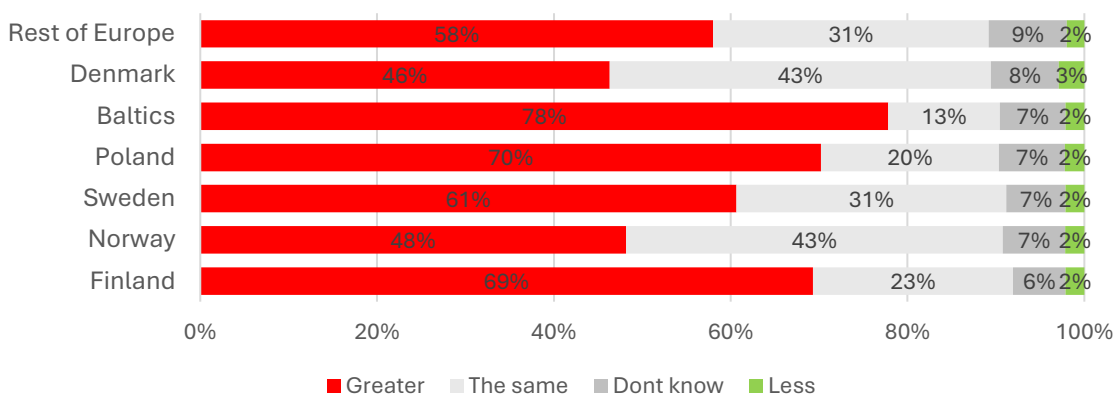
The view from the Ukrainian population is leaning toward the same reasoning, but you can also see that Ukraine have a history with Russia that is a bit more multi faceted than Sweden. Although Ukraine since 2010 moved closer towards “west” there is still a larger minority leaning towards Russia, but the majority is clearly thinking that the only beneficiary of US and Russia opening up communication and trade (normalization of relations) is Russia.

The question in Ukraine was: “in your opinion, how will normalization of relations between the USA and Russia affect these Countries?”

In Swedish it was necessary to clarify what normalization was, and we clarified it with “open up for trade and talks” as stated in the question above the chart. Focusing on not the exact wording but the core of the question, to avoid any confusion in the Swedish language. Normalizing could be misinterpreted.

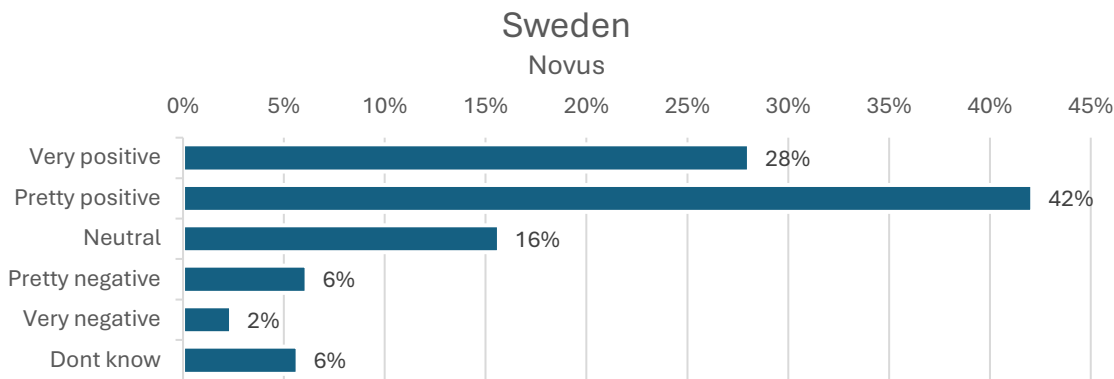
If the war in Ukraine ends quickly and Russia is allowed to keep territories it invaded, do you think Russia will become a greater or lesser threat to:

Sweden Novus



This question was not in Ratings questionnaire, only in our Swedish. It is crystal clear that the swedes see a Russia that will not stop at Ukraine, but a threat to rest of Europe, highest is the Baltics (78%) , Poland (70%), Finland (69%), Sweden (61%), Norway (48%) and lastly Denmark (46%).

What is your position on the idea of creating a common European military defense?



Also unique to Sweden, but after the record fast shift in opinion for Nato after Russian invasion of Ukraine, the neutrality is not anything the swedes want, and if USA back out of NATO, 70 % of the swedes is positive to a common European military defense. Only 8 % is negative. This is a higher support for this than it was for NATO during the process of application of membership. It is a perfectly logical reaction to the current situation, but it is also a historical shift, a stark reminder that the swedes understand the threat that Russia is not only posing by invading Ukraine, but the verbal threats that have been coming from them even before Ukraine was invaded. And as I wrote when Ukraine was invaded, swedes did not get scared, they got angry. This anger is clearly still there 3 years later.

Torbjörn Sjöström

Gallup Nordic/Novus

About the survey

The survey was conducted by Novus on behalf of Novus' own initiative 27 Feb-4 March 2025 in the Novus Sweden panel and was answered by a total of 1013 people and is representative of the Swedish people in the age group 18–84 years.

The survey is compared with Rating Group's survey conducted in Ukraine, which was published on February 21:

[Attitudes toward specific European leaders - Ukraine - Research](#)

For further information about the Novus Sweden panel, see <https://novus.se/om-novus/vanliga-fragor/>. If you are unsure of how a figure should be interpreted, please contact info@novus.se.

What is your attitude towards the following international leaders?

Sweden: Novus

	Very positive	Pretty positive	Don't know person	No answer	Pretty negative	Very negative
FRANCE: MACRON	13%	61%	2%	9%	12%	4%
EU: VON DER LEYEN	18%	48%	10%	10%	8%	7%
UK: STARMER	5%	39%	23%	20%	10%	3%
TURKEY: ERDOGAN	0%	2%	5%	4%	26%	64%
HUNGARY: ORBÁN	1%	3%	7%	7%	17%	65%
UKRAINE: ZELENSKYJ	50%	40%	1%	3%	5%	1%
RUSSIA: PUTIN	0%	1%	0%	1%	4%	94%
POLAND: TUSK	10%	34%	22%	19%	10%	5%
USA: TRUMP	1%	5%	0%	1%	12%	81%

Ukraine: Raiting

	Very positive	Pretty positive	Don't know person	No answer	Pretty Negative	Very Negative
France: Macron	26%	51%	4%	4%	9%	6%
EU: von der Leyen	33%	35%	4%	15%	8%	6%
UK: Starmer	21%	34%	6%	30%	4%	3%
Turkey: Erdogan	9%	48%	8%	8%	20%	7%
Hungary: Orbán	3%	8%	4%	11%	14%	60%
Ukraine: Zelenskyj	32%	33%	2%	0%	15%	19%
Russia : Putin	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	95%
Poland: Duda	17%	55%	6%	6%	13%	3%

If the US and Russia start to open up for trade and talks, how do you think it will affect:

Sweden: Novus

	Positive	No effect	Dont know	Negative
Ukraine	9%	3%	12%	76%
EU	9%	7%	13%	70%
USA	39%	12%	17%	32%
Russia	80%	3%	12%	5%
Sweden	9%	11%	17%	62%

Ukraine: Raiting

Kolumn1	Positive	No effect	Dont know	Negative
Ukraine	17%	8%	12%	63%
EU	15%	17%	15%	54%
USA	25%	29%	14%	32%
Russia	53%	18%	13%	16%

If the war in Ukraine ends quickly and Russia is allowed to keep territories it invaded, do you think Russia will become a greater or lesser threat to:

Sweden: Novus

	Greater	The same	Dont know	Less
Finland	69%	23%	6%	2%
Norway	48%	43%	7%	2%
Sweden	61%	31%	7%	2%
Poland	70%	20%	7%	2%
Baltics	78%	13%	7%	2%
Denmark	46%	43%	8%	3%
Rest of Europe	58%	31%	9%	2%

What is your position on the idea of creating a common European military defense?

TOTALT

VERY POSITIVE	28%
PRETTY POSITIVE	42%
NEUTRAL	16%
PRETTY NEGATIVE	6%
VERY NEGATIVE	2%
DONT KNOW	6%