






# Opinion Poll

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New Europe Center, 2019



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## BETWEEN LUKASHENKO AND MERKEL

### WHAT KIND OF FOREIGN POLICY ARE UKRAINIANS EXPECTING FROM THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE?<sup>1</sup>

#### KEY FINDINGS

- For 54% of Ukrainians, it is important for the future President of Ukraine to continue European integration
- Most Ukrainians did not feel any positive effect of rapprochement with the EU
- Almost 20% of Ukrainians would like the conflict between Ukraine and Russia to be resolved in the Budapest Format
- Ukrainians believe that the future President should look up to the political style of Lukashenko, Merkel, and Grybauskaitė. Half of the respondents found it hard to answer the relevant question

<sup>1</sup> The poll has been conducted in November-December 2018 at the request of the New Europe Center by the sociological company GfK Ukraine within the framework of the ENGAGE project for enhancement of civic activities funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the Pact in Ukraine.

## THE COURSE TOWARD EUROPE IS IMPORTANT

For more than a third of Ukrainians (36.1%) it is important (although not fundamental) that the future President will continue the European integration of their country. For 17.77% of citizens, maintaining the course toward the EU is fundamentally important, i.e., overall, we are talking about almost 54% of Ukrainians. In the regional context, the highest level of importance of the pro-European perspective of the future President has been observed in the West of Ukraine (over 70%), with the lowest in the East (34%). In the South and East, the rate of those who would vote for a person who will cease European integration is high enough, 16.17% and 13.46% respectively.

## BUDAPEST FORMAT

19.12% of Ukrainians believe that the future President should resolve the conflict with Russia in the Budapest Format with the participation of the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, France, and China. In the regional dimension, the largest share of supporters of the Budapest Format resides in the North of Ukraine: 26.34% of the respondents from the northern regions have chosen this option for conflict resolution. Almost the same level of support for the Budapest Format (24.94%) has been observed in the West. The East was not far behind with 20.65%. The central regions gave approximately the same number of votes for each of the options (within 10%), with 32% of the residents of the central regions having chosen the “hard to tell” answer (the highest figure compared to the other regions). The South shows the highest rate (19.66%) of support for the option “this is an internal conflict, which requires direct negotiations with the representatives of the uncontrolled territories of Donbas.” Moreover, in the South, the option to negotiate in the current formats (the Minsk Process or the Normandy Format) was relatively popular. In the West of Ukraine, the highest number of those who consider it necessary to use the Budapest Format has been observed. Furthermore, quite a few of the respondents in the western regions believe that the Armed Forces should be involved in order to reinstate control over the occupied territories (for comparison, in the West, the respective figure is 19.76% with 2.48% in the East).



## LUKASHENKO'S STYLE IS IN FAVOR

The future President of Ukraine should take an example from the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, as believed by 13.44% of Ukrainians. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's political style is favored by 9.83% of the respondents. The third most popular option is Dalia Grybauskaitė, leader of Lithuania. In the regional dimension, Merkel was the most popular in the West of Ukraine, while Lukashenko became the leader of sympathy in the rest of the regions. Interestingly, the highest rate of supporters of Lukashenko's style has been observed in the North of Ukraine (21.8%). Putin remains an example for 7.6% of the residents of the South and 6.85% of the respondents from the East (nationwide, Putin is a role model for 2.88% of the participants). Angela Merkel has approximately equal figures in these regions: 7.93% in the South and 4.15% in the East. The favorites of the international press, Emmanuel Macron and Justin Trudeau, are not particularly popular among Ukrainians (the level of support for them is within the margin of error). US President Donald Trump has been chosen as a role model leader by 4.17%; most of his sympathizers reside in the West (7.31%) and in Kyiv (7.15%). The analysis of age groups revealed that Angela Merkel is popular among young people, while Alexander Lukashenko is the favorite of the older generation. For instance, for the youth aged 18-24, Angela Merkel (17.25%) is the authority and the leader of sympathy, while Lukashenko is favored by only 3.55% of young Ukrainians. Among the respondents aged over 45, the Belarusian president is the favorite. In the age range of 55-64, 21.19% of the respondents would like the future President to take an example from the leader of Belarus. It should be noted that half of the respondents from all regions of Ukraine found it hard to answer this question. In Kyiv, this figure reached record highs of almost 60%.

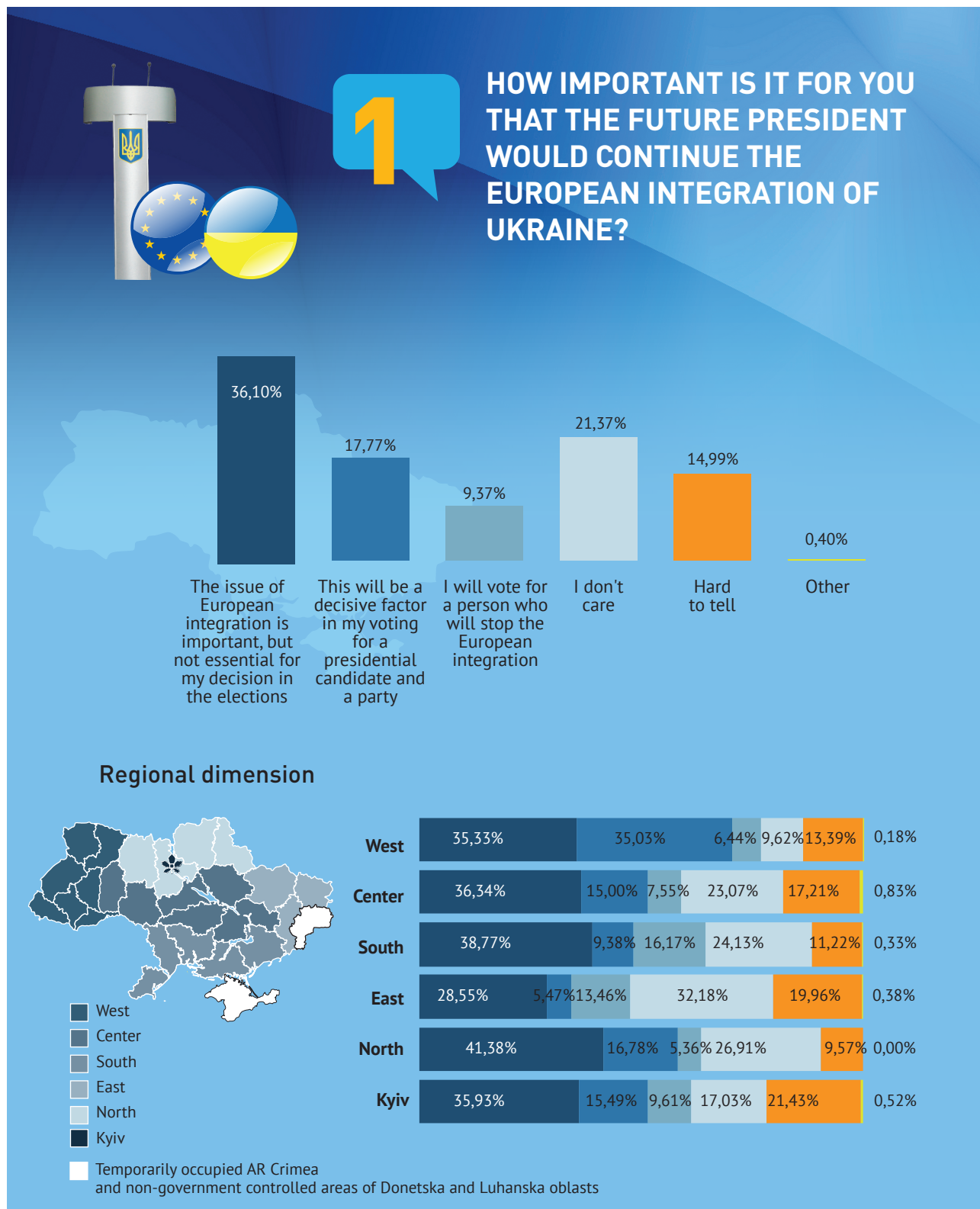
## RAPPROCHEMENT WITHOUT EFFECT

Most Ukrainians (64.1%) said that they did not feel any positive effect from Ukraine's rapprochement with the EU. In the regional context, there are no serious differences between those who feel a positive influence and those who don't. The West might be the only exception: almost 25.94% of the respondents felt a positive effect compared to 48.87% of those who did not. In the rest of the regions, the figures are approximately equal: from 15% in the South to 18.97% in the North have experienced a positive effect from rapprochement with the EU, while from 64.89% in the central regions to 77.3% in the East did not feel it. The analysis of age groups revealed that the older are the respondents, the less they show optimism about the positive impact of European integration. While respondents aged 18-24 were divided (25.01% felt the effect and 54.83% did not), in the range of 65 years and older, the respective figures are 9.53% versus 73.71%.

## DECENTRALIZATION OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Of the 18.41% of Ukrainians who feel a positive effect on rapprochement with the EU, 31.17% of see it in the revitalized communities that are more proactive in solving problems in their settlements without waiting for the state to do that. Similarly, one third of respondents reported improvements in transport infrastructure, or that local authorities listen to the communities, or that local products are exported to the EU.

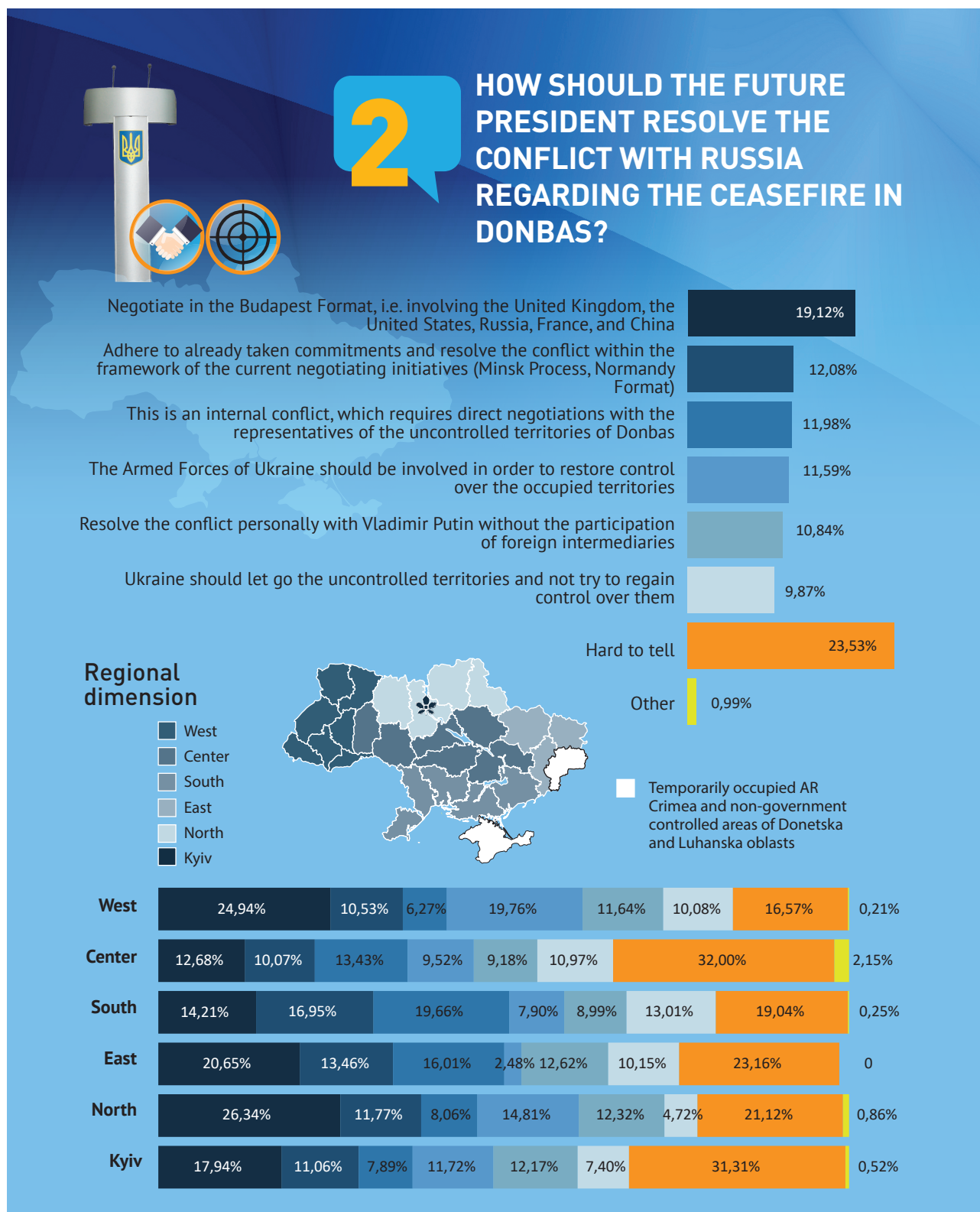
What kind of foreign policy are Ukrainians expecting from the next President of Ukraine?



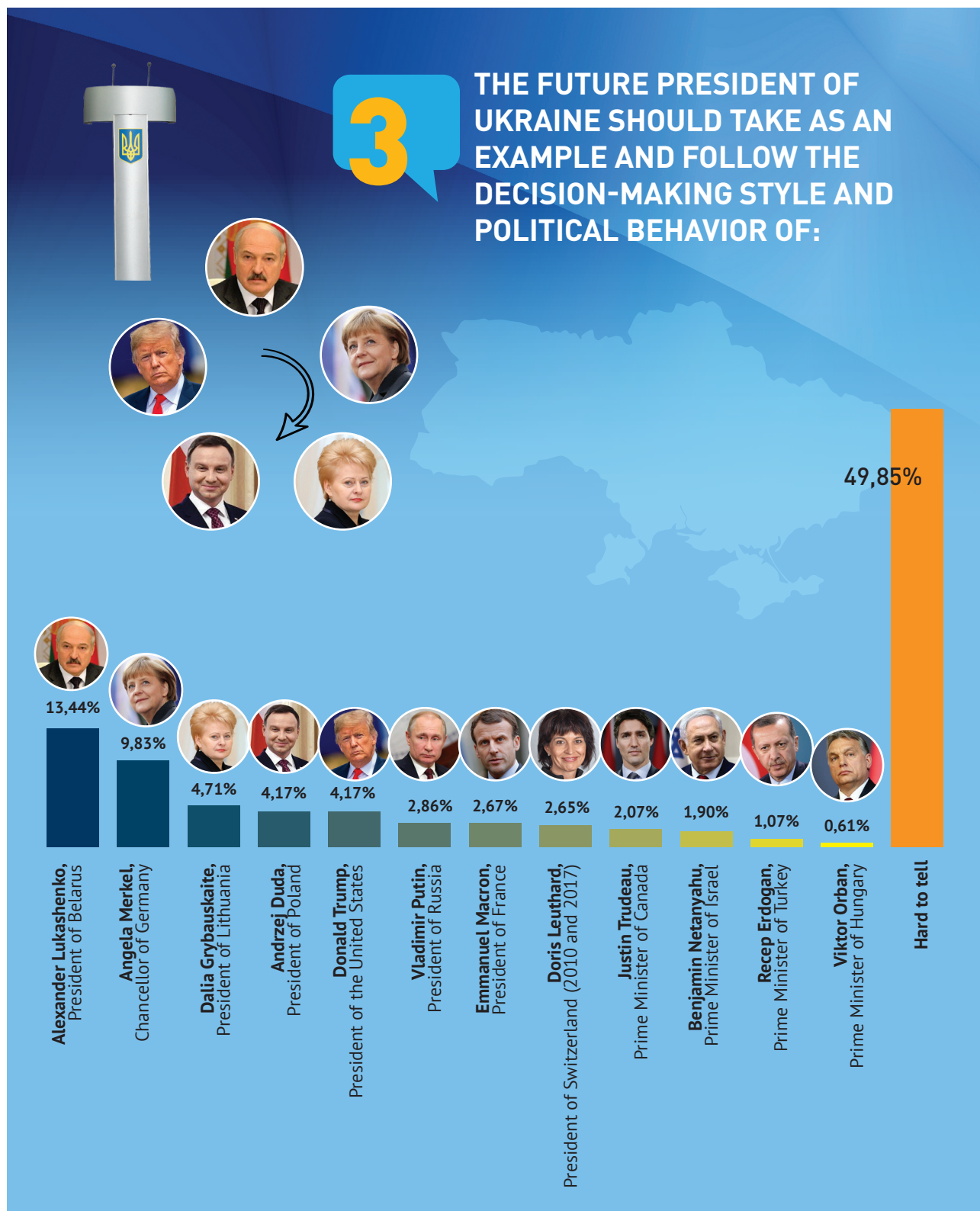




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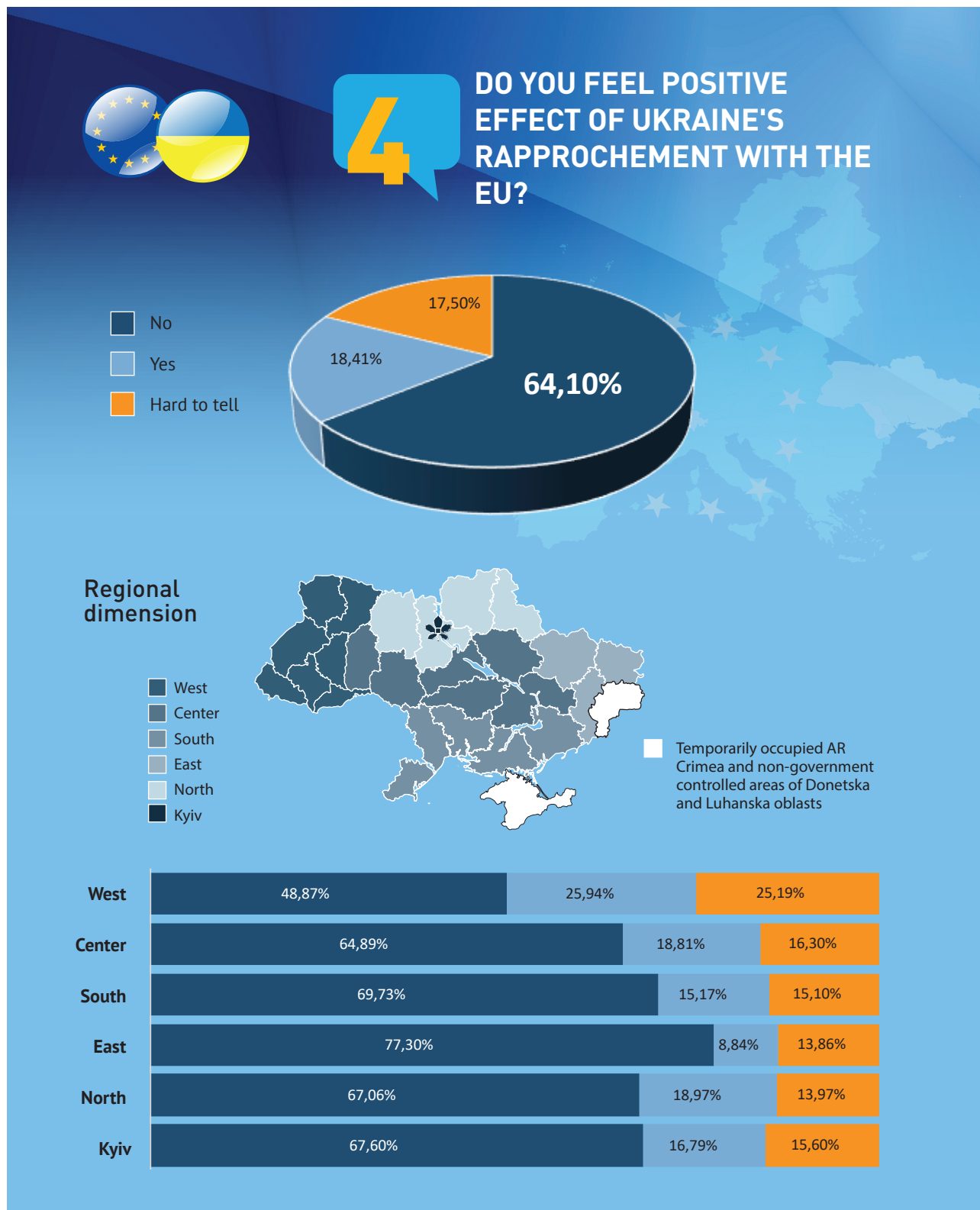


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