Defining and countering anti-Western narratives in the Republic of Moldova.

2nd edition Workshop

March 2025
Chișinău, The Republic of Moldova

Disclaimer

- This work is supported by the <u>Black Sea Trust of the German Marshall Fund</u> as part of the project **"Defining and countering anti-Western narratives in the Republic of Moldova. An in-depth audience analysis ."**

The conclusions in this material do not necessarily represent the position of the donor and are solely the responsibility of the authors.

Methodology

Type of research: Representative National Survey - Trends assessment

|	Wave 1 (September 2024)	Wave 2 (March 2025)
Data collection method:	CATI	CATI
Target group:	General population aged 18 and over.	General population aged 18 and over.
Sample size:	1021 participants	1002 participants
Fieldwork period:	September 13-22, 2024	March 18-26, 2025
Sampling:	Probabilistic with simple random selection principle.	Probabilistic with simple random selection principle.
Sampling error:	3.1%	2.6%

- **Foreign Policy Context**

Every seventh person says they are interested in what is happening internationally with every fifth following closely the events.

73.3% interest in Foreign Policy
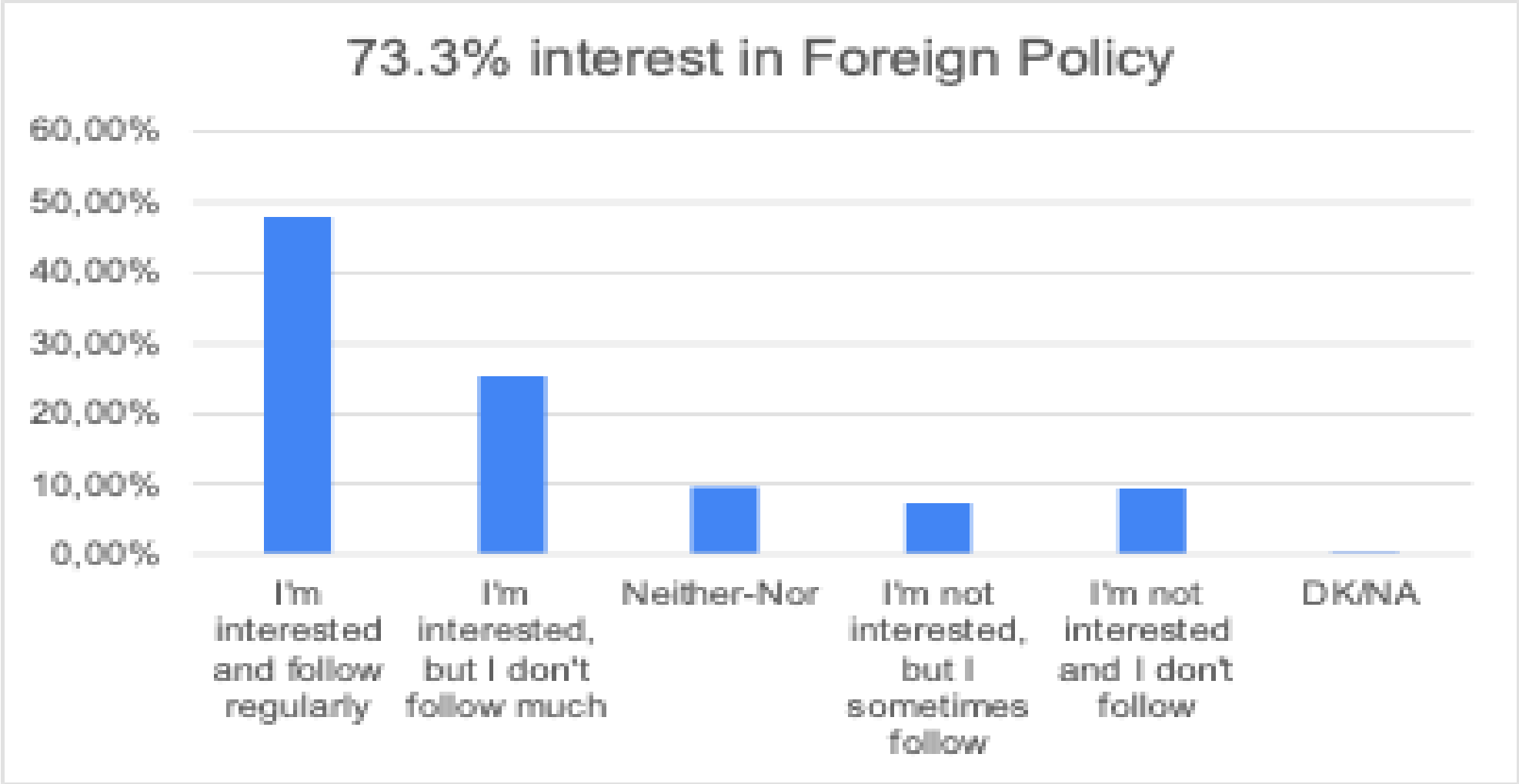
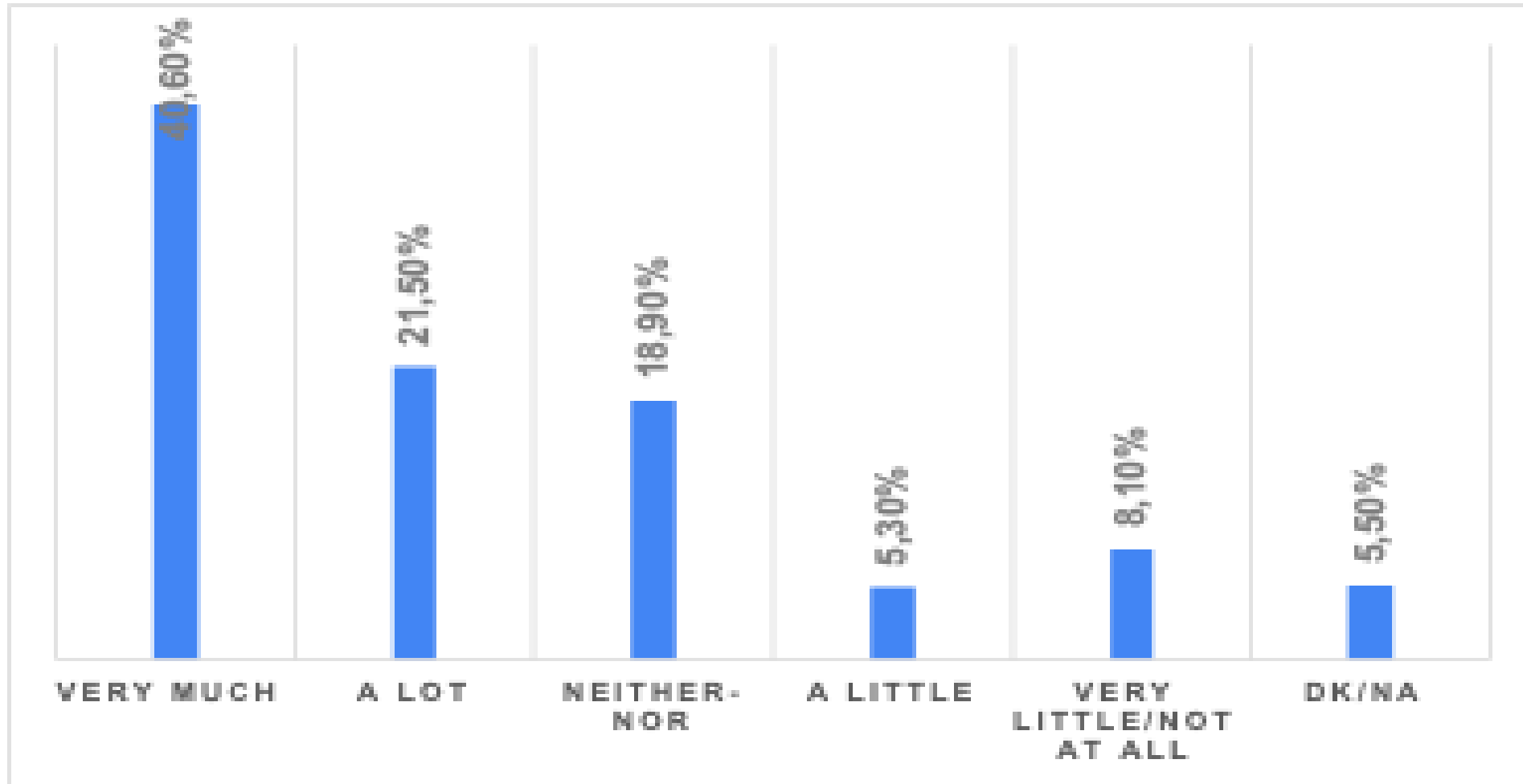Q. *To what extent are you personally interested in events taking place internationally (in other countries)?*

The international uncertain context is affecting Moldovan citizens as well.



Legend: I'm worried · I'm not worried · DK/NA

- 77% I'm worried
- 21% I'm not worried
- 2% DK/NA
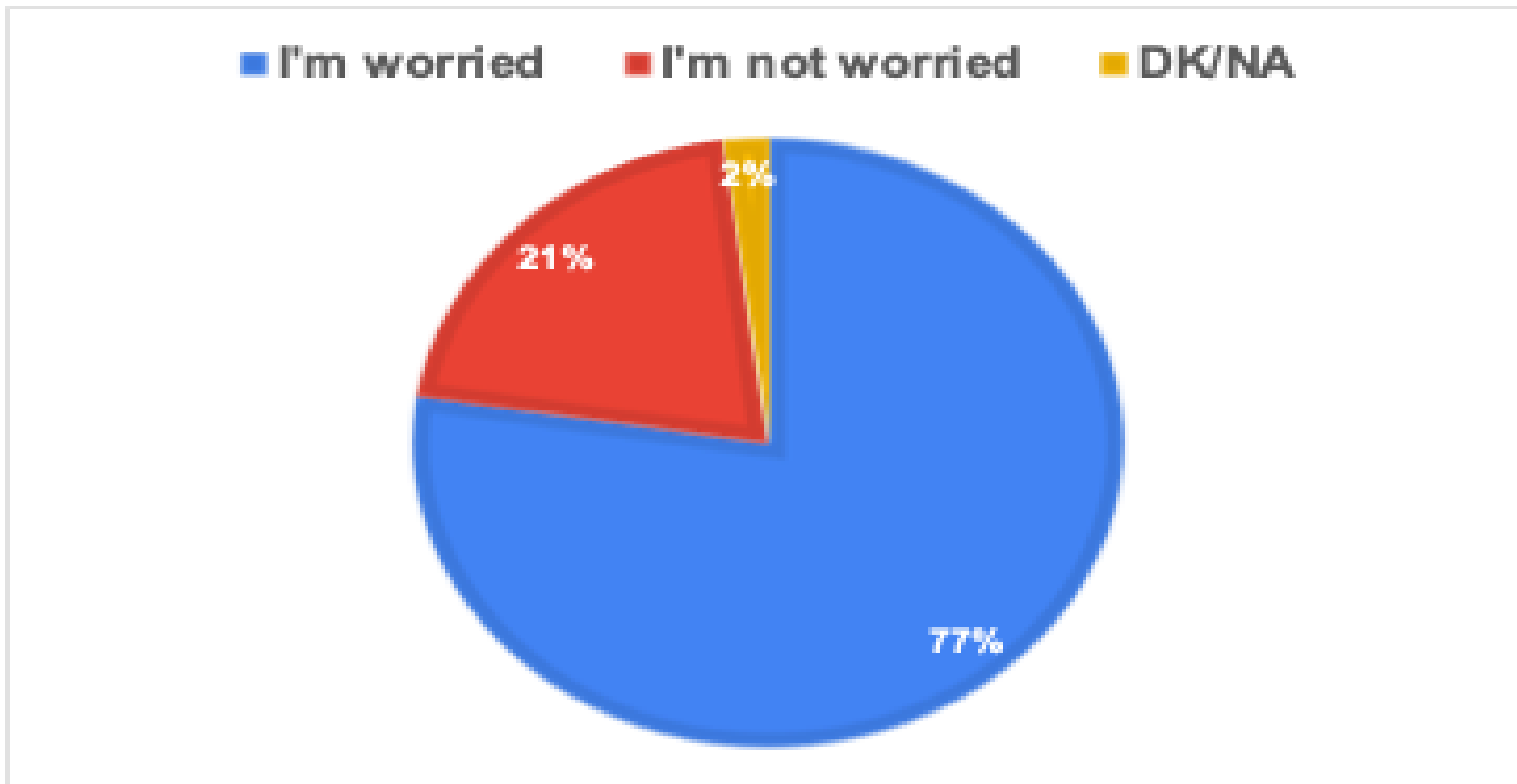
Q. *Please tell me, are you personally worried or not worried about the political changes taking place internationally?*

62.1% of citizens believe that Moldova is linked to the international events. Yet, the influence is seen differently by different groups. For e.g. only 42% say that _the change in the US position towards the EU and Ukraine will have for the Republic of Moldova negative effect._

Chart values:
- VERY MUCH: 40,60%
- A LOT: 21,50%
- NEITHER-NOR: 18,90%
- A LITTLE: 5,30%
- VERY LITTLE/NOT AT ALL: 8,10%
- DK/NA: 5,50%

Q. _To what extent do you think the socio-political and economic life in the Republic of Moldova is influenced by the events taking place internationally?_

The international context divides opinions about the peace negotiations in favour of Ukraine: now it's more about emotions than facts.
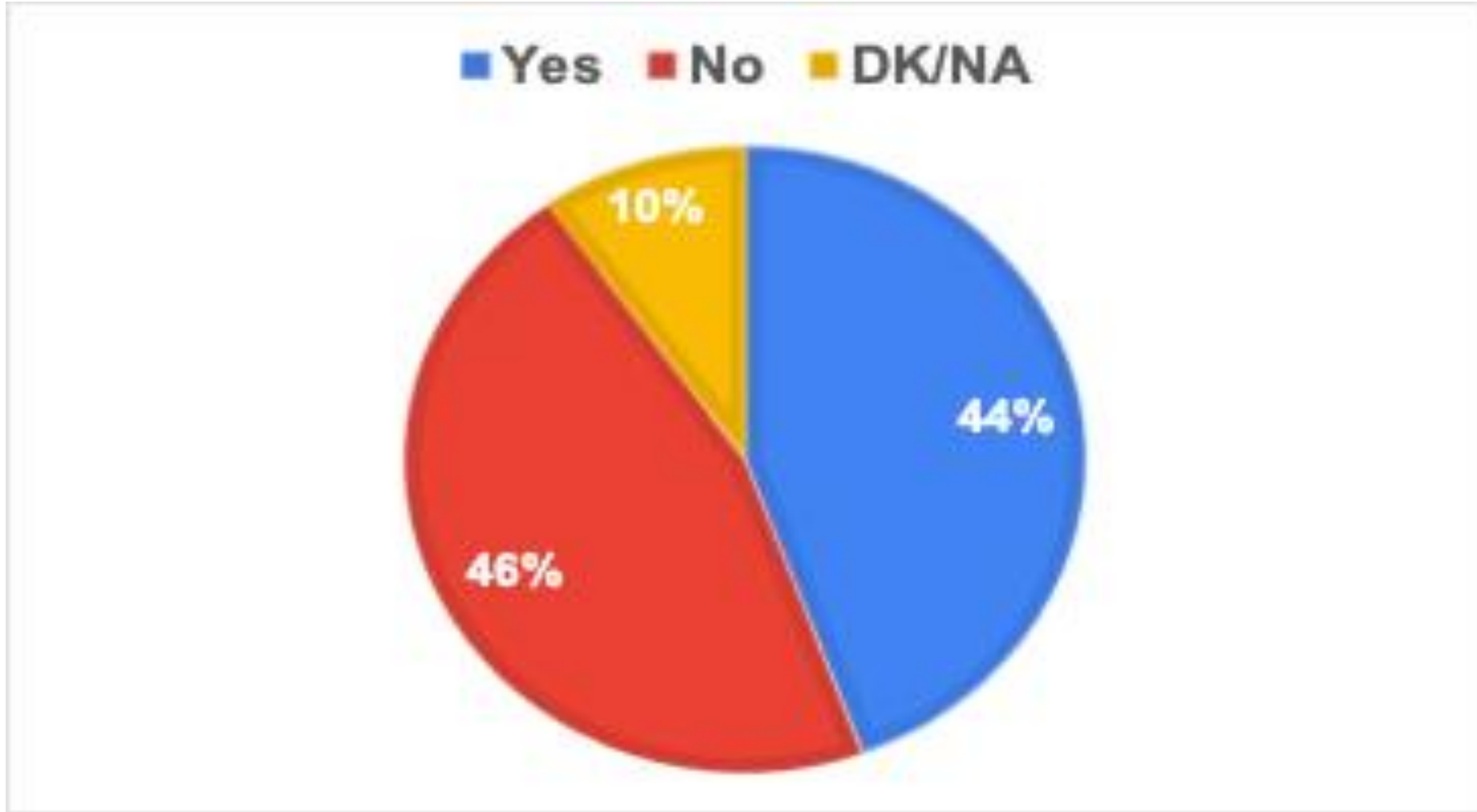

Q. Do you personally believe that Ukraine will manage to negotiate a peace agreement in its favor?

ReArm versus Protections: 60% support Moldova's consolidation of its army.
The new context is making Moldovans aware of their week points.

Left chart (YES / NO / DK/NA):
- YES: 42,40%
- NO: 45,10%
- DK/NA: 12,50%
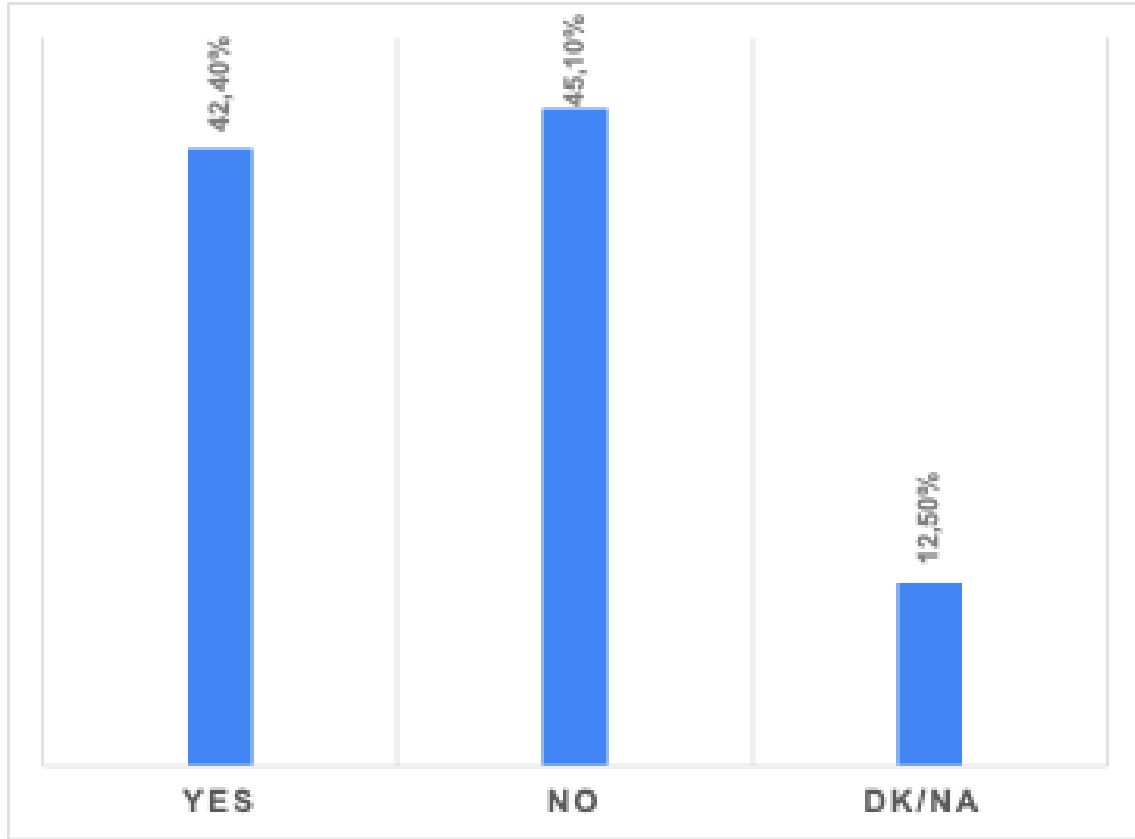
Q. *Do you think it is necessary to create a common army of the European Union, in the current security context?*

Right chart (YES / NO / DK/NA):
- YES: 58,50%
- NO: 37,50%
- DK/NA: 4,10%
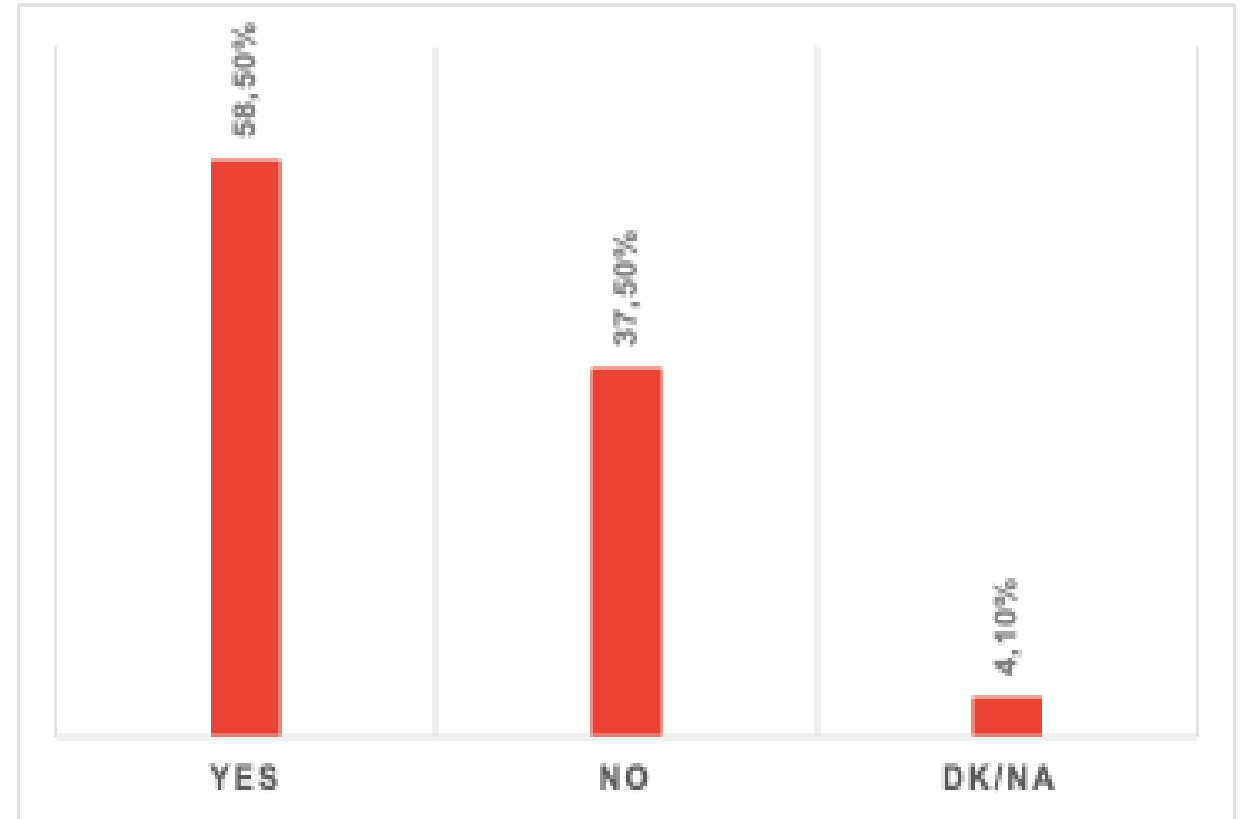
Q. *Do you think that Moldova needs to strengthen its national army, based on the current events taking place internationally?*

- **Resilience Indicators**

The weak points of a small state might become opportunities in communication to achieve foreign policy aims.

NO= UP 3.1

Wave I ■ Wave II

	YES	NO	DK/NA
Wave I	32,7	64,3	3
Wave II	30	67,4	2,6
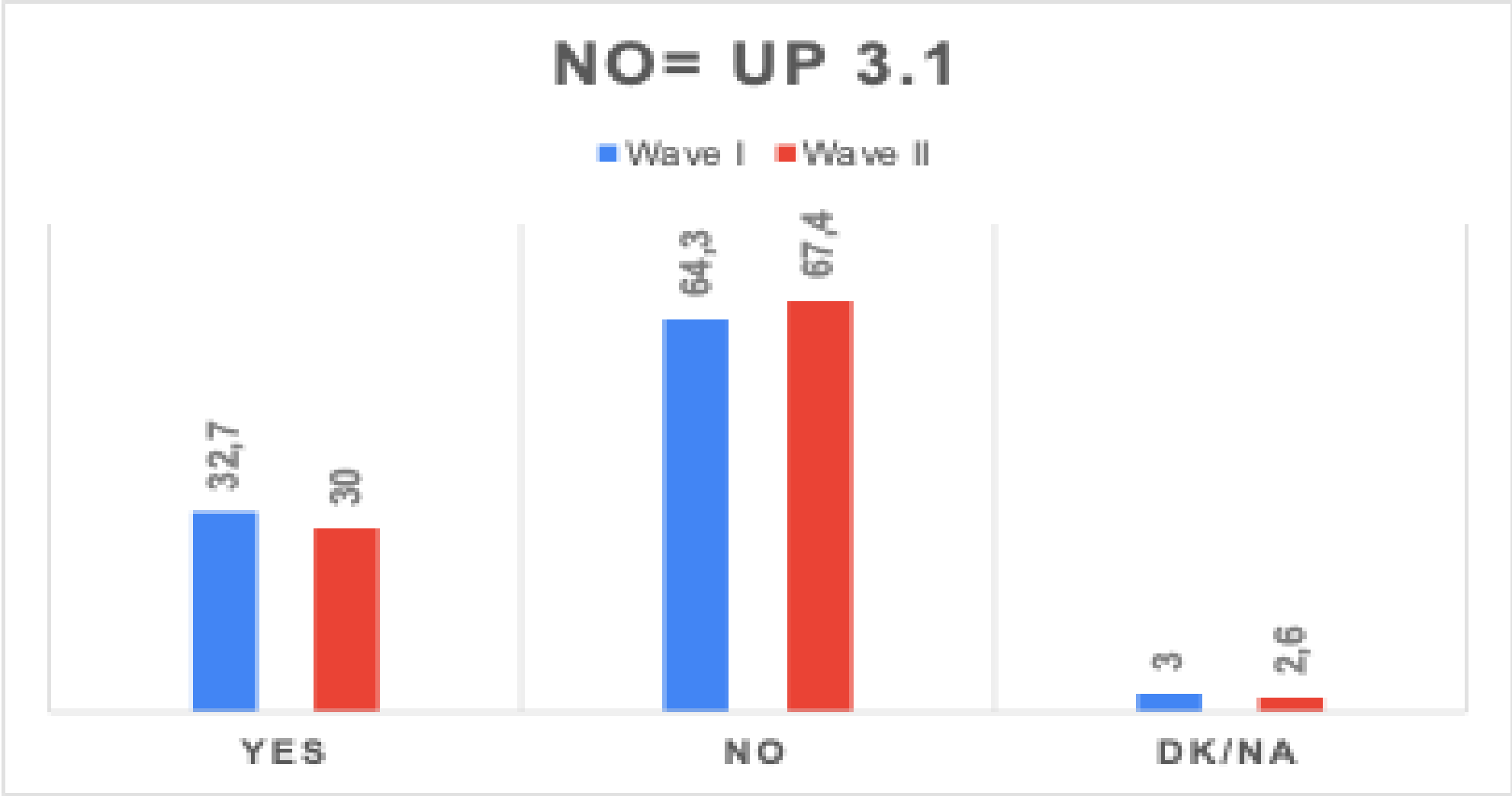
Q. Do you believe Moldova can develop on its own without external help (from the EU, other states?)

Six months after the Referendum – no change in the support towards the country's EU accession. Yes- 63% support, less are ready to actively show their support.
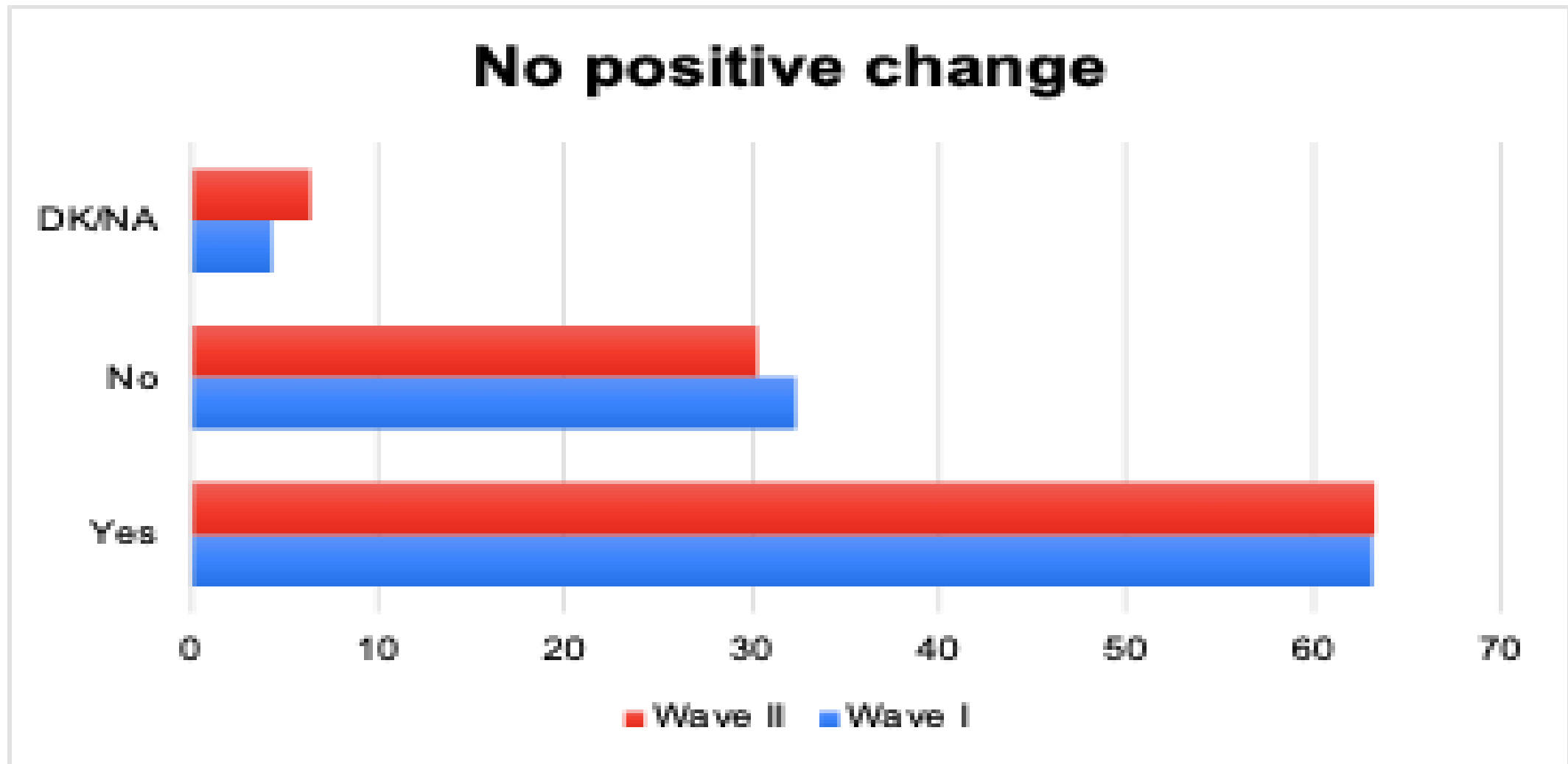

No positive change

Chart axis labels: DK/NA, No, Yes

Scale: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70

Legend: ■ Wave II ■ Wave I

Q: Do you personally support or oppose the Republic of Moldova's integration into the EU?

The Referendum Campaigns had not influence people's choice.

SLIGHT CHANGE BOTH FOR EU AND EEU

Legend: ■ April 2024 CBS ■ Wave I ■ Wave II

Category	April 2024 CBS	Wave I	Wave II
THE EU	53,9	55,8	54,4
THE EURASIAN...	25,3	26,8	24,7
WOULDN'T...	7,3	6,1	6,2
HAVEN'T...	11,8	10,1	12,5
N/A	1,6	1,2	2,2
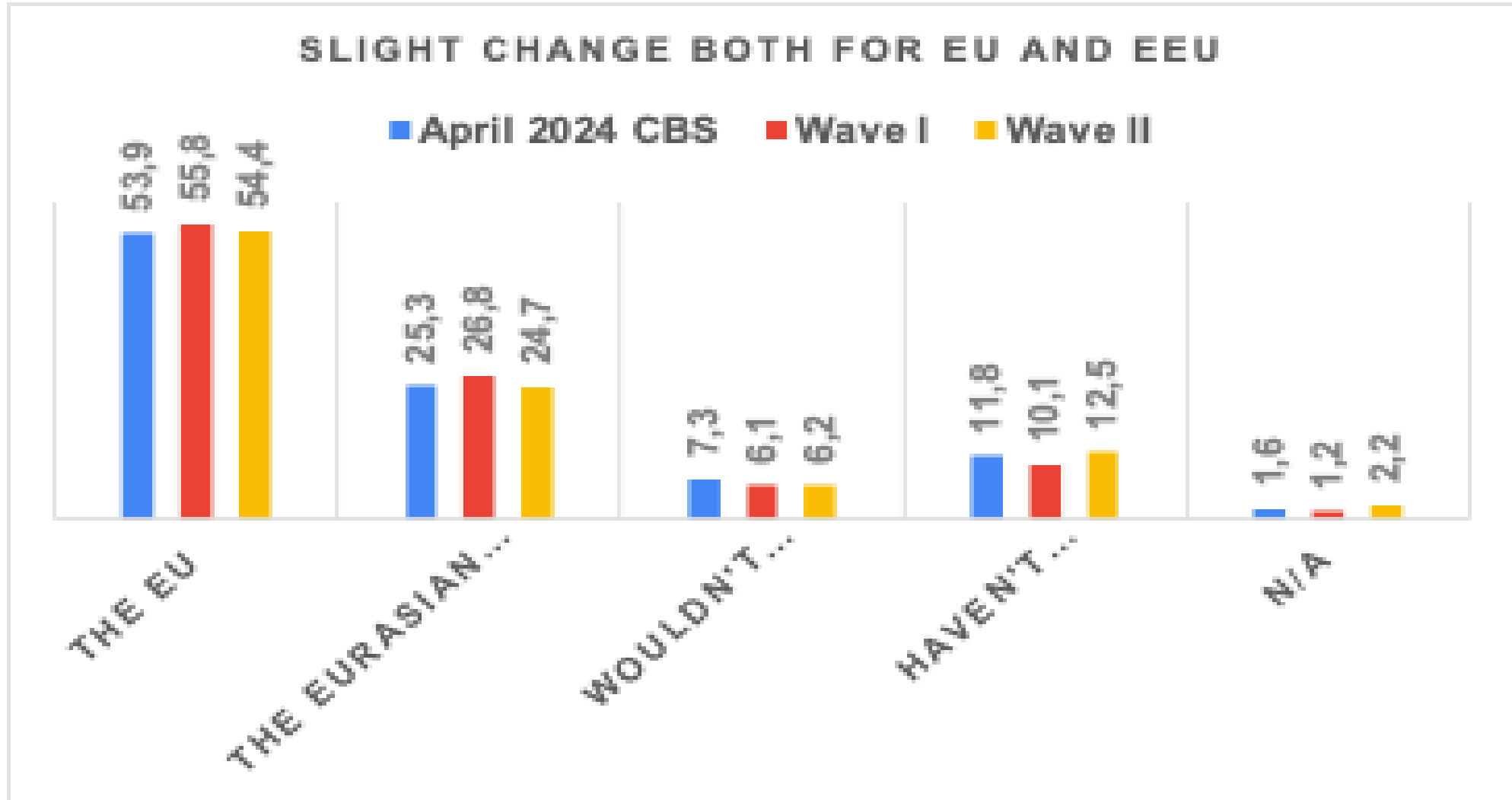
Q: *If a choice had to be made in a referendum between the Republic of Moldova joining the European Union and the Republic of Moldova joining the Eurasian Economic Union, what would you opt for:*

Majority can shape mindsets of minority – yet the referendum did not significantly contribute to achieving this goal.

3.1 INCREASE OF NO

Legend: ■ April 2024 CBS ■ Wave I ■ Wave II

YES
- 48,2
- 52,7
- 51

NO
- 30,3
- 32,6
- 36,5

DK/NA
- 21,5
- 14,8
- 12,6
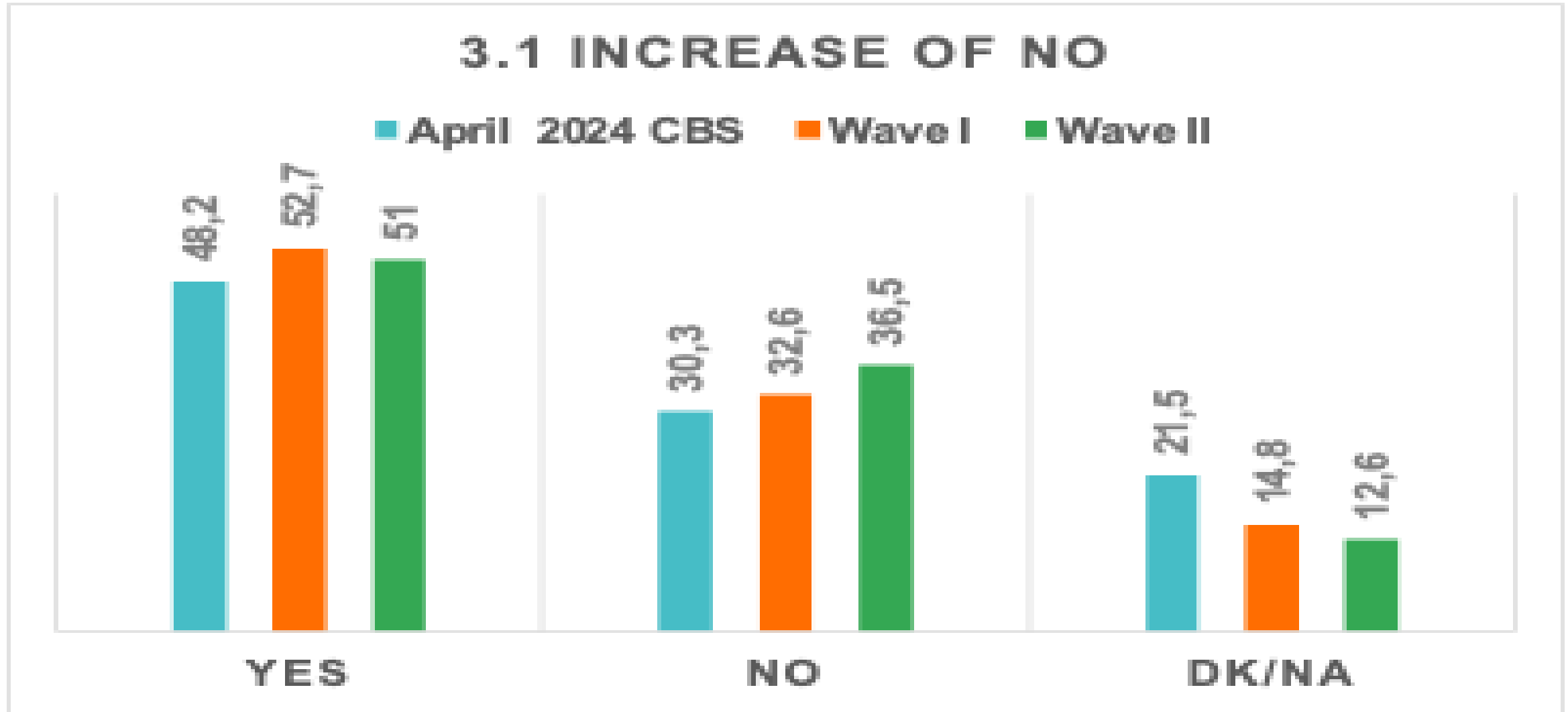
Q: In your opinion, does the majority of Moldova's population currently support the country joining the EU?

# E. Macron is the only international leader who registered a boos of positive image. D. Trump is seen in a neutral way.

NEUTRAL ATTITUD. FOR TRUMP= 25%

■ April 2024 CBS ■ Wave II

Person	April 2024 CBS	Wave II
V. PUTIN	30,1	29,2
V. ZELENSKI	30,5	31
E. MACRON	29,8	33,
M. RUTTE		17,4
D. TRUMP		22,6
E. MUSK		12,8
K. STARMER		20,6
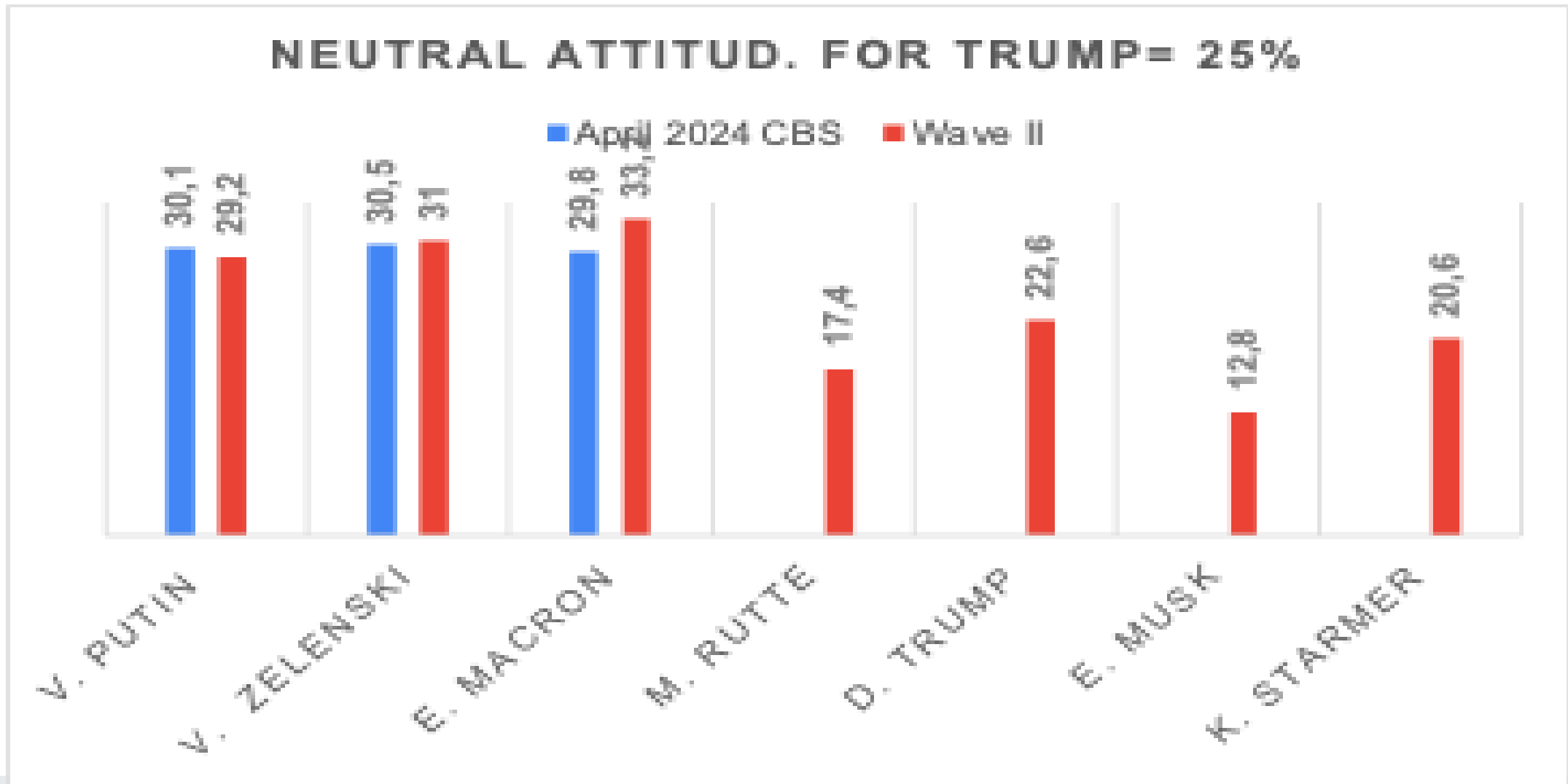
Q: How much do you trust the following public persons?

Russia is still a non-aggressor for the half of the population.

Ascendent & Divisive

Legend: Wave II (yellow), Wave I (red), April 2024 CBS (blue)
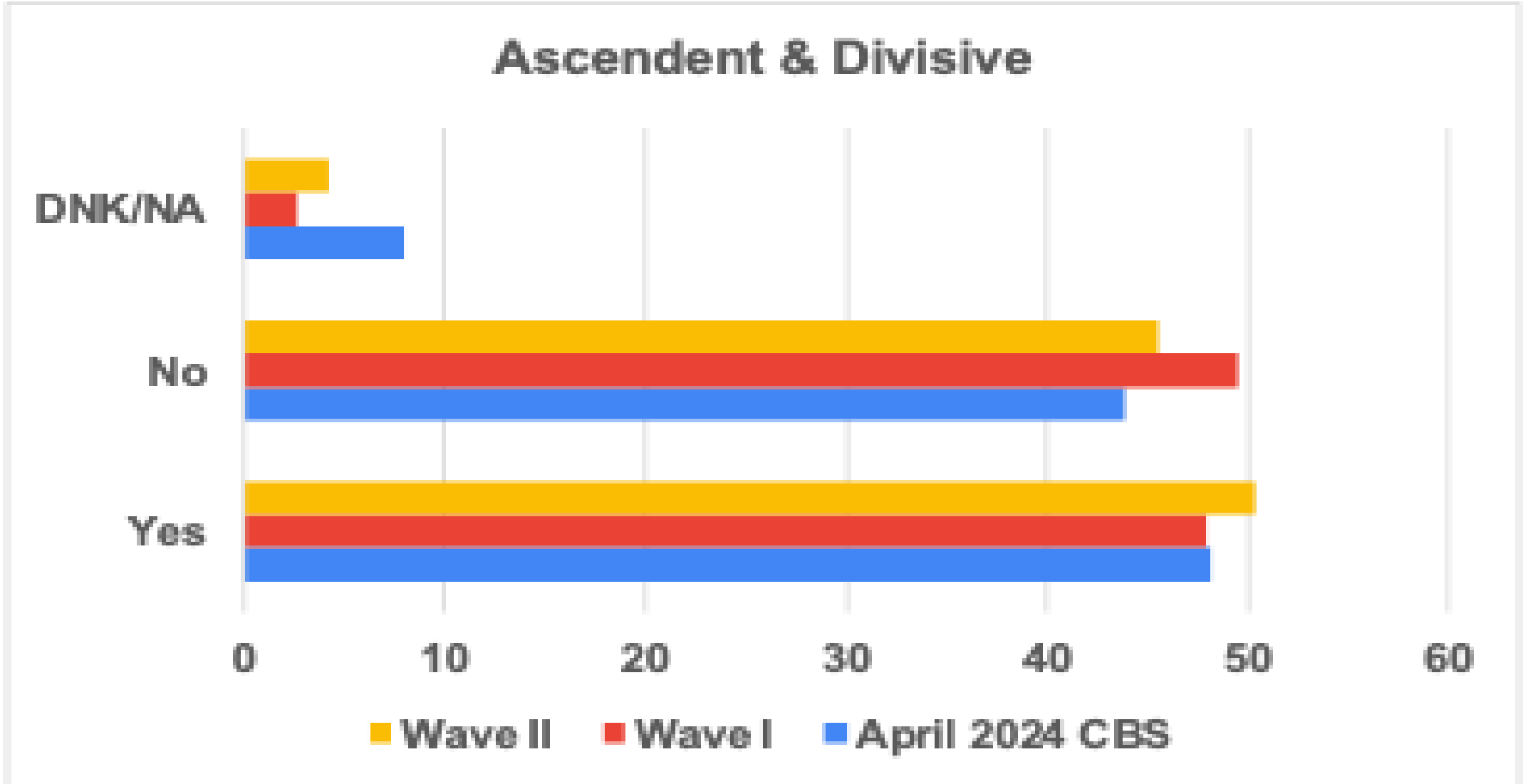
Q. *Do you believe that Russia represents a security threat to our country?*

- **Narratives & Counter Narratives**

Key Findings

➢ *Context, timing and format of the message matters.*

➢ *Link your messages to international actors and events to strengthen your points.*

➢ *How do you frame your message matters: the EU will make us economically better versus EU it is the best options that we have.*

➢ *If you will not talk about it, someone else will – Traditional Values.*

➢ *Build your message on something that is already there instead of trying to bring something entirely new.*

➢ *Shifting mindsets it is a long-term deal – 6 months are enough to test you approach not to change the world.*

➢ *Together we are stronger – BUT - coordinated campaigns instead of doing all of us the same.*

Combating disinformation and communicating

Task: Tracking - 19 narratives

- **10 Strategic messages**
- **8 False narratives**
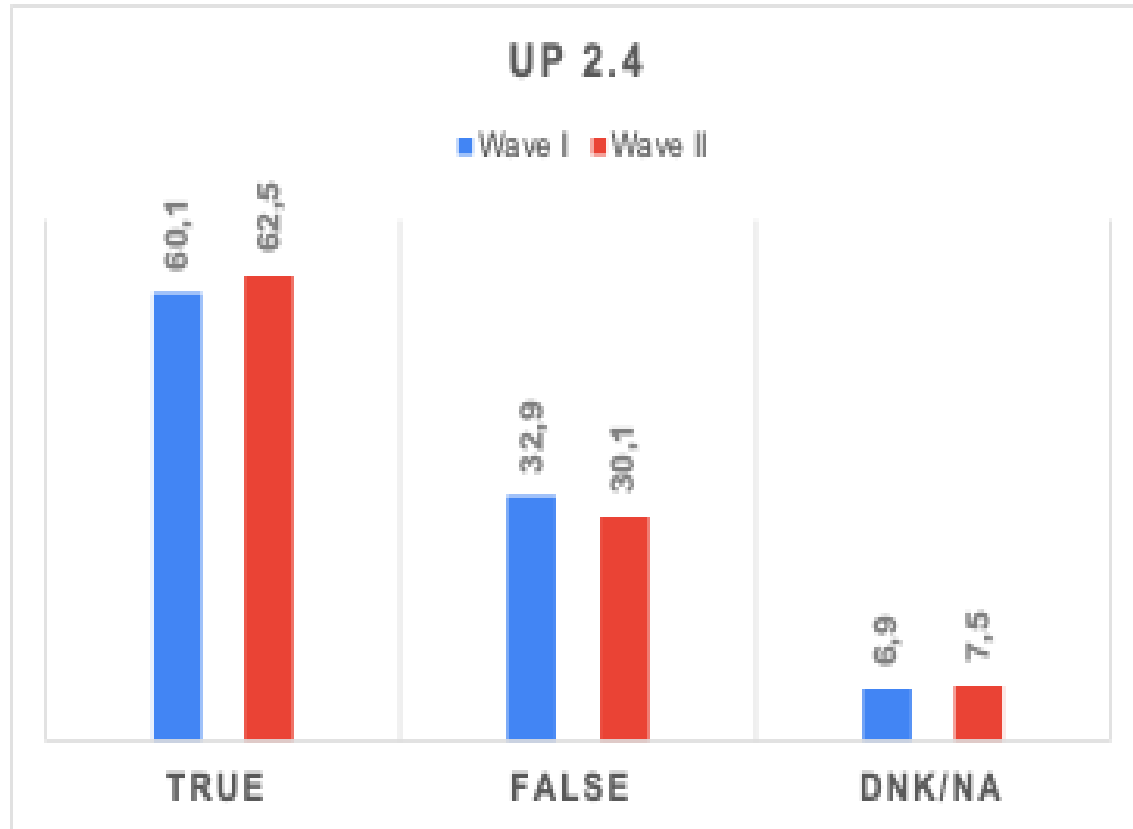- **1 control narrative**

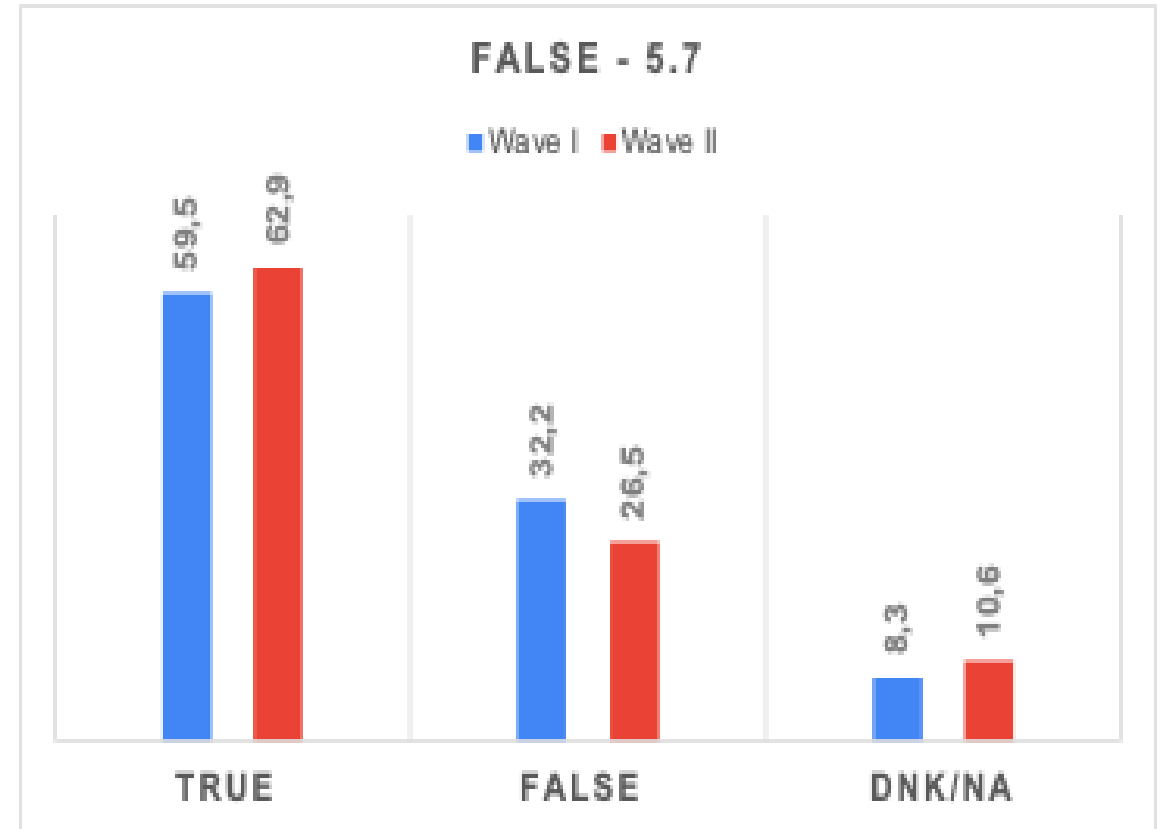| Promising/ Success - 6	Divisive topics – need a stronger boost - 5	Missed opportunity/Red Flag - 8
If we join the EU, we will be able to reintegrate Transnistria more easily	We can join the EU and remain a neutral country	We need the EU to attract investors to the national economy
Moldova and the EU share the same objective: peace and regional security	The values of the Republic of Moldova are very similar to those of European states	Joining the EU will help the diaspora return home
Even though the EU also has problems, it is the best option Moldova has right now	Military neutrality is good, but not for Moldova	All states in the EU are independent and sovereign countries
Russia can use Transnistria and Gagauzia to stop Moldova's EU integration	Joining the EU will lead to the loss of our traditions and values	Moldova will be invaded by migrants if it integrates into the EU
The EU is a puppet of the USA	The EU doesn't need us, it just wants to use us in its geopolitical games	Brussels imposes policies on member states with which they do not agree
Moldova is culturally closer to Russia than to Europe		Corruption is flourishing in the European Union
		Integration into the EU means losing the right to decide on our policy
		A strong Russia is necessary to balance the influence of the West

Promising messages to build societal resilience to disinformation.

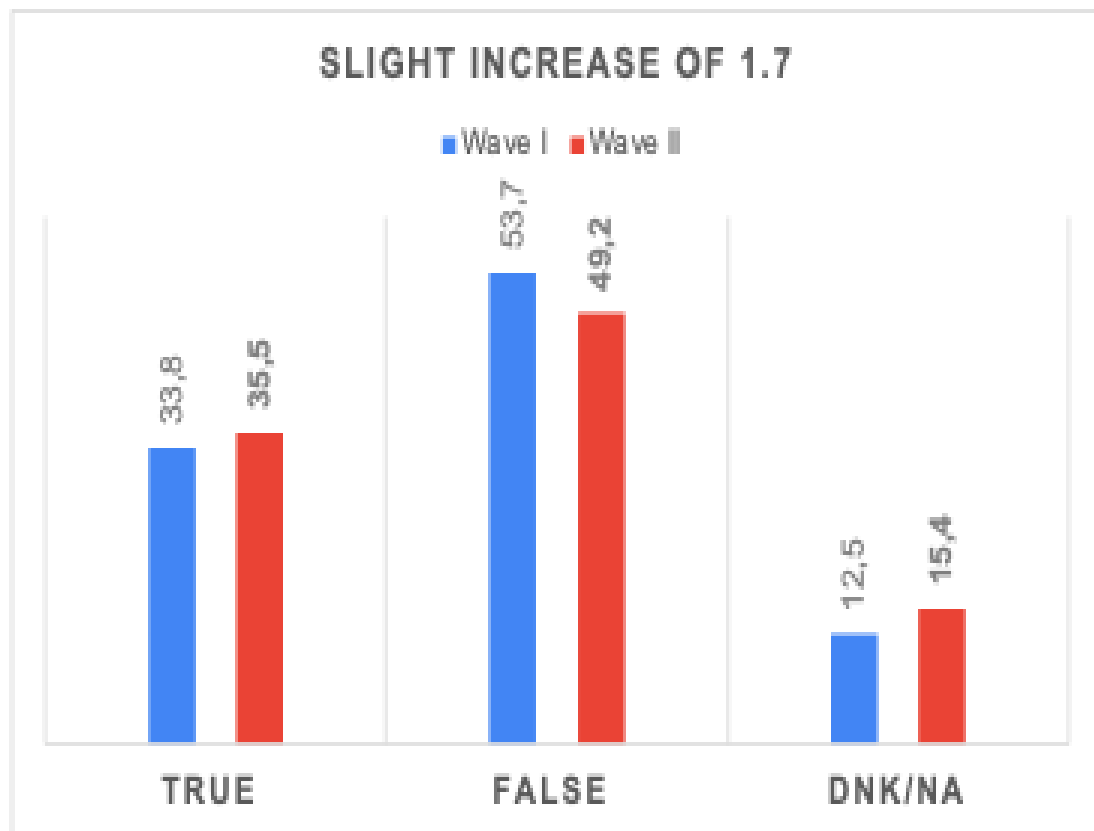Even though the EU also has problems, it is the best option Moldova has right now.

Russia can use Transnistria and Gagauzia to stop Moldova's EU integration.

UP 2.4

■ Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	60,1	32,9	6,9
Wave II	62,5	30,1	7,5

FALSE - 5.7

■ Wave I ■ Wave II

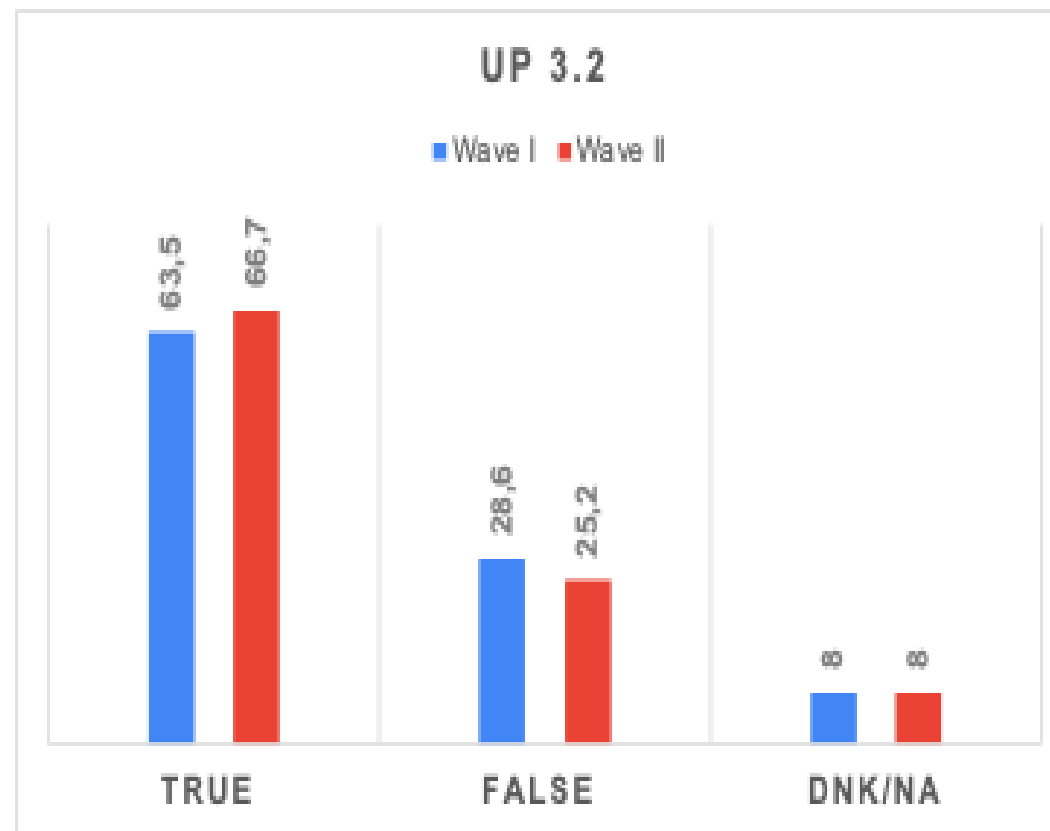|	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	59,5	32,2	8,3
Wave II	62,9	26,5	10,6

In your opinion, how would you rate the following statements about the EU?

A few voices but in a right moment versus long term message

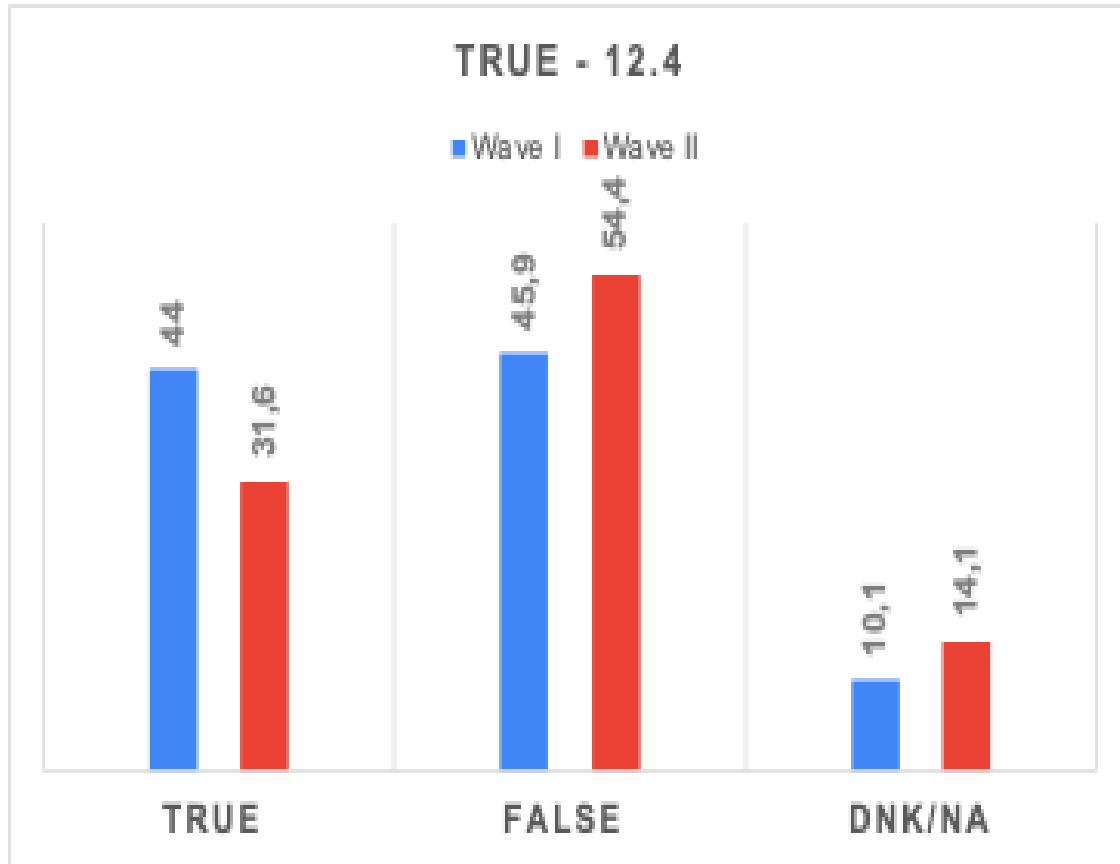## If we join the EU, we will be able to reintegrate Transnistria more easily

Moldova and the EU share the same objective: peace and regional security

SLIGHT INCREASE OF 1.7

■ Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	33,8	53,7	12,5
Wave II	35,5	49,2	15,4

UP 3.2

■ Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	63,5	28,6	8
Wave II	66,7	25,2	8

Success cases in partial debunking due to the international context:

The EU is a puppet of the USA

TRUE - 12.4

■ Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	44	45,9	10,1
Wave II	31,6	54,4	14,1

Moldova is culturally closer to Russia than to Europe

TRUE - 5.2

■ Wave I ■ Wave II

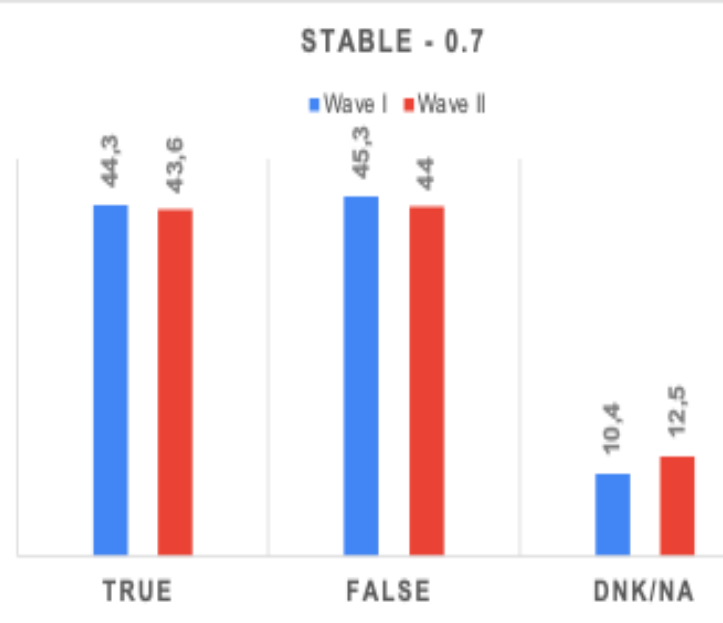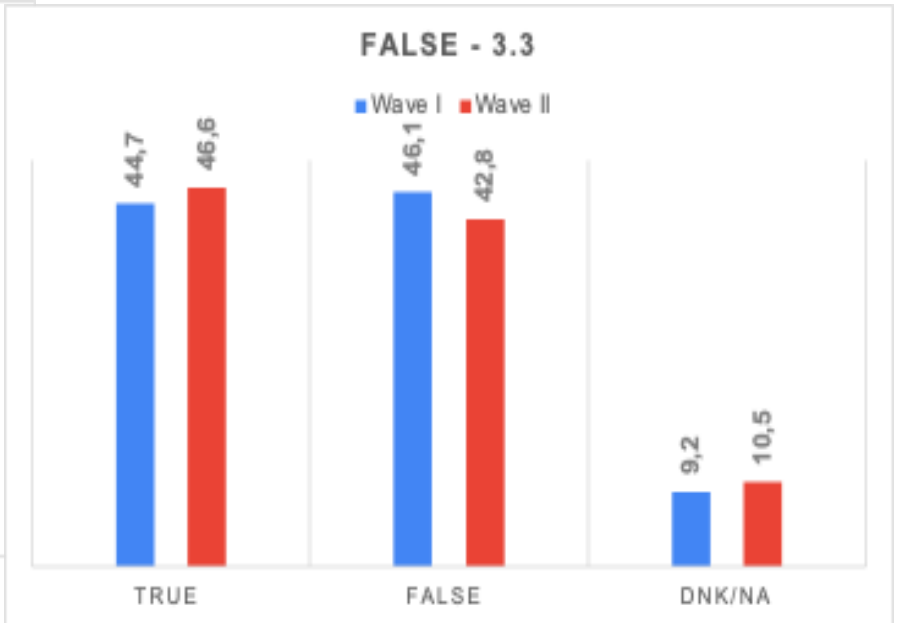|	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	49,6	42,2	8,3
Wave II	44,4	46,6	9
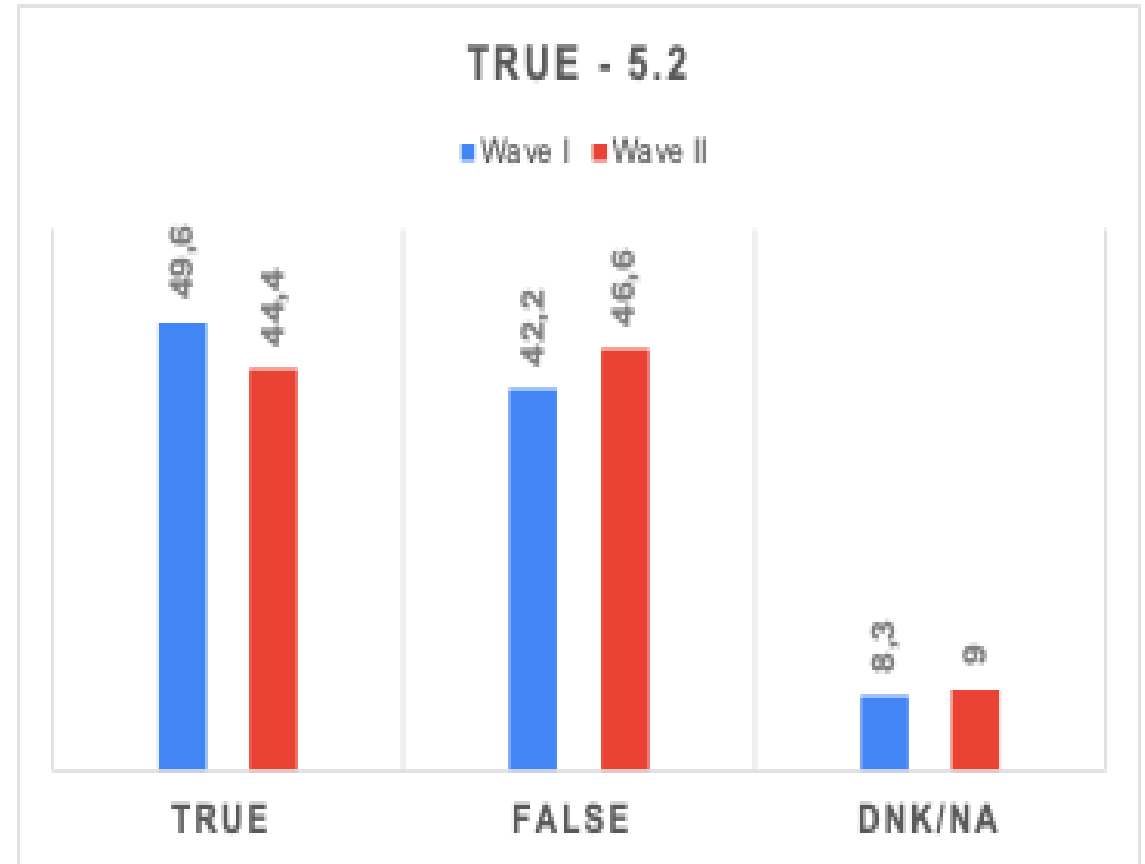
Divisive Messages – a boost is needed.

We can join the EU and remain a neutral country
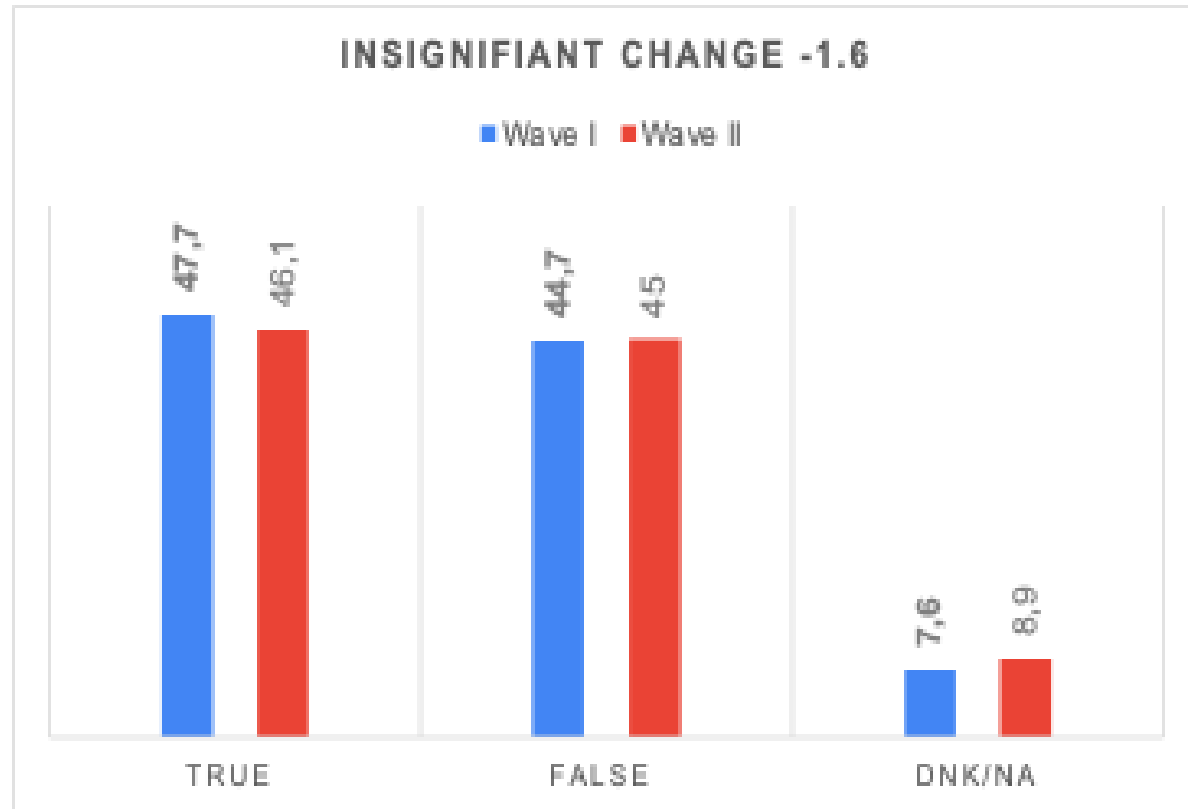
Military neutrality is good, but not for Moldova

The values of the Republic of Moldova are very similar to those of European states

TRUE - 2.5
Wave I · Wave II

	Wave I	Wave II
TRUE	48,4	45,9
FALSE	42,2	44,5
DNK/NA	9,4	9,6

STABLE - 0.7
Wave I · Wave II

	Wave I	Wave II
TRUE	44,3	43,6
FALSE	45,3	44
DNK/NA	10,4	12,5

FALSE - 3.3
Wave I · Wave II

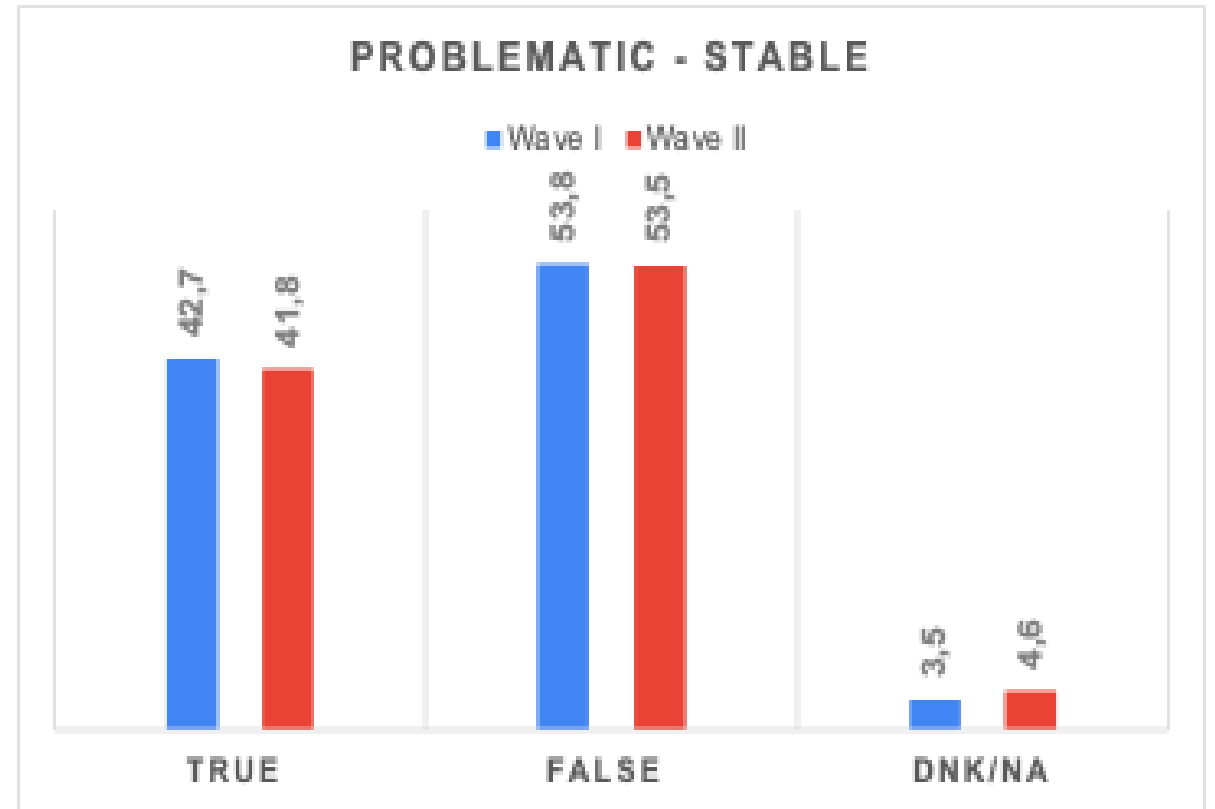|	Wave I	Wave II
TRUE	44,7	46,6
FALSE	46,1	42,8
DNK/NA	9,2	10,5

Divisive false narratives linked to international context and abstract aspects. What are the traditional values? If you do not talk about values – someone else will do.

The EU doesn't need us, it just wants to use us in its geopolitical games

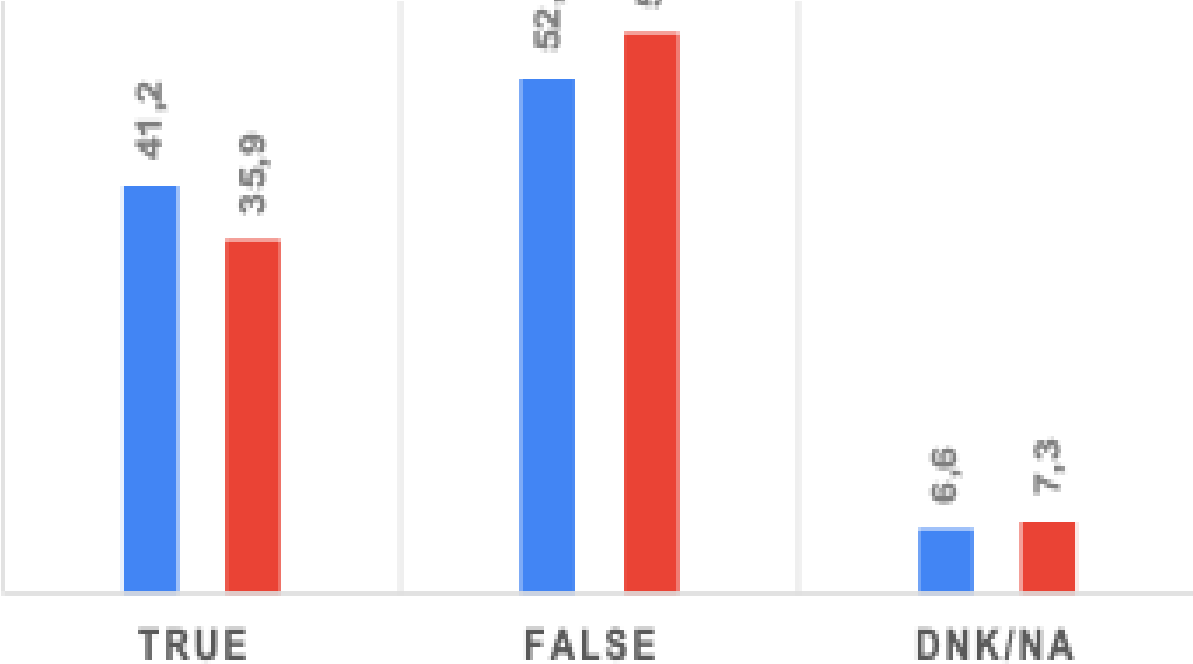Joining the EU will lead to the loss of our traditions and values

INSIGNIFIANT CHANGE -1.6

Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	47,7	44,7	7,6
Wave II	46,1	45	8,9

PROBLEMATIC - STABLE

Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	42,7	53,8	3,5
Wave II	41,8	53,5	4,6

Missed Opportunities & Red Flags

Strategic messages

Joining the EU will help the diaspora return home

We need the EU to attract investors to the national economy.

SIGNIFIANT DECREASE 5.3

Wave I ■ Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	41,2	52,2	6,6
Wave II	35,9	56,8	7,3

UP 1.1 - INSIGNIFICANT

Wave I ■ Wave II

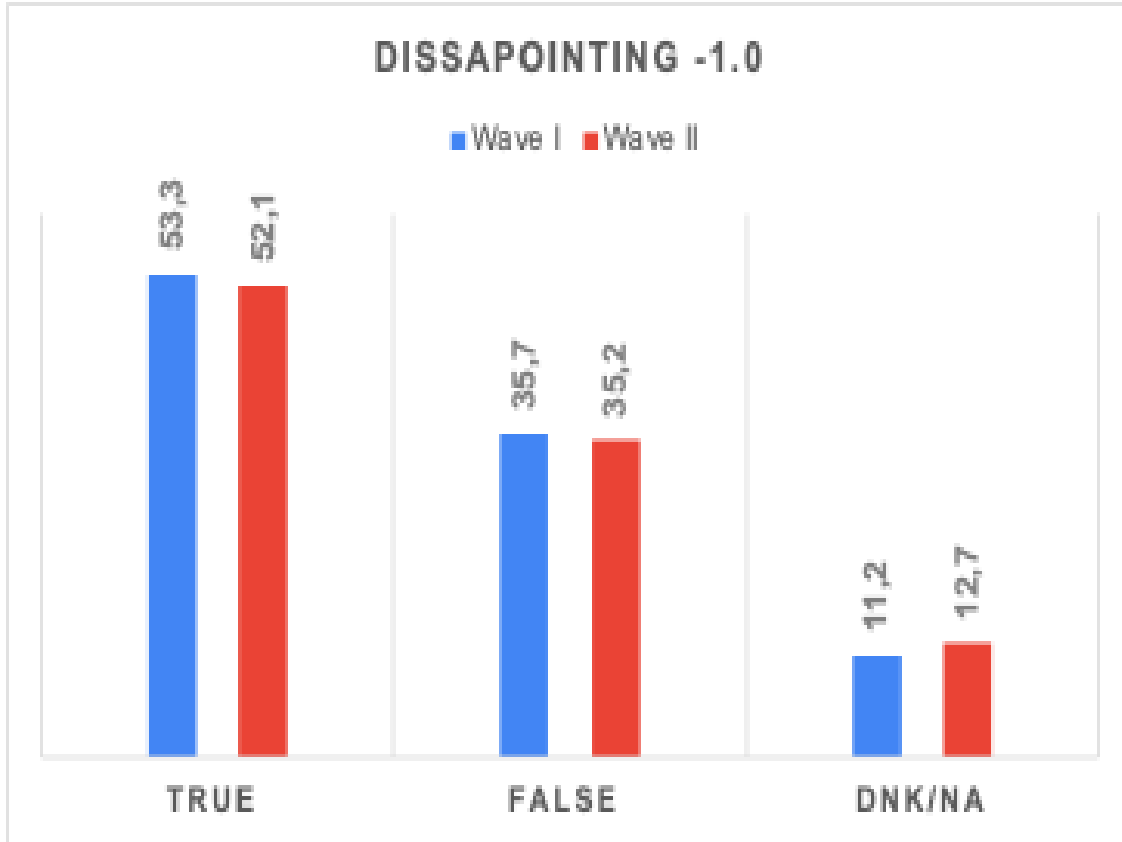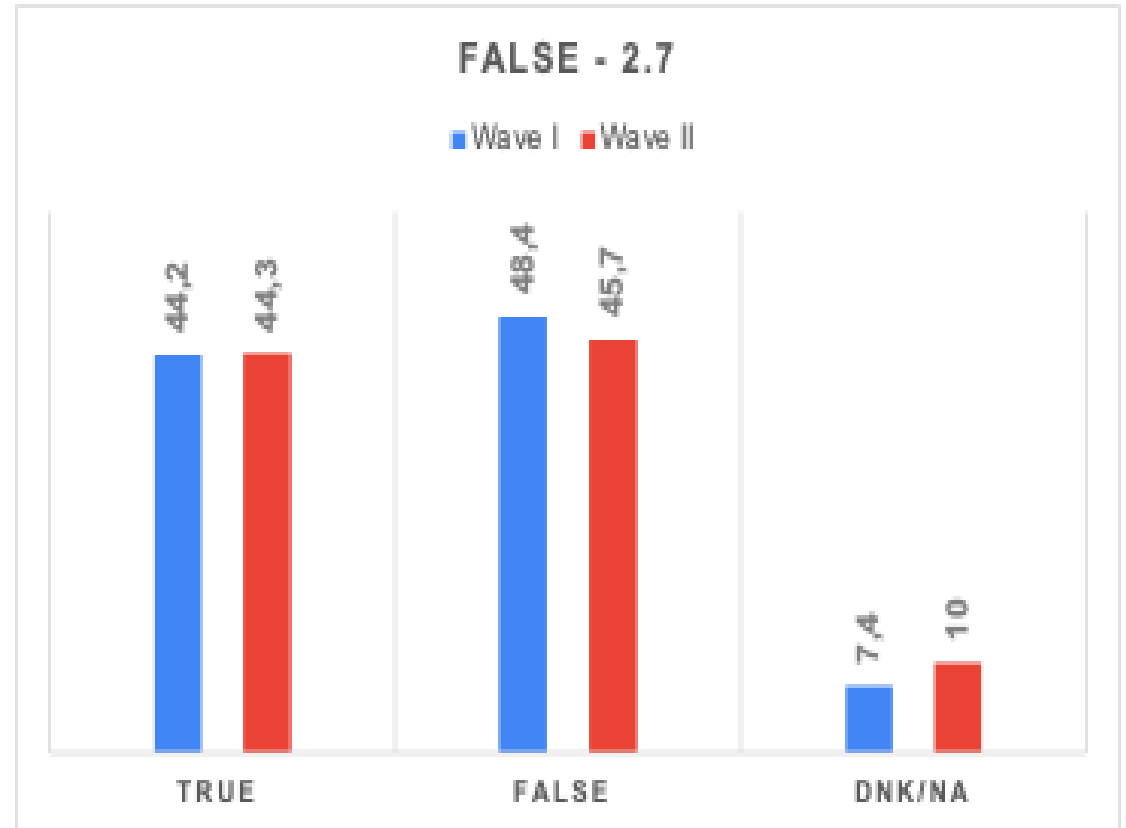|	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	68,2	27,9	3,9
Wave II	69,3	26	4,8
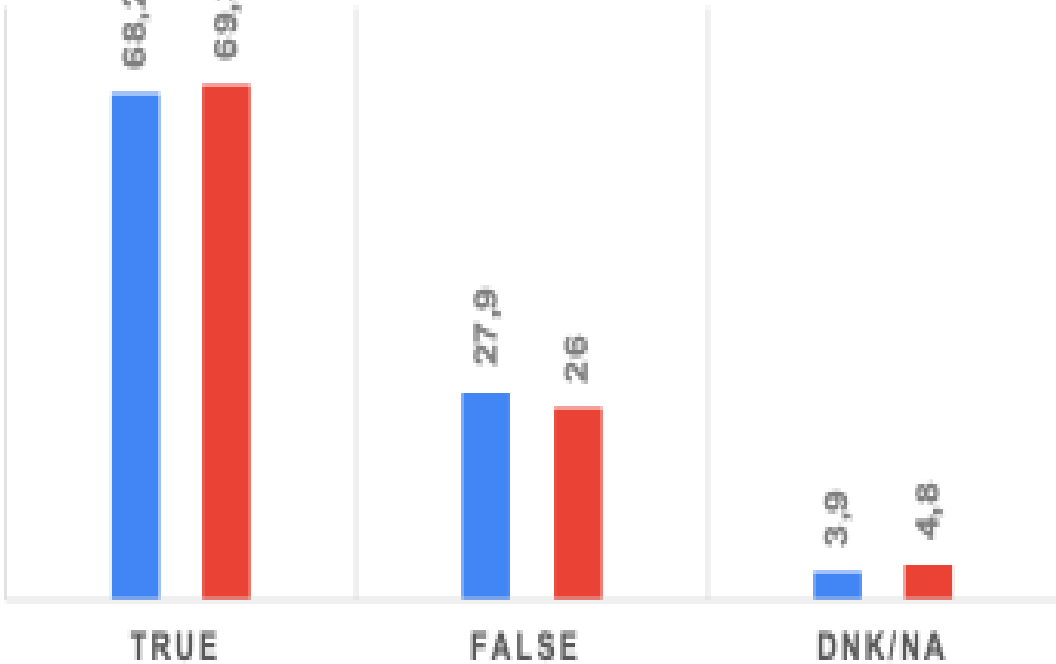
Red Flags

Strategic messages & False narratives

All states in the EU are independent and sovereign countries

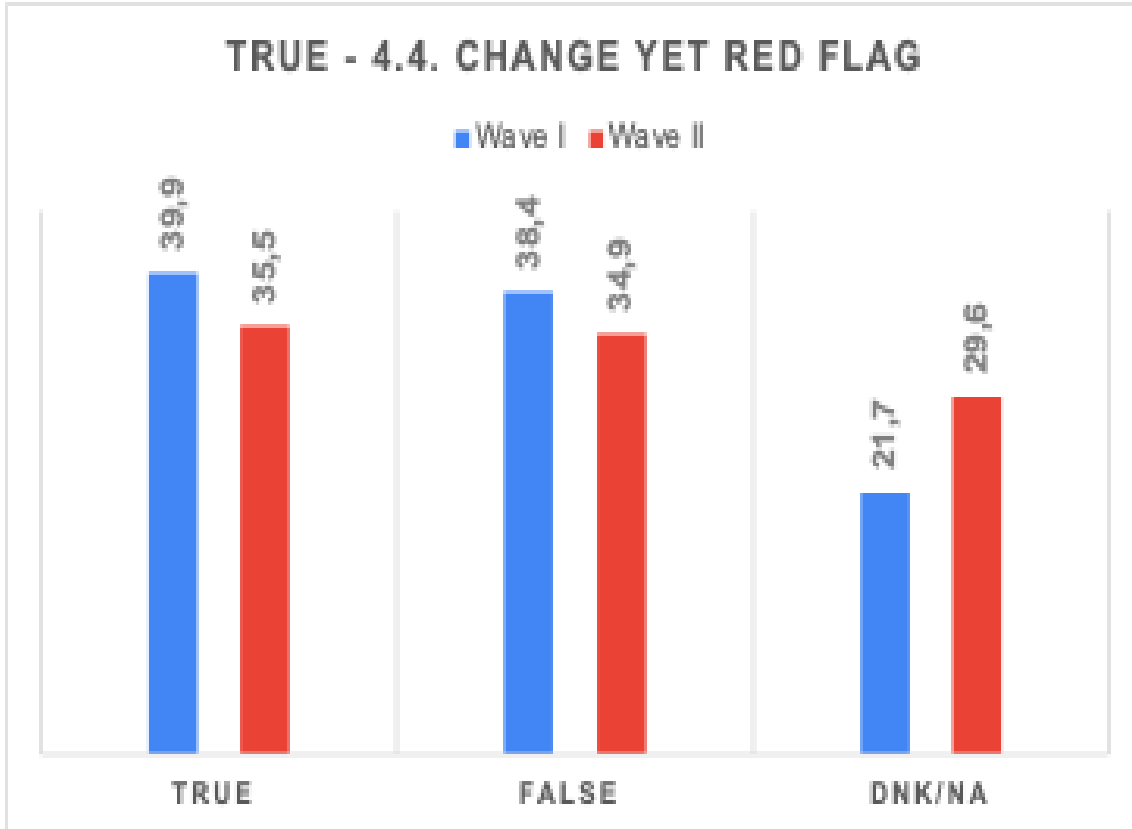Integration into the EU means losing the right to decide on our policy

DISSAPOINTING -1.0

Wave I   Wave II

	Wave I	Wave II
TRUE	53,3	52,1
FALSE	35,7	35,2
DNK/NA	11,2	12,7

FALSE - 2.7

Wave I   Wave II

	Wave I	Wave II
TRUE	44,2	44,3
FALSE	48,4	45,7
DNK/NA	7,4	10

Red Flags

False narratives

Brussels imposes policies on member states with which they do not agree

TRUE - 4.4. CHANGE YET RED FLAG

- Wave I
- Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	39,9	38,4	21,7
Wave II	35,5	34,9	29,6

Corruption is flourishing in the European Union

UP 9.3 -RED FLAG

- Wave I
- Wave II

	TRUE	FALSE	DNK/NA
Wave I	38,8	49,8	11,4
Wave II	48,1	38,1	13,7
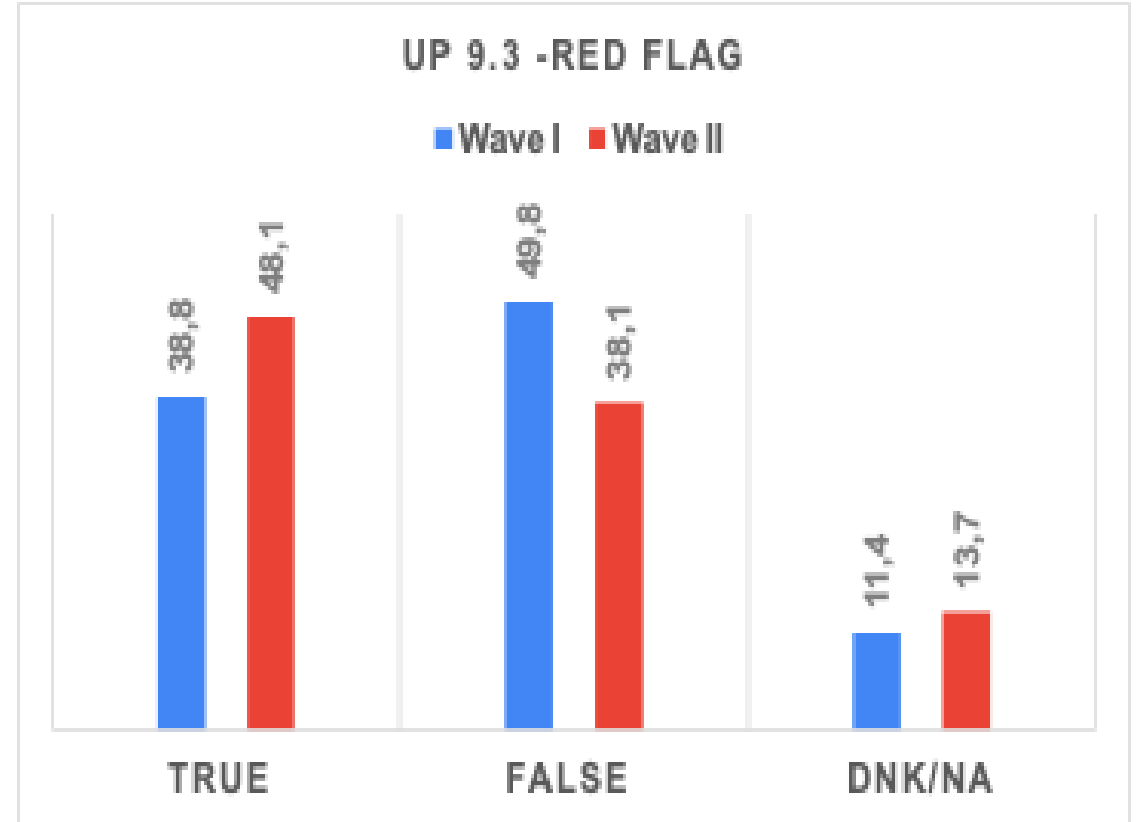
In your opinion, how would you rate the following statements about the EU?

- **Thank You.**

- **Let's talk about:**
- *Lessons learned.*
- *What can we improve?*