The European Union and the Russian-Ukrainian War

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Introduction

Why are European Union (EU) member states responding differently to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict? There are many factors that could be influencing how states are responding including international norms, opinions of individuals, proximity to the conflict, and energy dependence. In order to unpack the impact of these variables it is important to have an understanding of the conflict itself, what actions the EU and its member states have taken, and where member states have disagreed with one another regarding how to respond. In order to understand how and why EU member states have responded to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in varying ways, variables such as international norms, opinions of individuals, and energy dependence must be examined.

Background

After the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, Ukraine reemerged as its own state (Raik et al. 2023, 3). Since then, Ukraine has sought to join the European Union (EU) even though it "…is opposed by many EU officials and politicians…" (Parandii 2023, 9). Although Ukraine is in a "central geopolitical position," the EU only began to focus on Ukraine after the "big bang enlargement of 2004" (Raik et al. 2023, 3). Due to this growth, there was an increased "…need for a reformulated and sophisticated approach to Ukraine and other new Eastern Neighbours (*sic*)," (Raik et al. 2023, 3). This growth led to the creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 (and the 2009 Eastern Partnership) and defined bilateral relations by enhancing "political association" and creating "deeper more comprehensive trade relations," while also making sure not to "[undermine] official relations with Russia by offering Ukraine a membership perspective" (Raik et al. 2023, 3). Around this time in Ukraine, the Orange Revolution occurred in response to election corruption in Ukraine's 2004 presidential election in

which "…hundreds of thousands of people protested by taking to the streets" (Dyczok 2005, 241). These protests led to the election being overturned, a new vote being called, and the opposition candidate winning (Dyczok 2005, 241). Since then, Russia and the EU's differing opinions on what international norms should be, has led to Russia "upgrad[ing] its efforts in the West" after every "…major normative clash" (Liik 2018, 5).

Additionally, before the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine was unable "to choose between the Russian led Customs Union and the EU…as 33% of its total external trade…in 2012 was with the EU, and 29% with the Customs Union" (Popescu 2014, 4). This, in addition to the fact that "25% of Ukrainian exports [went] to the EU and 30% to the Customs Union," shows how Ukraine is not only geographically in between the EU and Russia but also politically between them (Popescu 2014, 4). The 2014 annexation of Crimea had a fairly large impact on Ukraine's economy because Ukraine lost a city with "critical energy infrastructure [including] big scale solar power plants, as well as offshore oil and gas" (Surwillo and Slakaityte 2022, 2). This, plus the termination of the 2010 Kharkiv Accords by Russia "…resulted in an 83% gas spike for Ukraine" leading Ukraine's next energy plans to emphasize "stronger energy efficient measures, market liberalization and investment in big renewable energy projects" and "…plans for further development of nuclear energy, as well as diversification of gas…" (Surwillo and Slakaityte 2022, 2-3). The 2014 annexation of Crimea and its resulting impact on Ukraine shows how Russia's invasion in 2022 is part of a continuation of Russia's aggression towards Ukraine.

As important as Ukraine's relationship with Russia is, the EU's and Russia's relationship to each other since the early 2000s is also important to understand. In 2003, "[t]he EU and Russia formally agreed to create a Common Economic Space…;" however, when "in 2007 talks were launched on a new enhanced agreement that was supposed to provide the legal basis for

inter alia, closer economic integration" the talks did not succeed (Popescu 2014, 1). Political tensions may have driven economic decisions when it came to making decisions about Russia exporting gas to the EU. Prior to the "…gas related rows with Ukraine in 2006 and 2009…," Russia attempted to strengthen their connection to the EU using gas (Popescu 2014, 2). However, the rows alerted the EU to how "…even third country disputes can have direct adverse effects on EU consumers…" which prompted the EU to "[boost] the Union's resilience to possible gas supply disruptions" (Popescu 2014, 2). Additionally, even as Russia has "tried to use their energy relationship with various European states to corrupt and divide the EU" and thereby increase their influence in the EU and "…demonstrate that the EU's normative commitment to the rule of law cannot defeat the profit motive" they have had "little success in this effort" (Liik 2018, 12). Looking more broadly, however, it is clear that trade relations between the EU and Russia were actually fairly stable prior to 2014.

In January of 2014, before Russia annexed Crimea, the "EU-Russia economic partnership" was described as "rest[ing] on solid foundations" although "it [had] lost its momentum" (Popescu 2014, 1). At the time "[t]he EU [was] Russia's single biggest trading partner with 41% of Russia's total external trade (and 45% of its exports) going to the EU in 2012" (Popescu 2014, 1). Additionally, "Russia [was] the EU's third biggest trading partner – after the US and China – accounting for 9.7% of the EU's external trade" (Popescu 2014, 1). Another way that the stability of the EU and Russia's relationship can be seen before 2014 is through travel. In the lead up to Russia's annexation of Crimea, travel restrictions between the EU and Russia lessened as "…the number of Schengen visas issued annually in Russia almost doubled between 2009 and 2012, from 3.2 million to 6 million" and "visa-free travel" between the EU and Russia was being considered (Popescu 2014, 3).

Russia's decision to annex Crimea in 2014, its first major military move against Ukraine after 1991, changed their relations with the EU (Kuzminski et al. 2022, 163). Russia was able to "…[maintain] its control over Crimea" while simultaneously "support[ing] pro-Russian separatist forces who…took control of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine (the Donbas) in 2014" (Walker 2023). The EU responded to this aggression incrementally including first introducing a "set of restrictive measures against 21 Russian and Ukrainian officials" on March 17, 2014, "cancel[ing] a planned EU-Russia summit on March 20, 2014, and agreed on several different sets of sanctions against Russia" which was in an effort to "…balance sanctions with selective engagement" (Timeline- EU Restrictive Measures against Russia over Ukraine and European Council on Foreign Relations 2021, 2). These sanctions were considered to have "…been reasonably successful" in "constraining" Russian activities in Ukraine as of 2021 as they "…contributed to significant delays and cost increases in many of Russia's next generation weapons platforms…" and allowed the EU to continue to not prioritize its defense spending (European Council on Foreign Relations 2021, 4). Although the EU had passed sanctions and been publicly antagonistic towards Russia post the annexation of Crimea, the antagonism was not extreme as "Russians continue[d] to be the biggest recipients of Schengen visas in the world" and the sanctions passed often "target[ed] individuals rather than the Russian economy" so as to not "significantly weaken [Russia]" but instead "send signals of disapproval" (European Council on Foreign Relations 2021, 2). This is additionally evidenced by the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and the fact that "…the worse the political relationship became, the more Russian gas the EU bought" (European Council on Foreign Relations 2021, 2). Similarly, from the Russian side, their "meddling in European domestic politics is neither well-coordinated nor specifically designed to bring down the EU…" (Liik

2018, 6). Given this, it is clear that the EU, while disapproving of the 2014 annexation of Crimea, did not feel the need to come down particularly harshly against Russia as a whole.

Why Russia and the EU generally disagree with one another about Russia's aggression could be because of their differing opinions on international norms. Some of the "fundamental" international norms that Russia does not agree with include "…its western-led "unipolar" nature; its emphasis on human rights and democracy; and the idea that countries have the right to choose their own alliances and join once they qualify" (Liik 2018, 1). Additionally, according to the European Council on Foreign Relations, in 2018 their surveys point to Russia "capitalis[ing] on what already exists" in order to influence Europe and that "…most EU countries see some evidence of Russia's attempts to influence their domestic debate but view its effects as limited," even though they all regard it as an important policy issue (Liik 2018, 6). These surveys also showed that in 2018 support for Russia in one area does not equal support in all areas and that "[s]ympathy with Russia's geopolitical worldview…does not translate into formal acceptance for Russia's annexation of Crimea" (Liik 2018, 7). As of 2018 "European views [were]…significantly aligned in assessments of the military threat from Russia" which was not the case in 2008 (Liik 2018, 8). This is because Russia's actions against Ukraine in 2014 "…acted as a catalyst for greater unity among EU member states" (Bosse 2022, 533). That is not to say that there were no divisions between EU member states with central and eastern members "…calling for more powerful sanctions" and more western members (Germany, France, and Italy) pushing for "diplomatic caution" (Bosse 2022, 533). Although these sanctions remained in place after 2014 "…many EU member states continued to pursue political and economic relations with Russia, especially with regards to energy supplies" meaning that "…while EU-Russia relations clearly deteriorated following the 2014 war, the member state's security

preferences vis-à-vis Russia had not fundamentally changed" (Bosse 2022, 533-534). This balance of economic and normative relations between the EU and Russia was thrown out the window after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russian forces invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, after Russian President Vladimir "Putin announced the beginning of a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion of Ukraine…" (Center for Preventive Action 2024). After the initial attacks, "long range missile strikes caused significant damage to Ukrainian military assets, urban residential areas, and communication and transportation infrastructure" (Center for Preventive Action, 2024). These attacks and the others that followed cause relations to shift between the EU and Russia, and the EU and Ukraine. In 2023, Ukraine planned for their offensive to "…have punched through Russia's so-called Surovikin Line in Zaporizhzhia Province and liberated Melitopol, severing the roads connecting Russia to Crimea" but it was unable to (Watling 2024). While this paper will not delve into the battlefield, it will instead focus on the outside perspectives and responses to the war, while keeping in mind that as the battlefield changes so too can the desired support. Regarding this battlefield, in the two years since the beginning of the invasion "…Ukraine has recaptured 54 percent of occupied territory while Russia still occupies 18 percent of the country" (Center for Preventive Action 2024). Over the course of 2023, the number of artillery rounds fired per day varied with the highs being up to 7000 a day, but by December 2023 those numbers were down to 2000 rounds per day (Watling 2024). As 2023 came to a close, it became clear that the big hurdle Ukraine would be facing was a lack of munitions (Watling 2024). As the battlefield in Ukraine has developed so too have the international responses to the war developed and changed.

EU Political Support, Opposition, and Opinions

International Norms

International norms and laws require that states respect one another's sovereignty. Yet, how states respond to violations of sovereignty differ depending on the violation. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg (Benelux) supported "the impositions of sanctions on Russia…" and continued to support sanctions after the 2022 invasion (Kurniasih and Drajati Nugrahani 2023, 49). Comparatively, it took Germany until a few days before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 to really take action against Russia, but when it did "it prohibited the use of Nord Stream 2… started to deliver arms to Ukraine…announced major investments in its own armed forces…[and increased the] annual defense spending above the NATO threshold of 2 percent of gross domestic product" (Driedger 2023, 135). This overwhelming support for Ukraine in reaction to the 2022 invasion was seen across EU member states. While the annexation of Crimea led to more unity between EU members at the time, the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 "[led] to a very significant reformulation of EU member states' security interests, and in particular a redefinition of the interests of Russia's traditional partners in the EU" (Bosse 2022, 533-534). Part of this redefinition was sanctioning Russia which, as noted above, had already been called for by the Benelux countries. Member states agreeing on sanctions that target both "…*inter alia* Russian high-tech companies, aviation and finance sectors, as well as Russian oligarchs…" and energy "…such as a ban on coal and oil imports from Russia…" in the first five months after the Russian invasion began was surprising as EU member states have varying levels of dependence on Russia, especially for energy resources (Bosse 2022, 536). This can be explained through international norms (Bosse 2022).

Leaders in the EU and the member states such as Olaf Scholz, Josep Borrell, Emanuel Macron, and others used the language of international law to condemn Russia's actions as well

as to advocate for supporting Ukraine (Bosse 2022, 536-537). After it was reported that there was "growing evidence of war crimes committed by Russian soldiers…" "[t]he governments of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia led the call for harsher sanctions…" arguing that the EU has a "responsibility to intervene to protect Ukraine and Ukrainian civilians from atrocity crimes, war crimes and crimes against humanity" (Bosse 2022, 537). This shows how norms surrounding international law and sovereignty have contributed to the EU's support of Ukraine (Bosse 2022). Looking at specific statements made by the EU and EU member states, demonstrates how these norms are put into action.

An example of drawing on international norms can be seen on the European Commissions' website:

> The EU and its international partners are united in condemning Putin's aggression on Ukraine. We will provide support to those seeking shelter and we will help those looking for a safe way home. The EU will continue to offer strong political, financial and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and impose hard-hitting sanctions against Russia and those complicit in the war. (EU Solidarity With Ukraine).

This quote describes the invasion of Ukraine by Russia as both an act of "aggression" committed by Vladimir Putin and as a "war" which are both viewed negatively in the modern international system. The statement does not entertain the idea that Putin's invasion is justified and makes it clear where the EU stands regarding who it supports. Additionally, individual EU member state leaders have made similar statements. For example, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre almost a year after Russia invaded Ukraine said "[w]e are standing together in condemning Russia's war in Ukraine and in supporting the Ukrainian people's legitimate fight to defend themselves…" (Office of the Prime Minister 2023). This statement declares Norway's support

for Ukraine and for international norms by describing its fight as "legitimate" thereby framing Russia's as illegitimate. This shows how, as discussed above, there are clashes between the EU and Russia on what exactly international norms should be and therefore what would be considered a "legitimate" action. Another example is from May 14, 2023, when the Presidents of the French Republic and Ukraine met and issued a statement (Joint declaration of France and Ukraine 2023). Within the statement there is an "unequivocal condemnation of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine," a recognition of Ukraine's "inherent right to self-defence against this unprovoked and unjustified attack," a call for Russia to "completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders," and a statement that France remains committed to supporting "Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders" (Joint declaration of France and Ukraine 2023). Again, this language upholds international norms by stating that the conflict is a "war of aggression" that was "unprovoked and unjustified," and that Ukraine has the "inherent right to self-defence" (Joint declaration of France and Ukraine 2023). It also explicitly calls attention to Ukraine's sovereign rights (Joint declaration of France and Ukraine). These examples clearly show the EU and EU member states drawing upon the legitimacy of international norms to justify their condemnation of Russia and support for Ukraine.

Along with the various shows of support for international norms, there have also been large changes to the international playing field caused by the invasion of Ukraine such as it "compel[ing] Finland and Sweden to apply for NATO membership" (Lokker, Townsend, Hautala, and Kendall-Taylor 2023, 1). Finland was accepted into NATO on April 4, 2023, while Sweden was accepted into the alliance on March 7, 2024 (NATO 2023 and NATO 2024).

Additionally, February 28, 2022, was the day that Ukraine applied for EU membership status (Ukraine *European Council of the European Union*). They were granted candidate status on June 23, 2022, and their efforts to meet the objectives were acknowledged in February 2023 (Ukraine *European Council of the European Union*). This led to EU leaders opening accession negotiations with Ukraine in December 2023 (Ukraine *European Council of the European Union*). If Ukraine becomes a full EU member, that would have a large effect on the geopolitics of Europe. These massive shifts in behavior by the EU and its member states show how Russia invading Ukraine has had a massive impact on the politics of Europe. Yet, these shifts have not created a completely united EU.

There are a few areas where a divergence of opinion between EU member states have appeared, one of which emerged shortly after the conflict began. By February 2023, Arlo Poletti, associate professor of political science and international relations at the University of Trento, believed that although there were shared "objectives" between EU member states, "such as reducing dependency on Russian gas and mitigating socio-economic disruptions," and the member states had, been "maintain[ing] a unified front in sanctioning Russia and supporting Ukraine" there were clear disagreements about "the terms of an acceptable peace" (Poletti 2023, 76). At that time, France and Germany were of the opinion that peace should "…[entail] restoring the status quo ante, defined as the situation prevailing immediately prior to 24 February 2022…" leaving "[w]hether Ukrainian territory should include Crimea…an open question…but for a later unspecified time" (Poletti 2023, 77). However, "…Poland and the Baltic states, which are more directly exposed to Russia, [were] more inclined to subscribe to a maximalist definition of peace that calls for a long-term eradication of Russia's threat and could logically imply regime change in Russia" (Poletti 2023, 77). This information points to the idea that states that are

geographically closer to Russia are more inclined to be heavily invested in the outcome of the war in Ukraine, yet geography does not tell the whole story.

Though closer to the conflict than many other EU member states, Hungary has been particularly difficult for other EU member states to negotiate with, as it has taken several steps to oppose the EU sending aid to Ukraine. In December 2022, "[t]he Hungarian government…blocked [an] agreement on an €18 billion aid package for Ukraine…" (Tamma 2022). Then, in May 2023, "[t]he Hungarian foreign minister, Péter Szijjártó…said his government will block a further €500m from the European peace facility, a fund used to reimburse EU member states that supply military aid to Ukraine, unless Kyiv removes Hungary's OTP Bank from its list of war sponsors" and "…threatened to veto the 11th package of sanctions over OTP bank…" (Rankin 2023). Additionally, Hungary's rhetoric surrounding the sanctions were criticized by the EU when they compared "…EU sanctions on Russia to bombs…" in a poster campaign in October 2022 (Tidey 2022). All of these actions against what the majority of the EU is trying to accomplish led to the most recent development. In January 2024, the Members of the European Parliament (MEP) "…demanded the EU Council explore the possibility of stripping Hungary of its EU voting rights…" as Hungary's Prime Minister Orbán is accused of "…riding roughshod over democratic values and the independence of the judiciary system, and who has held up fresh EU funding for war-hit Ukraine" (Wax 2024). While the MEPs actions have "no legal effect…it sends a political signal to the other EU institutions about the extent of unhappiness with MEPs about Orbán's backsliding on the rule of law, and how little is being done in the EU to address it" (Wax 2024). The fact that the MEP are publicly speaking out against Hungary's actions and in fact calling for Hungary to potentially lose voting

rights is a very significant political move and highlights how divergent Hungary's opinions and actions are from the rest of the EU.

In addition to Hungary's blatant opposition to general EU policy, Slovakia has also become opposed to providing military aid. In fall 2023 Slovakia's election resulted in a pro-Russian party taking control (Higgins 2023). After the new Prime Minister of Slovakia, Robert Fico, took office he "…ended his country's military aid for Ukraine…;" yet, in January 2024, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and Fico met and agreed on a way for "…Ukraine to purchase weapons and equipment directly from Slovak companies without government interference…" (Josek 2023 and RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service 2024). Also in January 2024, "Fico reaffirmed support for Kyiv's bid to join the European Union…but said policy differences remained on issues including NATO accession," while also "insist[ing] life in the Ukrainian capital was "absolutely normal" and there was no war…just hours after Russian missiles fell on Kyiv" (Dysa, Lopatka, and Hovet 2024 and Lopatak, Hovet, and Plityuk 2024). Even more recently on March 21, 2024, it was reported by the Associate Press that "the foreign ministers of Hungary and Slovakia said they are not ready to change their strict refusal to provide arms to Ukraine" (2024). These actions and statements from both Hungary and Slovakia suggest their motivations differ from the rest of the EU's motivations, as their actions are so divergent from the other member states' actions.

While Hungary and Slovakia (since the most recent elections) have been making supporting Ukraine difficult, there are also EU member states who, while they remain supportive of Ukraine overall, have wavered in that support from time to time. The Austrian government in May 2023 had a disagreement about whether Austria "…should offer Ukraine help with civilian demining with the defense minister and a major opposition party pointing to concerns over the

implications for Austrian military neutrality" (Austrian President, Government at Odds over Offering Ukraine Demining Help 2023). Additionally, in September 2023, Poland announced it would stop sending new weapons in the lead up to their next elections (Vinocur and Barigazzi 2023). Then, in January 2024, a new military aid package from Poland to Ukraine was announced "…that includes a loan to buy larger weapons and a commitment to find ways to manufacture them together" (Novikov 2024). A meeting between Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy led to "an understanding" between them "…to resolve through talks any differences between their countries over grain shipments and trucking" (Novikov 2024). However, although Ukrainian refugees were welcomed at the beginning of the conflict they are "…beginning to face more and more xenophobia across Polish society…" (Kosicki 2023). In fact, as of autumn 2023, Poland had the lowest support for Ukrainian refugees of the EU member states at 60% (DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit 2024). While these occurrences do not mean that Poland has stopped supporting Ukraine, it is important to remember that even the member states that have historically been some of the strongest supporters of Ukraine can wane in their support over time and take actions that while not completely divergent from EU policies have an negative effect on the EU's ability to support Ukraine.

Public Opinion

Another variable that impacted the shifting relations between Russia and the EU after Russia invaded in 2022 was the overwhelming public support that Ukraine received from individuals following the invasion. In the immediate wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Europeans agreed that Russia was to blame for the war and the "biggest obstacle to peace" which was a change from how Europeans viewed Russia before the invasion (Krastev and Leonard

2022, 3-4). From 2021 to 2022, the median approval rating for Russian leadership went from 22% approval 62% disapproval to 7% approval 85% disapproval (Ritter and Crabtree 2023 Russia Suffers Global Rebuke After Invasion). Additionally, after the invasion, most Europeans supported "providing economic assistance, sending arms, supporting Ukrainian membership of the EU, and accepting refugees" as well as targeting Russia by "applying economic sanctions, ending fossil fuel imports, and deploying troops to eastern Europe (but not to Ukraine itself)" (Krastev and Leonard 2022, 4). Since one of the EU's core values is democracy, it stands to reason that leaders are paying attention and responding to their constituents needs and opinions (Directorate-General for Communication 2024). Therefore, if the majority of people are in support of Ukraine and supplying aid, European leaders have incentives to pay attention to those opinions. Yet, even from the beginning of the conflict when people were rallying to support Ukraine, there were divisions even among citizens on how best to do so.

One division early on, (which is very similar to the disagreements between EU member countries on the matter of acceptable peace) was between those who wanted the war to end quickly, "…even if that meant Ukraine making concessions to Russia…" the "peace camp" and those who wanted Russia to be clearly defeated "…even if that meant a longer war…" the "justice camp" (Krastev and Leonard 2023, 2). In 2022, ECFR polls "…indicated that the 'peace camp' was larger than the 'justice camp'" but by March 2023 that opinion had become less popular, meaning this division is likely not the reason behind why European leaders struggled to reach consensus around supplying aid to Ukraine more recently (Krastev and Leonard 2023, 2-3). In addition to this shift in opinion on preferred outcomes, "[i]n every country polled, the prevailing opinion is now that Russia is an adversary (ranging from as little as 32 per cent in Romania to 77 per cent in Estonia)" compared to "…five per cent in Bulgaria…" and "38 per

cent in Poland" seeing Russia as an adversary to Europe in 2021 (the 2023 poll asked about respondents perception of Russia's relationship to their country) (Krastev and Leonard 2023, 5). The increase in individuals viewing Russia as an adversary is notable as it is an attitude that is reflected in EU policy, though whether one is causing the other is beyond the scope of this paper. That is not to suggest that there are no individuals that support Russia within the EU. As noted above, even in Estonia where 77 percent of people viewed Russia as an adversary that still means that 23 percent did not (Krastev and Leonard 2023, 5). Additionally, in May 2023 "[s]upporters of the pro-Russian Revival party trashed the EU offices in Bulgaria's capital…" although the country itself remains in support of Ukraine (Camut 2023). Additionally, in the "Regional Overview Europe & Central Asia August 2023" there were no reports of protests by citizens supporting Ukraine, which while it does not show negative sentiments towards Ukraine, it does show that individuals may be less actively supporting Ukraine than they were at the beginning of the war (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project 2023). However, despite disagreements among citizens on how to view Russia, the EU as a whole remains committed to Ukraine.

Beyond opinions of Russia, there were also opinions on Ukraine, such as those documented in the 17-23 September 2022 Regional Overview which reports that rallies against the mobilization in Russia or in solidarity with Ukraine were organized in Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Serbia, and Sweden (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project 2022, 2). These positive opinions of Ukraine also applied to positive opinions of Ukrainian refugees. As of December 31, 2023, there was a recorded 6,357,100 refugees from Ukraine recorded globally (Operational Data Portal). Germany and Poland had taken in the largest number of Ukrainian refugees in total as of December 2023 with 1.1 million living in Germany and 950 thousand living in Poland (Operational Data Portal). Therefore, it is notable

that in 2022 "…the percentage of people who consider migrants living in their country to be a "good thing" improved to some degree…" in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia "…compared with attitudes in 2019" especially, "…[as] these nations have consistently ranked among the least accepting in the world for migrants" (Dugan 2023). Additionally, one country that has shown more support for Ukraine than many other EU member states is Estonia. Part of this support includes welcoming "…over 110,000 people…with over 60,000 having remained in Estonia" despite Estonia, only having "a population of just over 1.3 million people" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 "Estonia," 9). Beyond the reasons for EU countries supporting Ukraine that have been previously discussed, perhaps one reason Estonia has been so welcoming is because of its own experience with Russian annexation during the Cold War period (Office of the Historian n.d.).

Sanctions

As can be seen above, the EU was able to converge in their opinions of Russia and international norms quite a bit in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The result of this is a wide-reaching multilayered response from the EU and its member states both in support of Ukraine and against Russia (How the EU Is Supporting Ukraine in 2023: News: European Parliament 2023). As discussed above, part of this response was sanctioning Russia, something that began "on February 23, one day before the invasion began…" (Bosse 2022, 531). Since then, the EU has continued to pass sanctions and restrictions on Russia; as of December 18, 2023, "the Council adopted a twelfth package of economic and individual restrictive measures" (EU Response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine). The latest measures "target high-value sectors of the Russian economy and make it more difficult to circumvent EU sanctions" (EU Response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine).

Within the 12 sanction packages that have been passed there are both economic and individual sanctions (EU sanctions against Russia explained). Individual sanctions have included sanctions against Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as other governmental officials, individuals who have engaged in specific actions, such as "missile strikes against civilians and critical infrastructure…," and entities such as "banks and financial institutions…companies in the military and defence sectors…paramilitary groups, political parties…the Wagner group, a Russia-based private military entity, [and] RIA FAN, a Russian media organization" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). When an individual is sanctioned that can mean that they are banned from travel or have their assets frozen and when an entity is sanctioned, they have their assets frozen (EU sanctions against Russia explained). Economic sanctions have been applied in several ways including "a number of import and export restrictions on Russia" where "[t]he list of banned products is designed to maximise (*sic*) the negative impact of the sanctions on the Russian economy while limiting the consequences for EU businesses and citizens" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). Between the sanctions passed in 2022 and March 20, 2024, the European Commission reports that "the EU has banned over €43.9 billion in goods that would have been exported to Russia and €91.2 billion in goods that would have been imported from Russia" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). When compared "with 2021 export and import volumes, 49% of exports and 58% of imports are currently sanctioned" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). There are also services that are banned under the sanctions including "to provide, directly or indirectly, accounting, auditing…bookkeeping and tax consulting services, as well as business and management consulting or public relations services" as well as "IT consultancy, legal advice, architecture and engineering services" (EU sanctions against Russia explained).

One of the most notable sanctions was the "sixth package of sanctions that, among other things, prohibits the purchase, import or transfer of seaborne crude oil and certain petroleum products from Russia to the EU" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). It went into effect on December 5, 2022, for crude oil and February 5, 2023, for other refined petroleum products (EU sanctions against Russia explained). However, EU member states that have no alternatives to Russian oil may receive "[a] temporary exception…for imports of crude oil by pipeline" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). Other restrictions include the prohibition of "Russian and Belarusian road transport operators from entering the EU, including for goods in transit" which "…aims to restrict the capacity of Russian industry to acquire key goods and to disrupt road trade both to and from Russia" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). Also, "EU countries can grant derogations for…" various reasons such as "the transport of energy…humanitarian aid purposes…cars that have a diplomatic vehicle registration plate…[and] cars of EU citizens…" (EU sanctions against Russia explained). These sanctions are an important part of the EU's policy, yet it is notable that they are not where the most conflict has occurred when it comes to negotiations between EU member states. Instead, as discussed above, there has been disagreements surrounding the aid sent to Ukraine.

Aid

Financial

The EU has sent several different kinds of aid to Ukraine which includes financial, military, and humanitarian. From January 24, 2022, to January 15, 2023, the KIEL Institute for the World Economy "track[ed] €143.63 billion of humanitarian, military, and financial commitments made…by 41 donors" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 25). Of that €143.63 billion, "the combined commitments by all EU member countries and EU institutions" made up €54.92

billion; "[t]his sum consists of €19.9 billion in bilateral commitments from individual EU countries plus 29.92 billion from the EU Commission and Council" and "can further be broken down to €28.31 billion commitments via the Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) program, €3.1 billion from the European Peace Facility (EPF), and €2 billion by the European Investment bank (EIB)" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 25). In terms of largest sums donated by individual EU member states from all bilateral commitments during the first year, "Germany [was] the largest EU donor (€6.15 billion) followed by Poland (€3.56 billion)" with The United States and EU institutions ranking first and second in "absolute terms" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 26). Poland moves in to third place overall once one accounts for refugee costs because they spent "almost €12 billion in support" with Germany in second (Trebesch et al. 2023, 26 and 30). When one "allot[s] EU commitments across EU countries using each member country's relative contribution to the EU budget in 2020 or EIB subscription shares" thereby getting rid of the combined "EU Institutions" statistic, countries such as Germany, France, Italy, and Poland move up in the ranking and it becomes clear that "only six EU countries, namely Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Estonia, committed more to Ukraine through direct bilateral aid than through EU aid shares" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 28). Also notable is that Cyprus, Hungary, Malta and Romania sent a limited amount of bilateral aid but their "…total refugee costs are a multiple of other support" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 31). However, absolute numbers are not the only way to look at financial aid. Scaling "bilateral aid commitments by donor country GDP (in per cent) to account for the size of each country's economy" allows one to see which countries have been "particularly generous when considering the size of their economy;" when looked at this way "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland are the leading donors" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 27-28). When the data regarding the allotment of each member country's relative contributions to the EU

is scaled while including both "[t]otal bilateral commitments plus refugee costs (percent of GDP)" the ranking is fairly similar, however, "Poland is now on the top of the list, with total support corresponding to 2.1% of its GDP," Estonia is second "with commitments totaling 1.64%...of GDP," and Latvia is third "with commitments totaling…1.31% of GDP" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 31). This aid distribution provides important information as to the results of the decisions that leaders were making during the first year of the war.

The amount of aid, scaled or not, is not the only part of the commitment and distribution of financial aid that is important. Also important is exactly when the financial aid was committed and distributed. When looking at when aid was given, one can see an "increase in pledges after February 2022" but then "[b]etween June and October, [there was] almost no new aid, with the exception of a new US package of €10.7 billion in late September" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 34). However, when November and December roll around there is "a very strong increases (*sic*) in aid commitments, with €18 billion in new EU loan pledges and €37 billion from the US's Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act 2023" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 34). Yet, even with the "erratic" nature of the aid commitments, the "disbursement" of these commitments were more predictable (Trebesch et al 2023, 35). Additionally important to our understanding of financial aid is that not all financial aid is committed by governments. In fact, "much of the help to Ukrainian refugees abroad is in-kind and incurred by private households rather than governments, and the available statistics on fiscal expenses on Ukrainian refugees are imperfect" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 30-31). Again, understanding when this aid was being distributed gives us information as to how leaders were responding to the invasion during the first year.

Moving on from the first year of the war, as the conflict continued many countries began to announce multi-year aid packages (Bomprezzi et al. 2024, 2). A short-term commitment is

"aid that is to be allocated or delivered within the next fiscal year" whereas a multi-year

commitment is "a spending plan announced over a horizon of two or more years, with fund

pledged but no year allocated over time or for specific purposes" (Bomprezzi et al. 2024, 2). The

EU's multi-year plan was approved on February 1, 2024, though it was first proposed by EU

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in June 2023. (Bomprezzi et al. 2024, 2-3). Part of

the reason for the long gap between the proposal of the plan and the agreement is because in

December 2023, Hungary blocked the aid (Lukiv and Parker 2023). These actions directly

impacted the EU's ability to supply Ukraine with aid. Part of the reason for Hungary's blockage

may be that the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban "…is friendly with the Kremlin…" and

"…has said Ukraine is corrupt and does not deserve EU support…" (Kakissis 2024). On

February 1, 2024, a compromise was reached, and Hungary stopped blocking Ukraine aid

allowing the EU to approve a $54 billion aid package (Kakissis 2024). The compromise means

that there will be "…[additional] budgetary reviews…" but not the "…annual review of EU

money to Ukraine and the right to veto it…" that Orban originally demanded (Kakissis 2024).

After the aid passed, French President Emmanuel Macron stated that the EU's ability to pass this

aid package sends a clear message, that "Russia can't count on any fatigue from the Europeans in

their support to Ukraine" (Campenhout 2024). Hungary's actions surrounding the passing of this

aid again shows how their goals are especially divergent from the rest of the EU's goals and the

inclusion of the additional budgetary reviews likely means that the process of getting the aid to

Ukraine will be slower than initially intended. Hungary's opinion of Ukraine has clearly

impacted their willingness to provide financial aid.

Current aid is failing to meet the goals that were set as, before the multi-year aid passed

"…the EU executive said the bloc would fall far short of its target of sending Ukraine one

million rounds of artillery shells by March" and the aid does not include the additional 5 billion Euros some states wanted in order to put it into a "…broader military assistance fund, the European Peace Facility" (Campenhout 2024). The multi-year aid package itself consists of "…up to EUR 50 billion to be allocated between 2024 and 2027…" (Bomprezzi et al. 2024, 2). Called the "Ukraine Facility" it "was set up for short- and medium-term assistance under 3 pillars: 1) resilience and reconstruction, 2) budgetary and financial support, and 3) EU accession support, including funds to improve the rule of law and democracy as well as administrative expenses (Bomprezzi et al. 2024, 2-3). Additionally, there is more aid than just financial.

Military

Of the types of aid given, military aid is one of the easier kinds to count. As for the types and numbers of weapons received by Ukraine, as of January 15, 2023, Ukraine had "…received 368 tanks…293 howitzers…[and] 49 multiple launch rocket systems…" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 36). Though the vast majority of this military aid is committed to Ukraine by the United States, the EU has substantially contributed to Ukraine's military (Trebesch et al. 2023, 35). The two types of aid counted by the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in their February 2023 Working Paper are in-kind military aid and non-specified commitments (Trebesch et al. 2023, 35). In-kind military aid includes "weapons and equipment that can be counted" whereas non-specified commitments are "to be spent for military purposes" which "[includes] financial aid for military expenditures" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 35). According to the Kiel Working Paper, €11.19 billion of commitments have been for heavy weapons and "€4.37 billion (roughly 39%)" of that €11.19 billion "comes from EU countries" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 36). Additionally, when looking at "[a]ggregate heavy weapons: NATO stocks vs. units sent to Ukraine "…European countries, rather than the US, top the ranking," with the Czech Republic at the top "…with 32%

of stocks committed, closely followed by Norway, the UK, and Poland" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 39). Additionally, €3.1 billion in military aid was sent through the European Peace Facility (EPF) by the end of 2022 (Youngs et al. 2023, 18). This was a "significant leap forward on security and defence" because it was the first time that the EPF was used to send "military support to a third country at war" (Bosse 2022, 532). Of course, all countries have not given military aid equally.

As would be expected, as of March 13, 2023, countries with larger economies had been able to send more weapons in total than countries with smaller economies (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute). When it comes to individual countries bilateral commitments, Poland is in third place with €2.43 billion and Germany is in fourth with €2.36 billion (Trebesch et al. 2023, 35). Additionally, regarding heavy weapons, in the first year of the invasion "…EU member countries [had], on average, committed about 6% of their available stocks of tanks, howitzers and multiple launch rocket systems" with Poland and the Czech Republic being "particularly generous" (Trebesch et al. 2023, 2).

Pausing to look specifically at the Baltics, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, their support of Ukraine's military began before the Russian invasion, and afterwards the amount of aid these countries send only increased (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Lithuania, 15). For example, Lithuania "accelerated the implementation of [increase[ing] the defence spending up to 2.5% of GDP until 2030]," but as of December 2022 Lithuania "…no longer [had] certain military equipment that could be donated to Ukraine without risking its own security" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Lithuania, 16). As another example, in December 2022, Latvia was "the foremost supporter of Ukraine" when the support is "measured as percentage share of GDP" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Latvia 2022, 12). Latvia's "overall defence

policy", while sped up, has not changed, with it having "increased its defence budget for 2022 to 2.2% (EUR 758 million)" and hoping to increase the budget to 2.5% over three years (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Latvia 2022, 13). Lastly, Estonia's contributions to Ukraine are similar to Latvia's. Estonia in 2022 donated "the equivalent of more than 0.8% of its GDP" to Ukraine which is "the second highest of all nations per capita" and "almost 40% of its annual military budget" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Estonia, 9). The Military aid contributed was "…worth over EUR 255 million, including Javelin anti-tank missiles, howitzers, anti-tank mines, anti-tank grenade launchers, mortars, ammunition, vehicles, communication devices, medical equipment and supplies, personal protective equipment and military food rations" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Estonia, 9). It is important to keep in mind that the Baltics share borders with Russia. This is likely a factor in their decisions to contribute to Ukraine's military. Additionally important to remember, is the humanitarian aid that has been given to Ukraine.

Humanitarian

Weapons and armaments are not the only support that the EU has been providing Ukraine, Humanitarian aid has also been supplied. As of February 2024, "3.6 million people are believed to be internally displaced" with "14.6 million people [in] need [of] humanitarian assistance in 2024 (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). This has resulted in €926 being allocated by the European Commission for humanitarian aid programs (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). The money that the EU has actually mobilized amounted to €485 million in 2022, €300 million in 2023, and thus far €75 million in 2024 (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). In order to provide this

assistance, the European Commission is working with the EU Civil Protection mechanism (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). Through this mechanism "all 27 EU countries…have offered help to Ukraine" by providing "millions of items such as first aid kits, shelter equipment, firefighting equipment, water pumps, power generators, and fuel" (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2023). The EU has also "deployed assistance from its rescEU stockpiles, including: power generators, medical equipment, temporary shelter units, water treatment stations…[and] specialized equipment for public health risks, such as chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats" (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). Through logistical hubs in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia the EU has channeled "…more than 145,000 tonnes of aid…" (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). According to the European Commission's website, in 2023 the EU's humanitarian funding to Ukraine mostly went to shelter and cash assistance, with 29% going towards shelter and 27% towards cash assistance (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). The other largest sectors that were funded were: water, sanitation, and hygiene at 9%, health, and protection both at 8%, education in emergencies at 7%, food and basic needs, and mine action both at 4% (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations 2024). It is notable how these efforts are coming from EU institutions. Additionally notable is that Slovakia, while opposing the EU's support for Ukraine in ways discussed above, has helped to distribute humanitarian aid. The EU clearly values the ability to help other nations as many of these systems were in place before the war in Ukraine.

Another way the EU has helped raise money for humanitarian aid, is by creating a donor conference with the Canadian government in 2022 called Stand up for Ukraine Event in order to raise money for Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced people (Trebesch et al. 2023, 14). According to the European Commission, the campaign raised €9.1 billion "for people fleeing the Russian invasion, inside Ukraine and abroad…" with €4.1 billion being "…financial contributions and in-kind donations for internally displaced people and refugees pledged by governments, companies and individuals around the world" and €5 billion being "loans and grants from European public financial institutions" (Stand Up For Ukraine 2022). This collaboration between the EU and Canada shows that giving humanitarian aid is a value that individuals as well as states hold.

In addition to monetary support for refugees, the EU has allowed Ukrainian nationals and permanent residents to "…live, work, access healthcare, housing, and education in the EU for three years, without…" going through the asylum process via the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) grants activated in March 2022 (Bosse 2022, 532 and Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs). This was a significant policy decision for the EU as it "…stands in stark contrast to the years of stalled efforts on migration policy, and deep divisions among the eastern and southern member states on asylum rules…" (Bosse 2022, 538). This kind of support, while harder to quantify, is also a part of how EU member states are responding to the conflict.

Who gives the most?

In order to take into account as much of the aid that has been allocated as possible, the 16th release of the Ukraine Support Tracker covers data from January 24, 2022 to February 29, 2024 and calculates their data in several different (Trebesch, Christoph, Arianna Antezza, Katelyn Bushnell, Pietro Bomprezzi, Yelmurat Dyussimbinov, Catarina, Chambino, Celina

Ferrari, Andre Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Caspar Gerland, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christopher Schade, Stefan Schramm & Leon Weiser 2024). In terms of total bilateral allocations not scaled for GDP, EU institutions collectively give the most in bilateral aid, Germany gives the most of any individual EU country with Poland, Netherlands, Czech Republic, France, and Spain making up the next five countries; as for the bottom six member states ranked by their bilateral allocations, they consist of Croatia, Greece, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta (Trebesch, Christoph, Arianna Antezza, Katelyn Bushnell, Pietro Bomprezzi, Yelmurat Dyussimbinov, Catarina, Chambino, Celina Ferrari, Andre Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Caspar Gerland, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christopher Schade, Stefan Schramm & Leon Weiser 2024). When ranking countries by bilateral allocations plus refugee costs in percent of 2021 donor country GDP Poland is ranked first with Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Slovakia being the next five; as for the bottom six it consisted of Ireland, Malta, Portugal, France, Greece, and Italy (Trebesch, Christoph, Arianna Antezza, Katelyn Bushnell, Pietro Bomprezzi, Yelmurat Dyussimbinov, Catarina, Chambino, Celina Ferrari, Andre Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Caspar Gerland, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christopher Schade, Stefan Schramm & Leon Weiser 2024). In knowing which countries are giving the most, we can look to see if there are any obvious trends. For example, one may expect that countries with the largest GDP's would give the most aid overall, and while that is true of Germany it is not be the case for states such as Netherlands or Czech Republic which, as seen above, are ranked higher than France despite having smaller GDPs (International Monetary Fund 2024).

One may expect that EU member states that share a border with either Russia or Ukraine to contribute more to Ukraine, but is this the case? When measuring by bilateral allocations in

percentage of 2021 donor country GDP without taking into account refugee costs one can see that five of the six states with the most allocations (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland) share a border with Russia (Trebesch, Christoph, Arianna Antezza, Katelyn Bushnell, Pietro Bomprezzi, Yelmurat Dyussimbinov, Catarina, Chambino, Celina Ferrari, Andre Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Caspar Gerland, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christopher Schade, Stefan Schramm & Leon Weiser 2024). Then when it comes to EU member states that border Ukraine the two more northern states are in the top half of countries bilateral allocations by GDP (Poland and Slovakia) and the more southern states are in the bottom half of countries bilateral allocations by GDP (Hungary and Romania) (Trebesch, Christoph, Arianna Antezza, Katelyn Bushnell, Pietro Bomprezzi, Yelmurat Dyussimbinov, Catarina, Chambino, Celina Ferrari, Andre Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Caspar Gerland, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christopher Schade, Stefan Schramm & Leon Weiser 2024). However, if you take into account refugee costs, Hungary and Romania are actually among the top half of EU member states (Trebesch, Christoph, Arianna Antezza, Katelyn Bushnell, Pietro Bomprezzi, Yelmurat Dyussimbinov, Catarina, Chambino, Celina Ferrari, Andre Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Caspar Gerland, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christopher Schade, Stefan Schramm & Leon Weiser 2024). Given this information, while proximity to the conflict may be playing a role in how much countries are in favor of Ukraine and how much money they give in support, there are clearly other factors that are causing states such as Hungary and Slovakia to push against EU aid and states such as the Baltics to contribute more than other EU member states.

Energy

In addition to norms, opinions, sanctions, and aid, the importation and exportation of energy is important to consider when looking at how the EU has responded to the war in Ukraine because, in March 2022, Russia supplied "…over 40% of the EU's gas and nearly a third of its oil" (Surwillo and Slakaityte 2022, 2). Therefore, even with the motivation to do so, "extricating Europe from dependence on Russian energy, particularly natural gas, will take years, substantial investment, and political will" and even if energy imports could be stopped immediately "stopping energy imports from Russia would cause inflation to rise sharply and plunge the EU into recession" (Ozawa 2022, 41 and Tchakarova and Benko 2023, 100). Given this, the International Energy Agency and European Commission both released plans to reduce/eliminate the EU's energy dependence on Russia within about a month of the invasion (Surwillo and Slakaityte 2022, 3). The main obstacle at the start of the invasion "…to achieving independence from Russian natural gas [was] infrastructure and pricing" (Ozawa 2022, 47-48). As discussed above, "[t]he sixth sanction package sought to impose an oil embargo" while a price cap for Russian oil was agreed upon by EU member states and the G7 beginning on December 5th 2022 (Tchakarova and Benko 2023, 99-100). Though there has been movement towards EU member states becoming less dependent on Russia, the member states each have different energy needs and energy infrastructure and therefore must take different actions in order to become less dependent on Russia. This goal is made more difficult because Russian hacker groups have conducted cyberattacks "on emerging technology such as wind farms" (Zang et al. 2022, 93). How exactly these cyberattacks effect each EU Member State varies as much as each Member States' reliance on Russia for their energy. As discussed above, Germany was more resistant to the idea of reducing gas ties with Russia (Driedger 2022). Germany is tied to Russia not only as "the largest importer of Russian gas in the first months of the war" but also as "a major

distributor of Russian gas to other NATO countries…" (Lohmann et al. 2022, 130). If countries, such as Germany, entirely cut off Russian oil and gas they would go into a recession (Lohmann et al. 2022, 130). However, as seen above, Germany is one of the largest supporters of Ukraine when it comes to aid. Clearly, this energy dependence, while important, does not tell the whole story around why Germany is supporting Ukraine.

Just as each member state may have its own reasons for supporting or not supporting Ukraine, each member state also has a different energy relationship with Russia. France, while also being the second biggest economy in the EU after Germany, certainly has a different energy relationship with Russia than Germany (International Trade Administration 2023). This is because France is less dependent on Russian gas than many other EU countries, even though "[Russian gas imports] still make up 17 percent of its gas consumption" (Zhang et al. 2022, 97). While France is "…a net exporter of electricity…and the second largest nuclear energy generator in the world" it still relies on importing "…most of its natural gas and oil and all of its coal" (Zhang et al. 2022, 97). Shortly after the invasion of Ukraine, France "announced plans to end oil and gas imports from Russia completely by 2027" (Zhang et al. 2022, 97). Additionally, "France has established itself as a leader in both global and national cybersecurity practices…" meaning that it is more prepared than other EU countries to face up against Russian cyberattacks (Zhang et al. 2022, 95). Yet, France, while supportive of Ukraine, is not showing that support to the same degree as member states such as the Germany the Baltics, as discussed above.

Regarding the Baltics, Estonia "is one of NATO's leading members on cybersecurity…" (Quirk 2022, 185). This is in part because "[g]eopolitically, the threat of cyberwarfare from Russia is particularly pertinent in Estonia" (Quirk 2022, 186). Since "…oil shale made up 73 percent of total primary energy supply and 72 per cent of energy production" in 2018,

"…Estonia [is] one of the most energy independent countries in the EU, but also one of the most carbon intensive" (Quirk 2022, 186). The Baltic states were reconfiguring their electric grid in 2022 order "[t]o lessen reliance on Russian energy sources" which means that "…Estonia will decouple from the Moscow-based IPS/UPS power grid and synchronize instead with the EU" (Quirk 2022, 186-187). Latvia faced challenges with energy because as of December 2022, "Latvia's electricity networks [were] still not synchronized with the Continental European power grid" and relied "[i]nstead…on the BRELL network, which ties it to Belarus and Russia" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Latvia, 14). Although Latvia's "Parliament agreed to develop legislation" in order to ban "commercial electricity flows from Russia" while also "aiming to close the BRELL network by 2025," cutting off Russian gas led gas prices to go up so much that Latvia in December 2022 considered "limiting the sale of gas reserves by Latvia's main gas provider" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Latvia, 14). Part of this policy shift may have been related to Latvia's "…parliamentary elections in October 2022 [which] reflected a major shift away from pro-Russian sentiment" as the pro-Russian party, Harmony Centre, did not pass the 5% threshold for the first time "since the second regaining of Latvia's independence in 1991" (Hartwell, Rakštytė, Ryng, and Selga 2022 Latvia, 15). As of August 2023, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania agreed to "accelerate the integration of their electricity girds with the Continental Europe network (CEN) and their disconnection from Russia and Belarus" (Directorate-General for Energy 2023). This synchronization was moved forward from the end of 2025 to February 2025 and "follows an agreement between the respective Transmission System operators…on the steps for accomplishing the fully-fledged synchronization in February 2025" (Directorate-General for Energy 2023). While being dependent on Russian energy clearly

has not stopped the Baltics from supporting Ukraine, their investment in divesting themselves of Russian energy shows that it is factoring into the decision making process.

When it comes to overall public opinions on how the EU should approach energy, as of autumn 2023 according to the European Commission, 83% of respondents believed "…that the EU should invest massively in renewable energies" and 81% believed the EU should "…reduce its dependency on Russian sources of energy as soon as possible" (European Commission 2023). The fact that disentangling from Russian energy dependence is such a priority shows that while energy may not be the only factor in EU Russian relations, it is playing a role in how the EU is approaching the conflict with Ukraine. It is difficult to guess what less energy dependence on Russia would have meant earlier on in the war. However, it is safe to say that being less energy dependent on Russia would change the political landscape in Europe.

Conclusion

The ongoing war in Ukraine is an incredibly complex affair. While this paper was not able to address every potential cause behind why EU member states have acted the way they have it has addressed some of the potential causes; those being international norms, public opinions, geographical distance from Russia, and energy dependence. Additionally, while this paper uses many statistics, no independent data analysis was run meaning that all observations of the data available are fairly surface level. However, this paper was able to give an overview of how the EU has responded to the war in Ukraine and briefly examine what may or may not have been the causes EU member states' responses to the war.

What does the situation in Ukraine look like going forward? According to the European Commission, as of autumn of 2023, 89% of Europeans "agree with providing humanitarian support to the people affected by [Russia's invasion of Ukraine], and…84% agree with

welcoming into the EU people fleeing from the war" (European Commission 2023). 72% of people agree that the EU should financially support Ukraine and 72% also "support economic sanctions on the Russian government, companies, and individuals" (European Commission 2023). This shows that while there have been some recent disagreements between countries about continuing to support Ukraine, the majority of the EU's population is invested in continuing to give them support. Yet there are certain areas of support that are becoming less popular. For example, although "55% of EU citizens agree with providing weapons to Ukraine" the "data indicate[s] a downward trend in support for this measure overtime" (DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit 2024). Additionally, when broken down by country one can see that this almost 50/50 split is not even across all countries with "60% of Italians disagree[ing] with the idea of the EU offering weapons to Ukraine…" and 74% of Hungarians "oppose the idea of EU Member States providing an additional funding for military equipment to Ukraine" compared to "61% support for military help" in Estonia (DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit. 2024). With these differences in opinions comes a mirroring in actions by these states. It is beyond the scope of this paper to say which one is causing the other, but public opinions are certainly relevant to understanding how EU member states are responding to the war in Ukraine. Geographical distance from Russia or the conflict impacting if member states are supportive seems unlikely, however, how being geographically close to Russia has impacted those countries historical relations is an area that should be looked into more. Areas that are likely relevant to understanding why EU member states have acted the way they have are international norms and energy dependence, with GDP playing a role in the amount of aid a state is capable of giving. In identifying and acknowledging the factors that have affected how EU

member states have responded to the war in Ukraine, it becomes more possible to understand both the conflict and where it may go next.

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