






# Opinion Poll

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New Europe Center, 2018

## WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE DO UKRAINIANS EXPECT FROM THE EU AND THE US?

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Ukrainians seek greater pressure on the authorities from the EU side to accelerate reforms;
- Most Ukrainians consider pro-European reforms necessary, even if the EU does not offer Ukraine a membership perspective;
- Every fifth Ukrainian believes that the US should provide security guarantees for Ukraine;
- Only 6.8% of Ukrainians support the integration into the Eurasian Union with Russia and abandoning the European integration;
- In general, Ukrainians do not expect funding from the EU and the US. Only 7% of Ukrainians are seeking financial assistance from the EU, and even less (4.7%) of respondents are expecting money from the US.

Ukrainians are generally convinced of the need for assistance from the EU and the US. Quite an insignificant number of citizens oppose receiving assistance from the Western governments. The largest portion of those who would abandon external support resides in the East of Ukraine. These are the answers to the questions offered by the New Europe Center within the framework of an opinion poll conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology from August 16 to 28, 2018. 2,041 respondents have been interviewed (the marginal error is 2.3%).

## THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR HELP

The countries of the European Union and the United States started supporting the reforms in Ukraine virtually immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The assistance had increased and diversified significantly after the beginning of Russian aggression in 2014. It's not just about billions of dollars in financial assistance to advance the reforms, but also about advisory support, and, most importantly, political support. Ukrainians particularly appreciate and commend the assistance of international partners in the security sector. During the election campaign, statements about “external management”, interference in the internal affairs, and the loss of sovereignty through support from the Western countries are increasingly vocal; such ideas are mostly propagated by the pro-Russian wing politicians (in fact, relaying the rhetoric inherent in Russian information space).

The opinion poll has shown that Ukrainians are not unanimous regarding what kind of assistance from the US and the EU their country needs the most.

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**A rather insignificant number of Ukrainian citizens consider such support unnecessary: only 12.1% of the respondents strongly oppose the EU assistance**

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However, a rather insignificant number of Ukrainian citizens consider such support unnecessary: only 12.1% of the respondents strongly oppose the EU assistance, while slightly more poll participants (16.5%) oppose receiving assistance from the US. The largest number of the opponents of Western aid reside in the East and South of Ukraine. For instance, 47.8%

of respondents from the eastern and southern regions opposed European assistance, while 65% of the residents of these regions are against the US assistance. In the western regions, this figure does not reach even 5%, and in the central regions it is close to 10%. Obviously, the pro-Russian political forces are oriented towards the citizens of the South and East in their exploitation of the “external intervention” narrative.

## DEMAND FOR PRESSURE

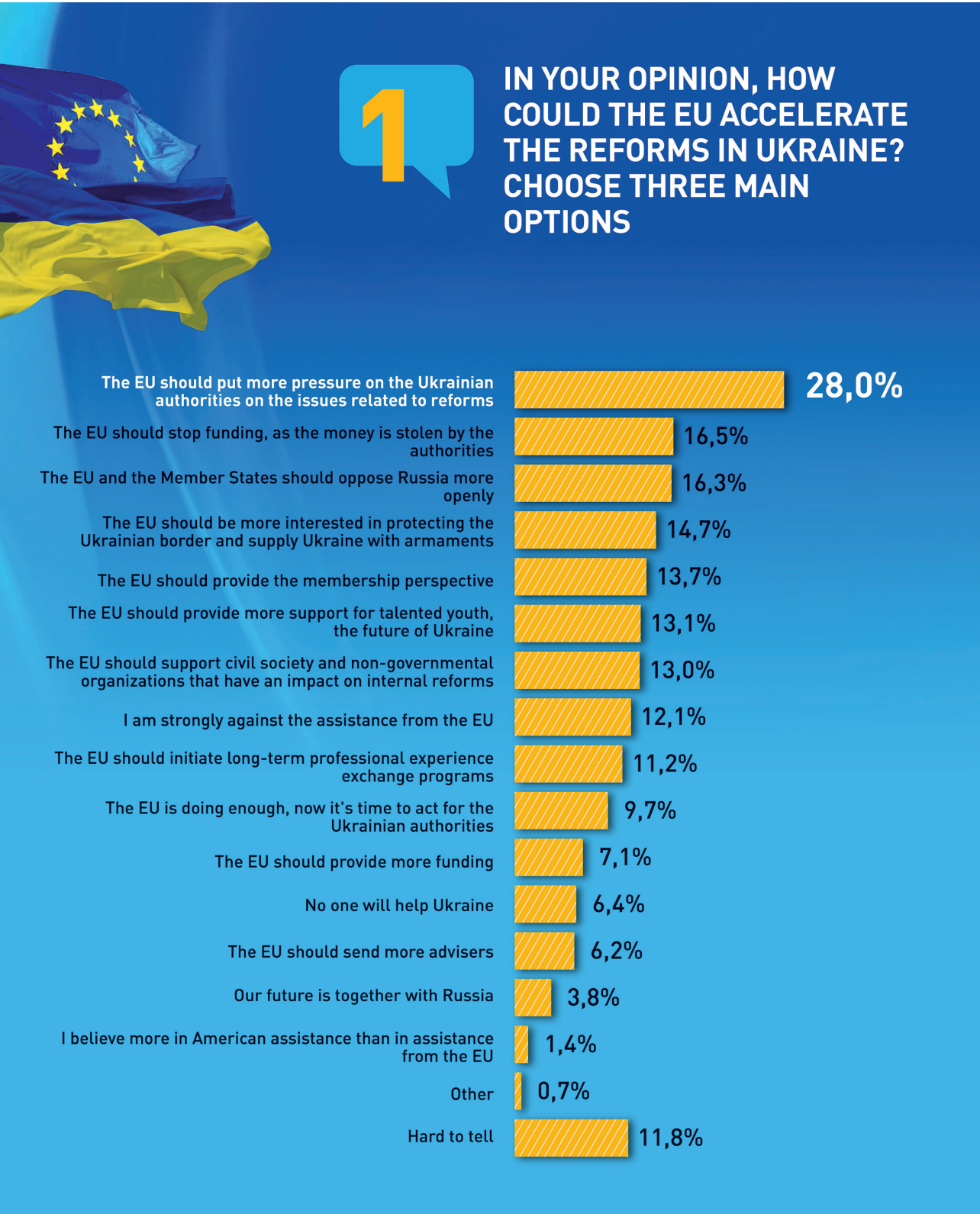
Of all kinds of support for Ukrainian reforms by the European Union, the citizens prefer more powerful pressure on the authorities. “The EU should put more pressure on the Ukrainian authorities on the issues related to reforms,” this option is the top choice of the Ukrainians (28%). The second most popular expectation of Ukrainian citizens is that the EU should stop funding, as the money is stolen by the authorities (16.5%). The third top answer was “The EU should oppose Russia more openly.”

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**Ukrainians demonstrate a noticeable trend of supporting stronger interference of the Western governments**

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Therefore, Ukrainians demonstrate a noticeable trend of supporting stronger interference of the Western governments, which could be connected to total distrust toward the state institutions in Ukraine and greater confidence in the Western powers. Three years ago, analysts of the New Europe Center have already raised a similar question before the Ukrainians, and the expectations of Ukrainian citizens regarding the EU assistance have not changed significantly over time. In 2015, respondents also sought greater



pressure from the EU on the Ukrainian authorities regarding the issues related to reforms (30.12%). The lack of confidence in the Ukrainian authorities was also reflected in another answer, “The EU is doing enough, now it’s time to act for the Ukrainian authorities” (in 2015, this figure reached almost 27%, and by now it has significantly decreased to almost 10%). Every fifth Ukrainian (22%) believed that “the EU should stop funding because the money is stolen by the authorities”; now this figure has slightly decreased (to 16.5%). Currently, as we see, this option is also among the top three expectations of the Ukrainians. Differences are noticeable in several responses. For instance, three years ago, twice as many Ukrainians believed that the EU should send more advisers (in 2015, this figure was 12.56%, now it is 6.2%). In the past, virtually every fifth Ukrainian expected the EU to provide more support for talented young people (19.74%), while by now this figure has decreased to 13.1%. Though the level of rejection of the EU assistance is very low in Ukraine, there is also a noticeable trend towards the growth of this indicator: in 2015, 4.69% of the respondents strongly opposed the EU support, now the respective figure is 12.1%.

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## SECURITY NATURE OF EXPECTATIONS

Ukrainians demonstrate a relatively high level of expectations for assistance in the security sphere. This is noticeable both in the results of the replies regarding support from both the EU and

the US. For example, 16.3% of Ukrainians believe that the EU should oppose Russia more openly, and almost 15% of Ukrainians believe that the EU should be more interested in protecting the Ukrainian border and supply Ukraine with armaments. The residents of the West and the Center are counting on such support the most; overall, 42% of respondents from these regions would like to see the EU opposing Russian aggressive policies more evidently. Ukrainians’ expectations of the United States are also linked with the security dimension, as the top three expectations are related to security.

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**The top response is related to the security guarantees: 20.6% of respondents believe that the US should provide security guarantees for Ukraine**

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The top response is related to the security guarantees: 20.6% of respondents believe that the US should provide security guarantees for Ukraine. According to the second most popular expectation, 17.8% are convinced that the US should introduce new sanctions against Russia. As demonstrated by the third most popular response, 14% of respondents believe that the US should support Ukraine’s membership in the NATO. Options related to the “civil” sector (advisers for reforms, support for the youth, and financial assistance) usually do not exceed 10%. For example, the answer “The US should provide more funding” was chosen by only 4.7% of Ukrainians. In terms of the regional dimension, the expectations of social support were prevailing in the results of the poll participants from the East and South: 17.4% of respondents in the East believe that the US should support civil society. In addition, the East demonstrates the highest level of rejection toward the US assistance (42.2%); in the South, the respective figure is also quite significant (22.8%).





Interestingly, a substantial number of respondents from the South (17.4%) chose the option “The US should provide security guarantees for Ukraine” (which is comparable to the West, where 22.2% of respondents chose this option).

## LACK OF MEMBERSHIP PERSPECTIVE IS NOT A REASON TO STOP REFORMS

Most Ukrainians believe that the state should continue implementing pro-European reforms, even if the EU does not offer Ukraine a membership perspective. 39.3% of respondents believe that Ukraine requires such reforms in the first place, while 20.8% of respondents said that Ukraine simply has no other choice but to move towards European integration (regardless of membership). Only 17.4% of Ukrainians are convinced that their country does not need these so-called “European reforms”, while another 6.8% answered that Ukraine should change direction towards integration into the Eurasian Union with Russia.

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**Thus, we can state that the camp of supporters of the pro-European reform path is three times larger than the camp of their opponents**

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Thus, we can state that the camp of supporters of the pro-European reform path is three times larger than the camp of their opponents. Naturally, respondents who favor the turn toward Russia reside in the South and the East (15% and 10.4% respectively). Meanwhile, not only representatives of the South and the East, but also residents of the central regions (17.1%) consider such reforms unnecessary. A group of supporters of pro-European reforms is relatively

uniformly distributed on a regional level: 38.4% of the respondents from the East believe that Ukraine requires these reforms in the first place; in the West, this indicator is higher by only 11.8%. Therefore, we can speak of the unequivocal unity of Ukrainians in supporting the pro-European reforms, although it has a “patriotic” accent: first and utmost, they are necessary for Ukraine, not for the European Union.

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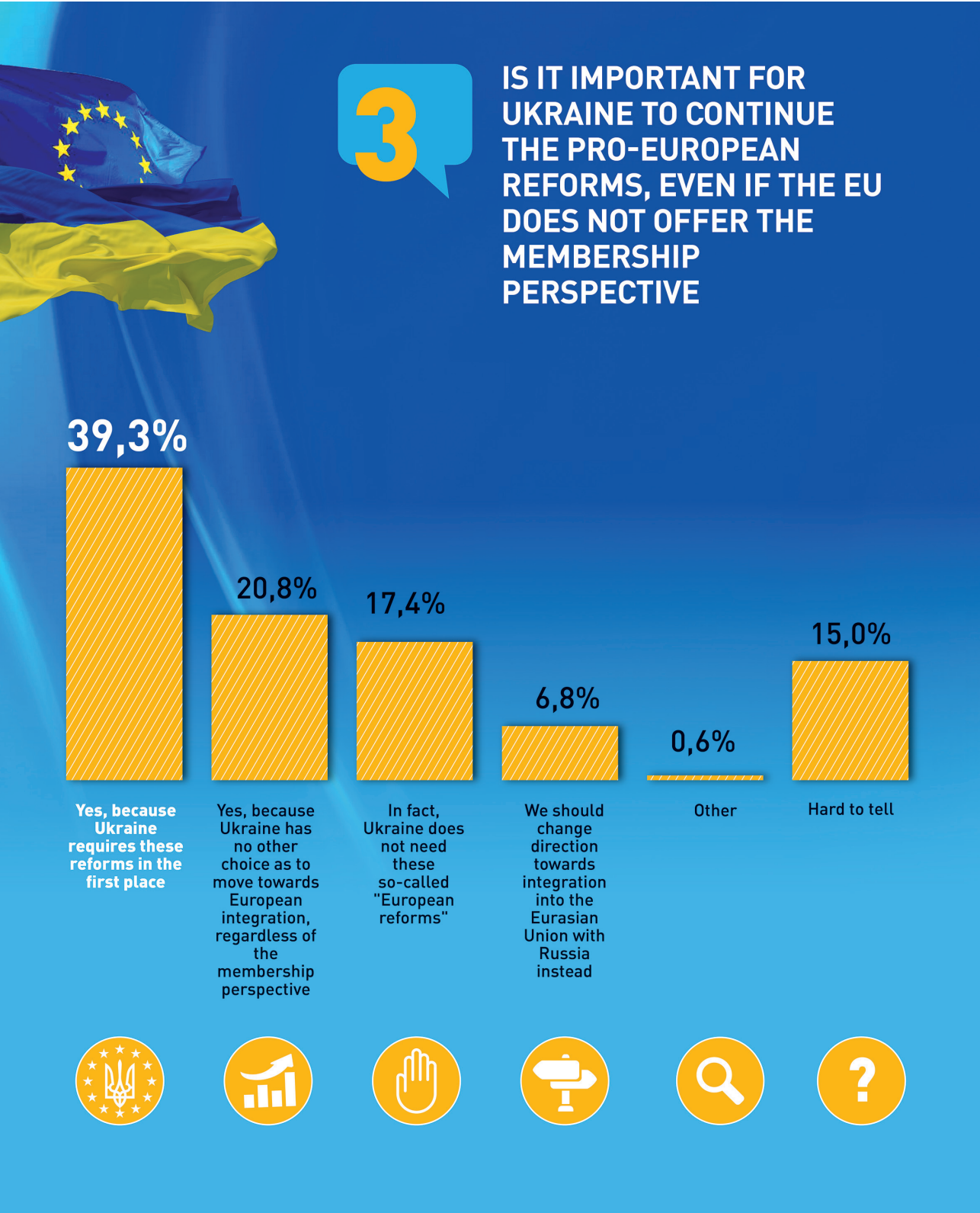
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Overall, we see that the public demand for pro-European reforms remains stable among Ukrainians, despite the lack of a prospect of the EU membership. In 2016, on the request of the analysts of the New Europe Center, sociologists from GfK Ukraine asked the Ukrainians “What should the Ukrainian authorities do if the European Union does not offer Ukraine a membership perspective in the nearest future?” Two years ago, 46% chose the option “First, we should implement reforms, and then talk about the EU membership.” The accession to the Eurasian Union in case if Ukraine does not receive membership prospects in the nearest future was supported only by 6% of Ukrainians<sup>1</sup>.

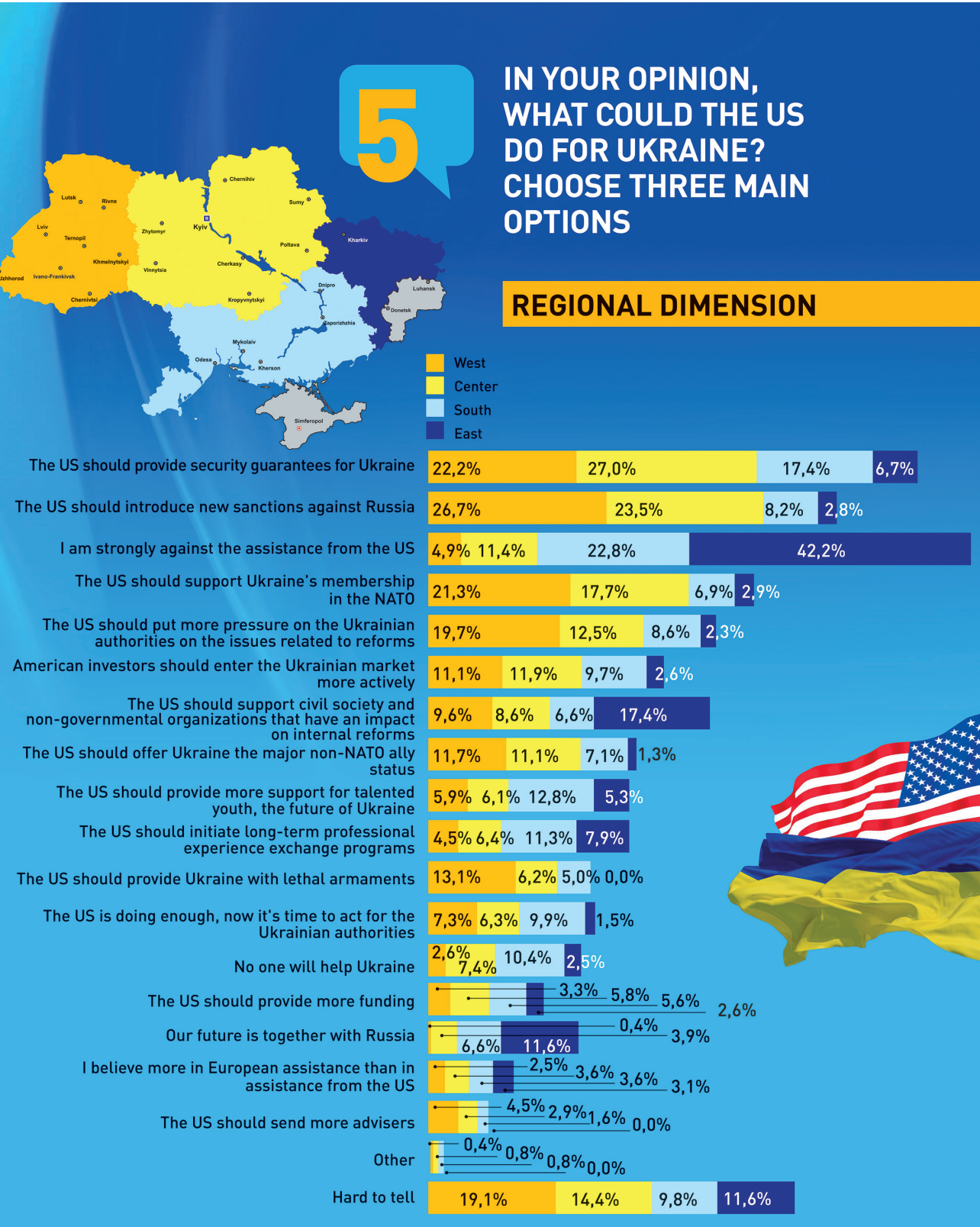
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<sup>1</sup> The results of the poll conducted by GfK Ukraine on request of the analysts of the New Europe Center. 2,000 persons aged over 16 have been polled in all regions of Ukraine, except Crimea. In Donetsk and Luhansk regions, polls have been conducted only in territories controlled by Ukraine. The poll has been conducted from March 29 to April 17, 2016. The margin of error was 2.2%.

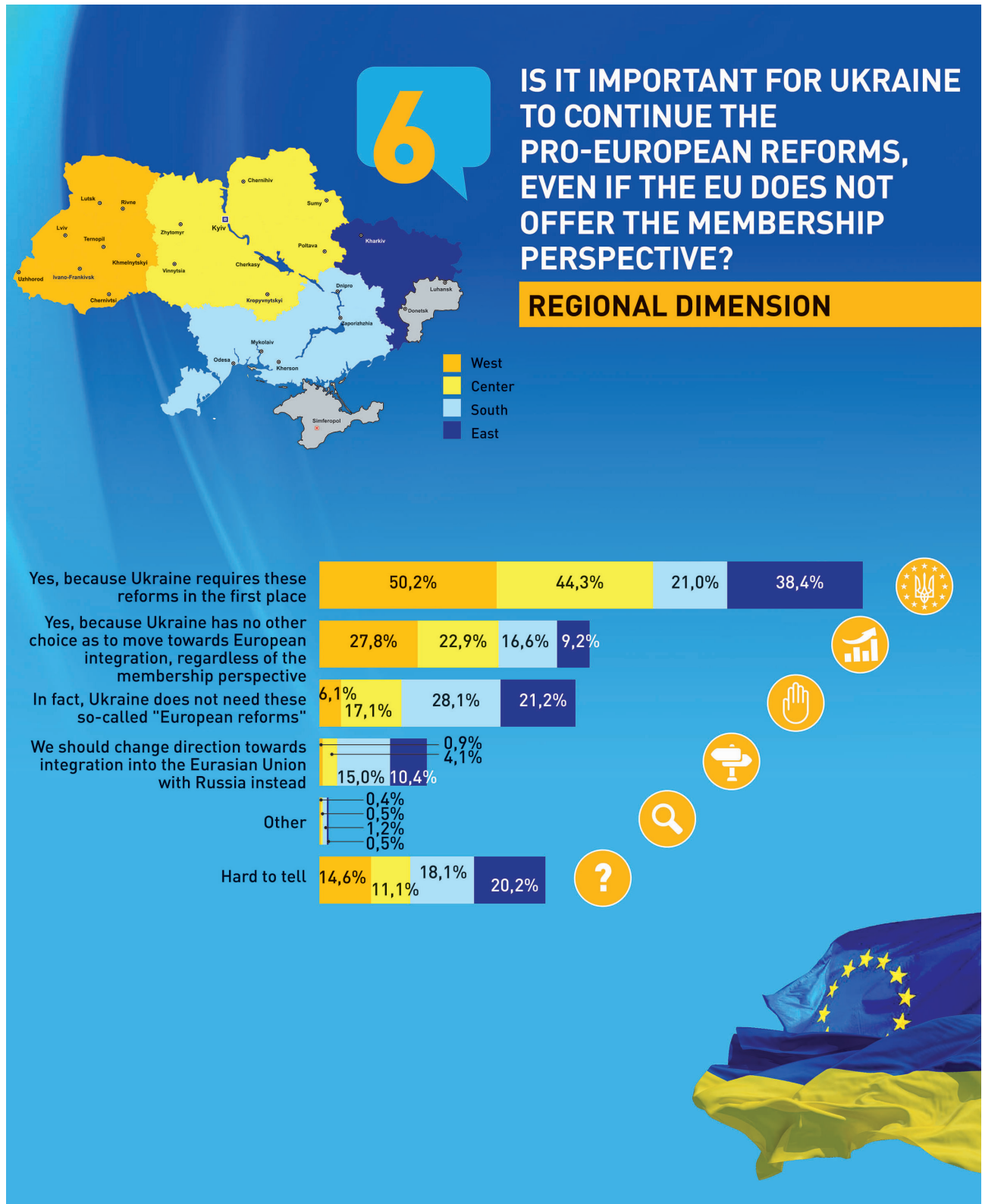


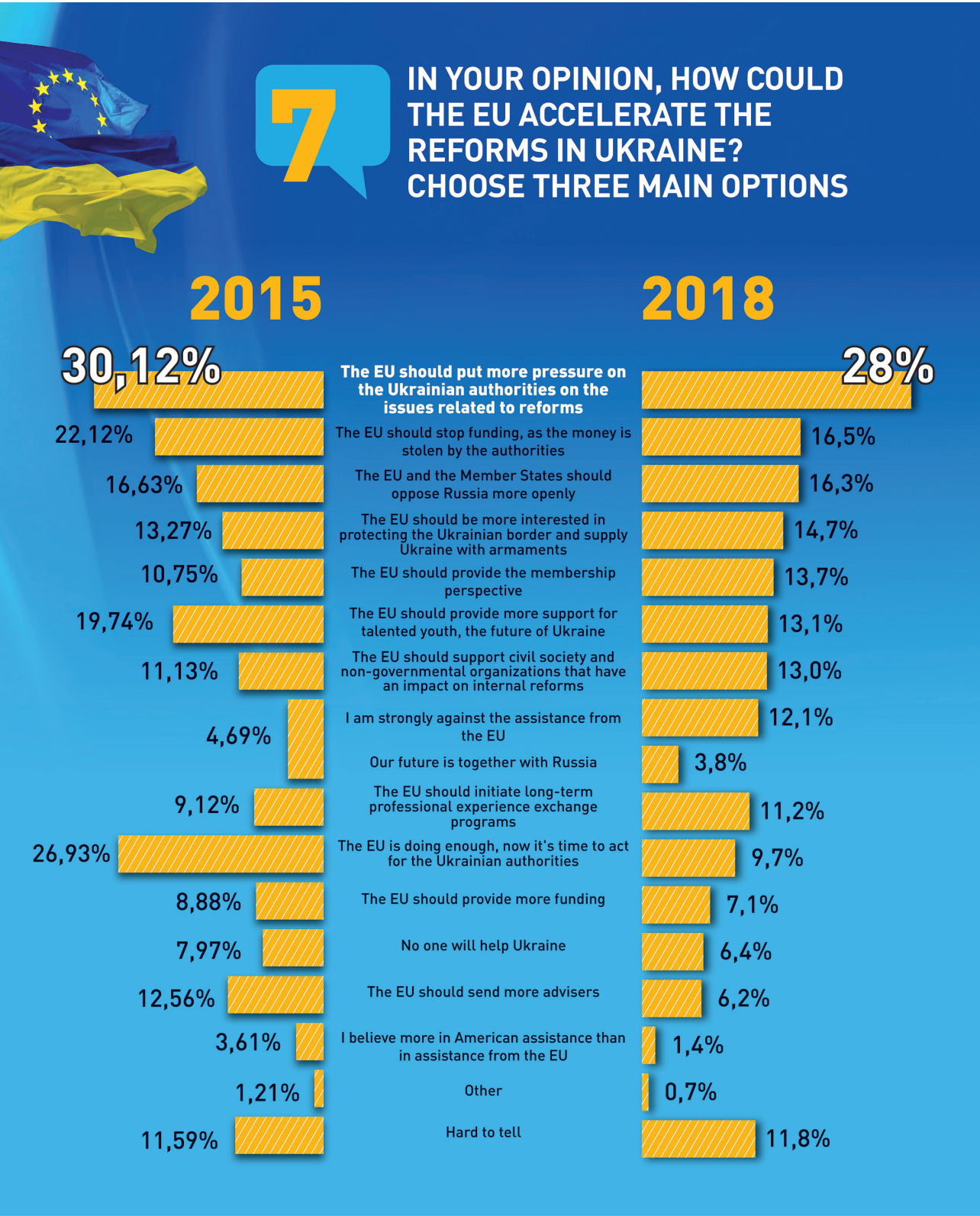












This survey was held by the sociological company GfK Ukraine. Sample: 2,000 respondents aged 18 and over. The sample is representative by gender, age, region of residence and size of settlement. Period of the survey: from October 22 to November 10, 2015.



Answers to the questions offered by the New Europe Center were received within the framework of a poll conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology from August 16 to 28, 2018. 2,041 respondents have been interviewed. Margin of error is 2.3%.





## ABOUT NEW EUROPE CENTER

*The **New Europe Center** was founded in 2017 as an independent think-tank. Despite its new brand, it is based on a research team that has been working together since 2009, at the Institute for World Policy. The New Europe Center became recognized by offering high-quality analysis on foreign policy issues in Ukraine and regional security by combining active, effective work with advocacy.*

*The New Europe Center's vision is very much in line with the views of the majority of Ukrainians about the future of their country: Ukraine should be integrated into the European Union and NATO. By integration, we understand not so much formal membership as the adoption of the best standards and practices for Ukraine to properly belong to the Euroatlantic value system.*

*More about New Europe Center: [www.neweurope.org.ua](http://www.neweurope.org.ua)*