MINDS AND MISSILES

Public Debate on Security & Defence Policy



Ipsos I&O
10 November 2026

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Key take-aways

1 Security (re)emerges as a political issue

2 Public opinion converges (differences remain)

3 Are we willing to bear the costs of security?

PART I

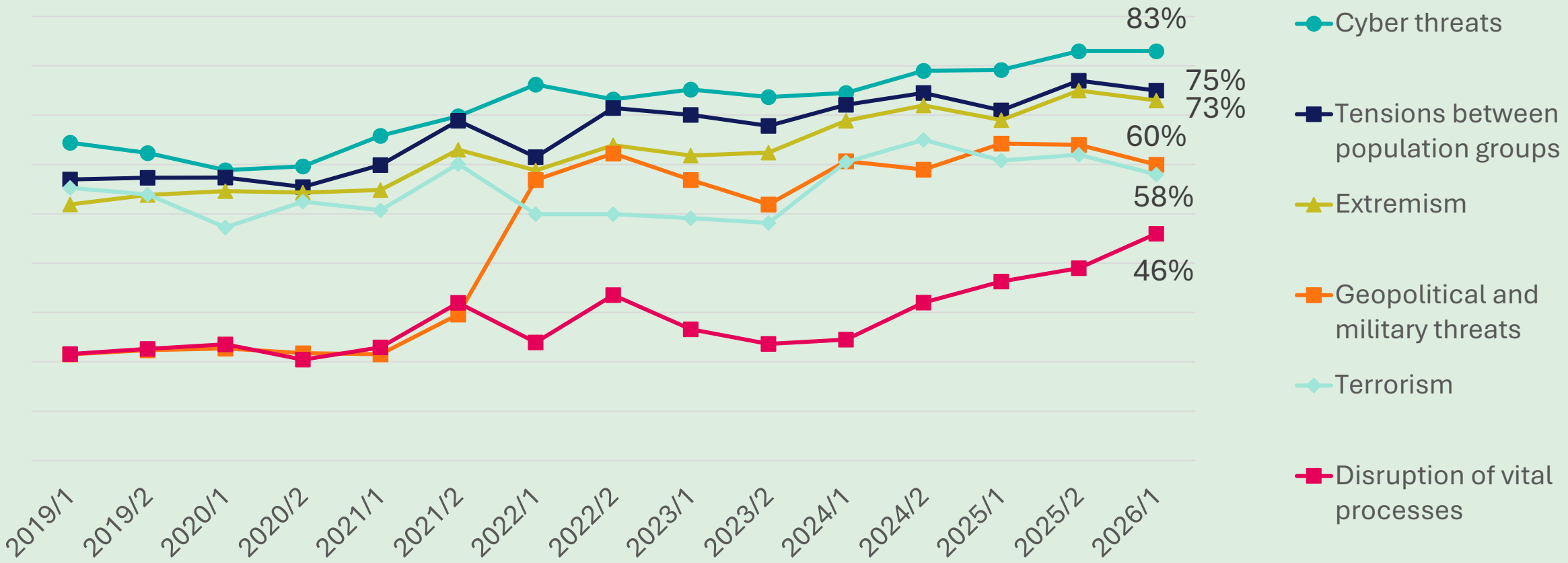
RETURN OF SECURITY TO THE PUBLIC DEBATE



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Geopolitical risk is becoming mainstream

% who think the event is likely / very likely to occur

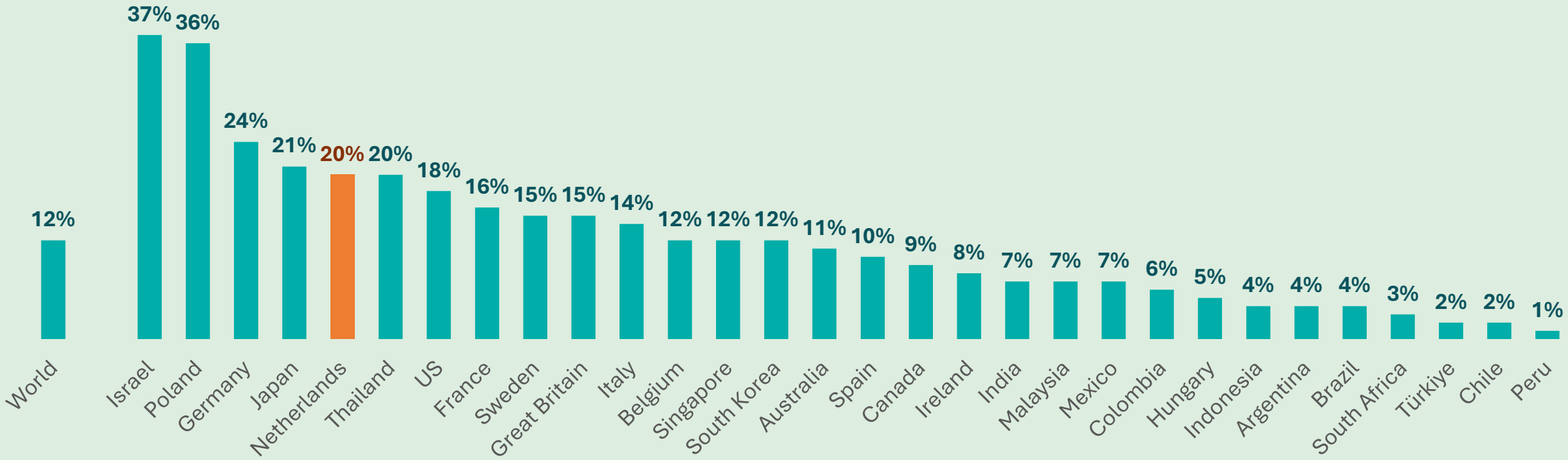


Source: Spring 2026, Risk and Crisis Barometer, Ipsos I&O commissioned by the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV)

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The Dutch are especially worried

% choosing 'military conflict between nations' as a worry

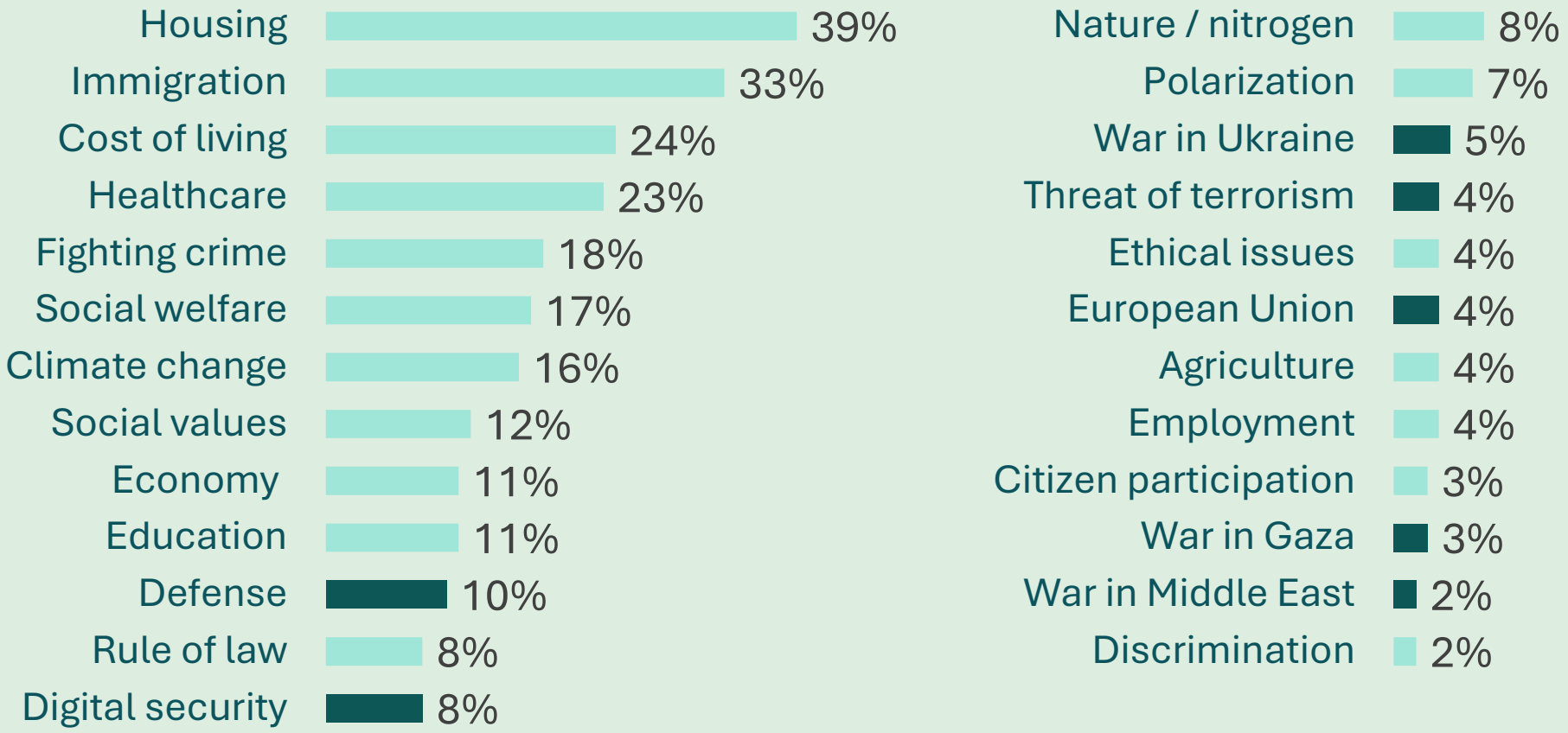


Source: Ipsos | What Worries the World | June 2026

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Domestic concerns dominate

'Which issues do you think politicians should prioritize?' (Max 3)



Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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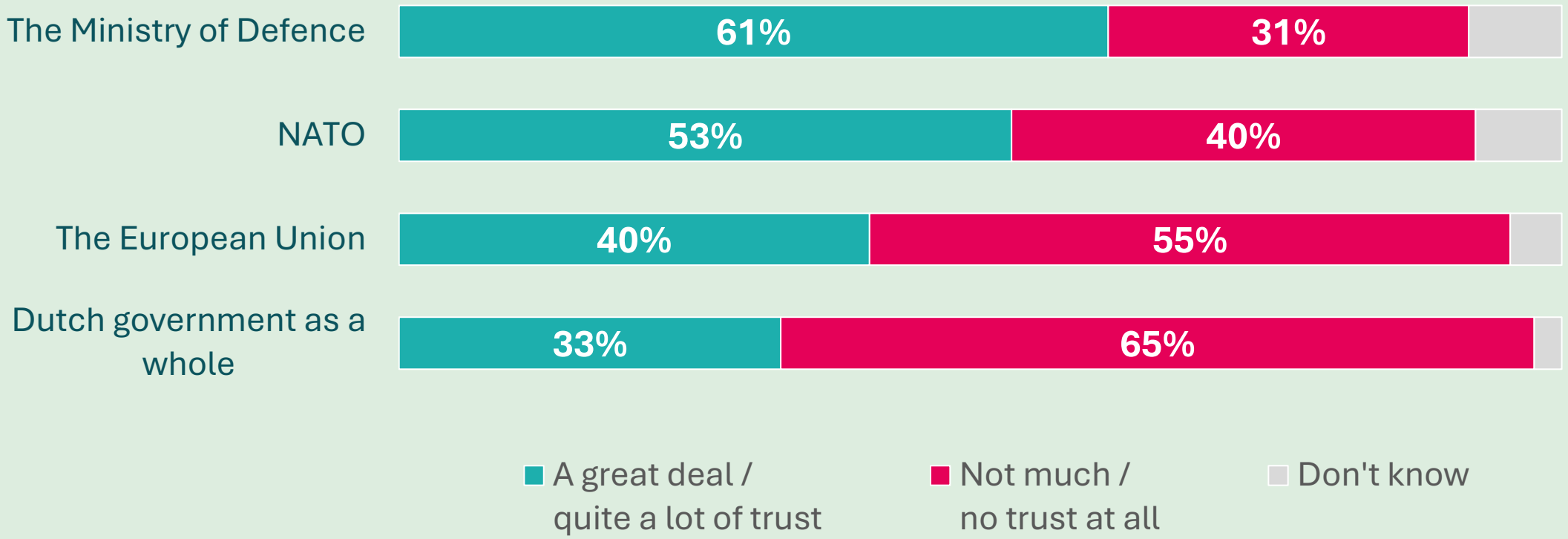
PART II

PUBLIC OPINIONS CONVERGES, ALTHOUGH DIFFERENCES REMAIN

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Trust in defence exceeds trust in politics

To what extent do you trust the following institutions and organizations?

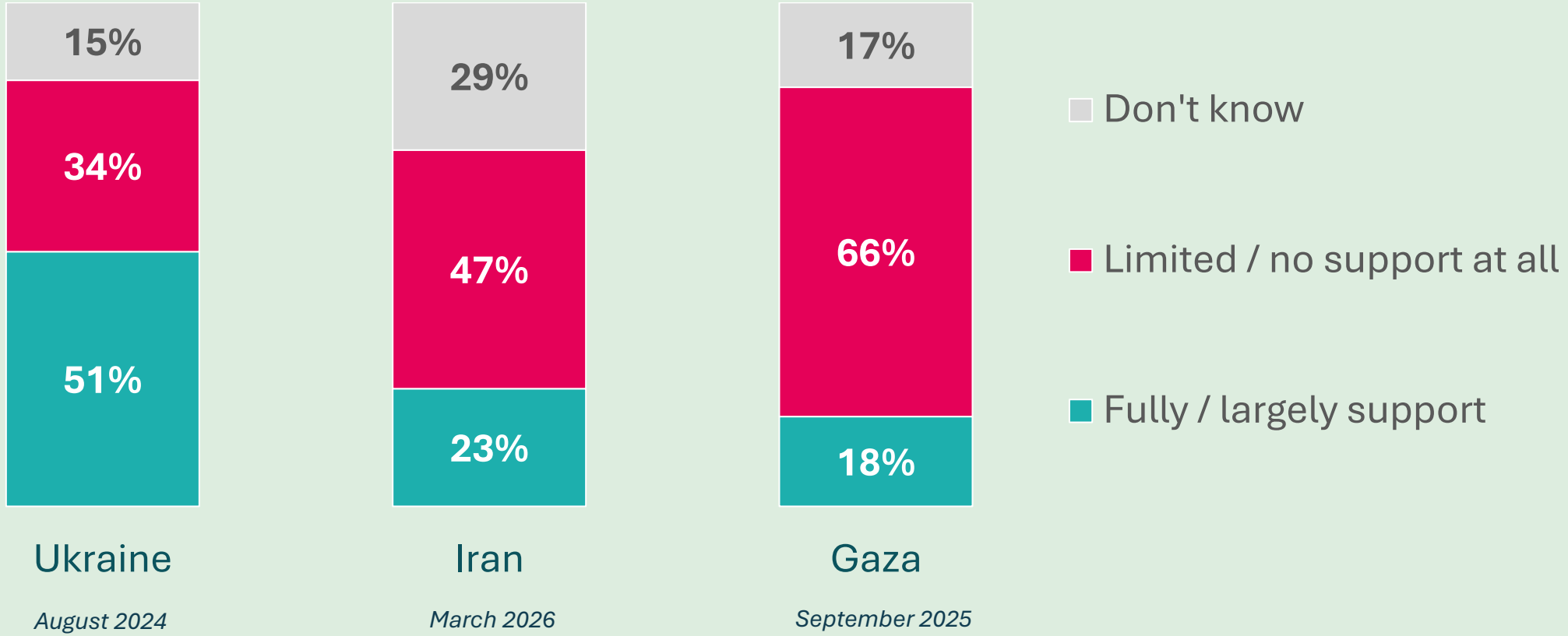


Source: Ipsos I&O Political Poll Oct 2026 + Environmental Scan Foreign Affairs 2025

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Not all international crises are viewed equally

'To what extent do you support the way the Dutch government is handling the war in Ukraine / between the US and Israel and Iran / Gaza?'

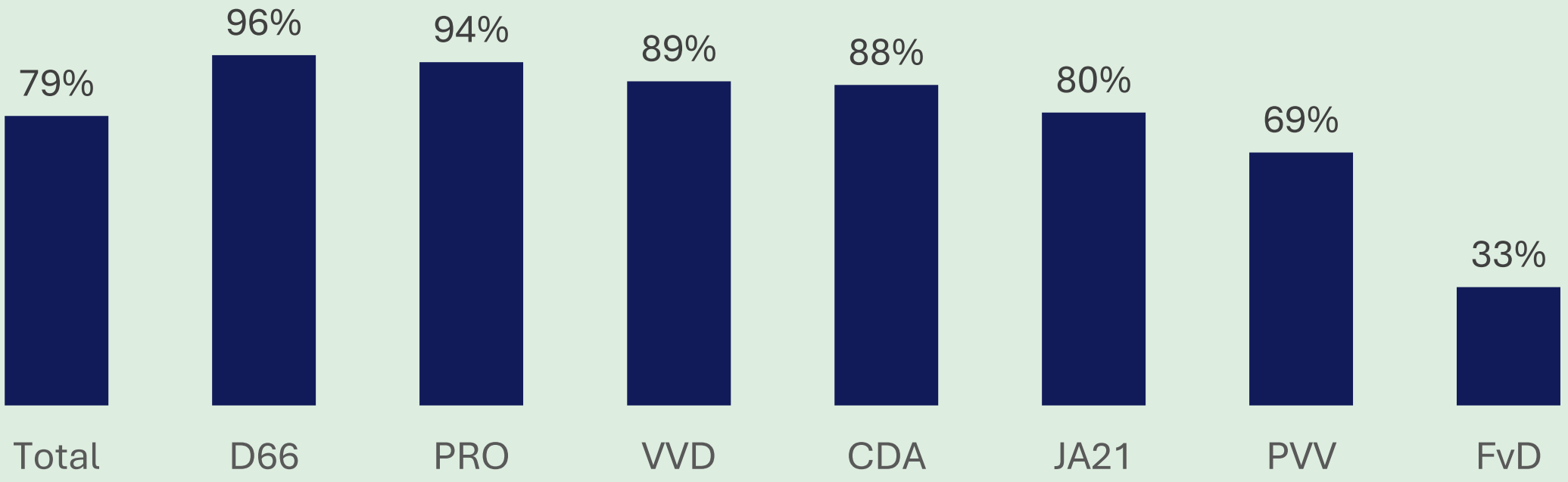


Source: Ipsos I&O Political Poll; August 2024, September 2025, March 2026

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Views on Russia differ across the political spectrum

% agree with statement 'Russia poses a threat to peace in Europe', by current party preference



Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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PART III

SETTLING THE BILL

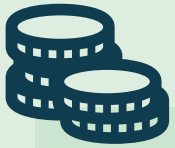
Four costs of security



Diplomatic cost



Democratic cost



Economic cost



Personal cost

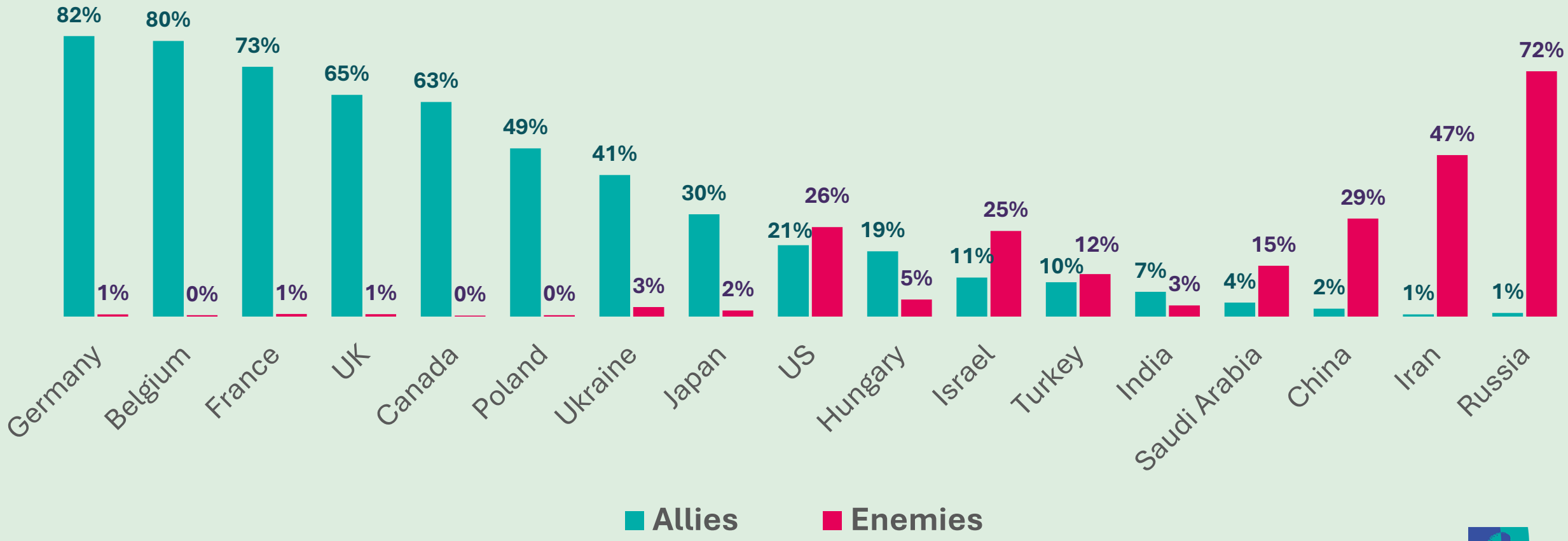
DIPLOMATIC COST

Transatlantic relationship is being questioned, but is Europe truly an alternative?

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Geopolitical alignments become contested

'Which countries do you consider allies of the Netherlands?' 'And which countries do you consider enemies of the Netherlands?'

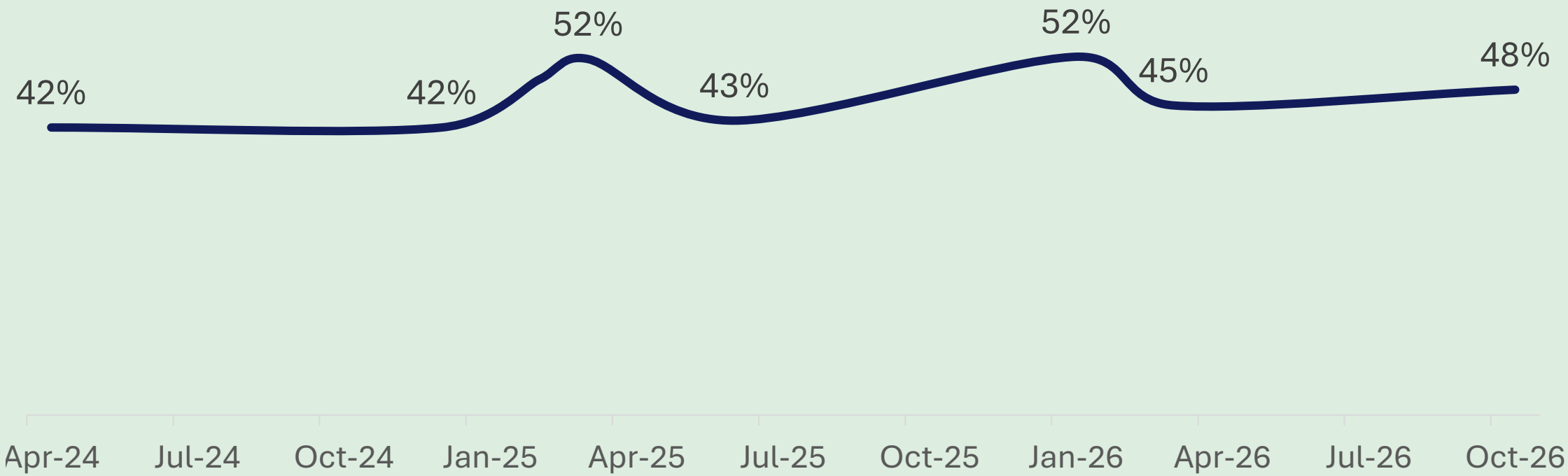


Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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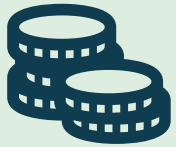
But is there a European alternative?

% agree with statement: 'An army of EU member states should be established instead of national armies'



Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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ECONOMIC COST

Who should pay for security?

Testing different scenarios

1 External threat

- Latvia invaded by Russia
- War between Russia & Ukraine continues
- Major shipping route attacked
- Dutch banks & supermarkets hit by cyber attack
- Russia & Ukraine sign peace treaty

2 Future of NATO

- United States withdraw from NATO
- NATO remains intact, US remains a member

3 Taxes or debt

- Higher-income groups pay more taxes
- Everyone will pay more taxes
- Government takes on more debt

4 Budget cuts

- Cuts on education
- Cuts on healthcare
- Cuts on climate policy

Source: May 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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Not every scenario results in equal support for defence spending

Scenario:

Latvia invaded

US withdraw from NATO

Taxes for higher incomes

Cuts on climate policy

Scenario:

Cyber attack

NATO remains intact

Taxes for higher incomes

Cuts on education

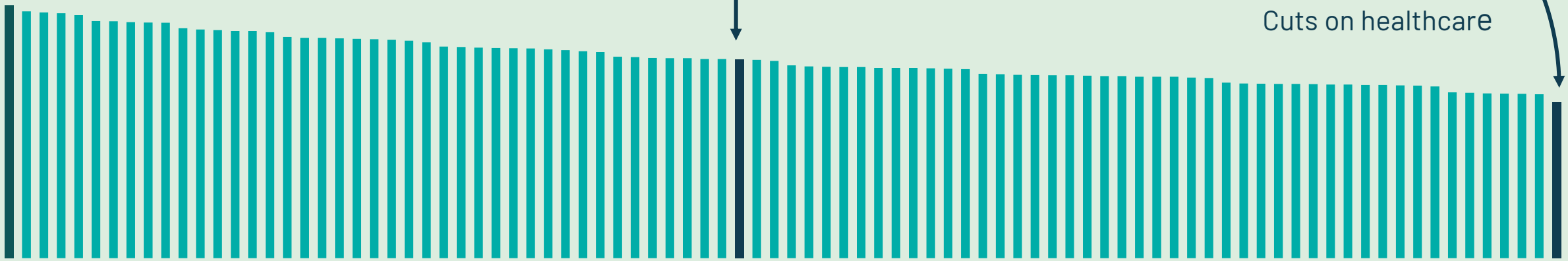
Scenario:

Russia & Ukraine peace treaty

NATO remains intact

Taxes for everyone

Cuts on healthcare



High support

Average support

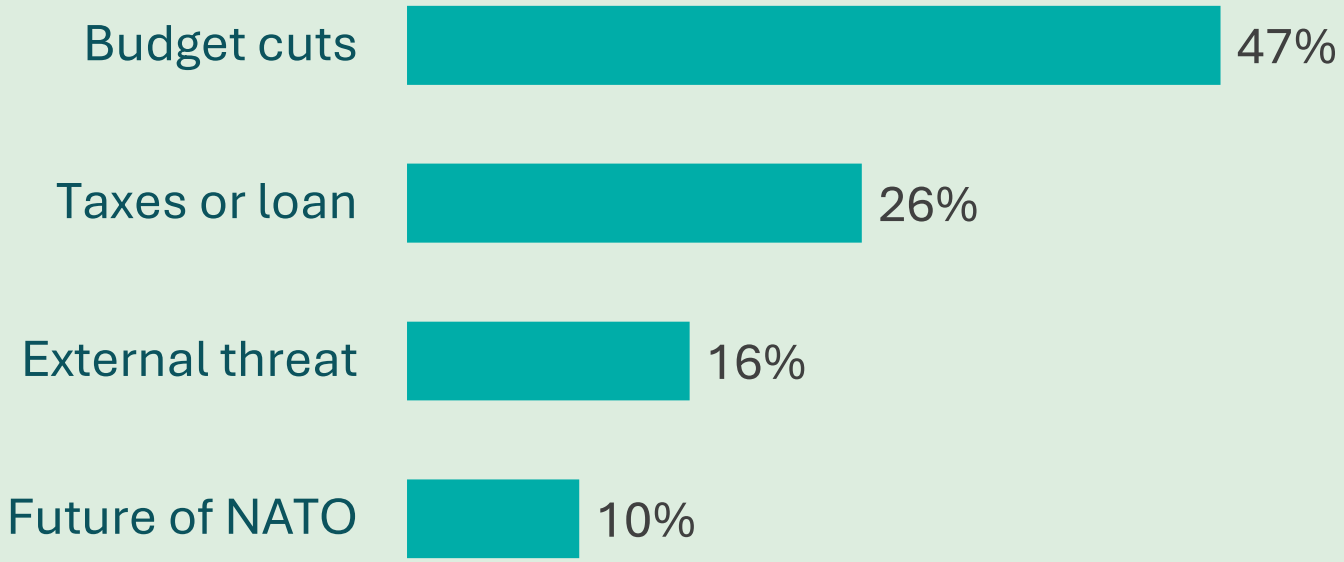
Low support

Source: May 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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Who pays matters more than the geopolitics

Relative importance of attributes for higher spending



Source: May 2026, Ipsos I&O Political Poll

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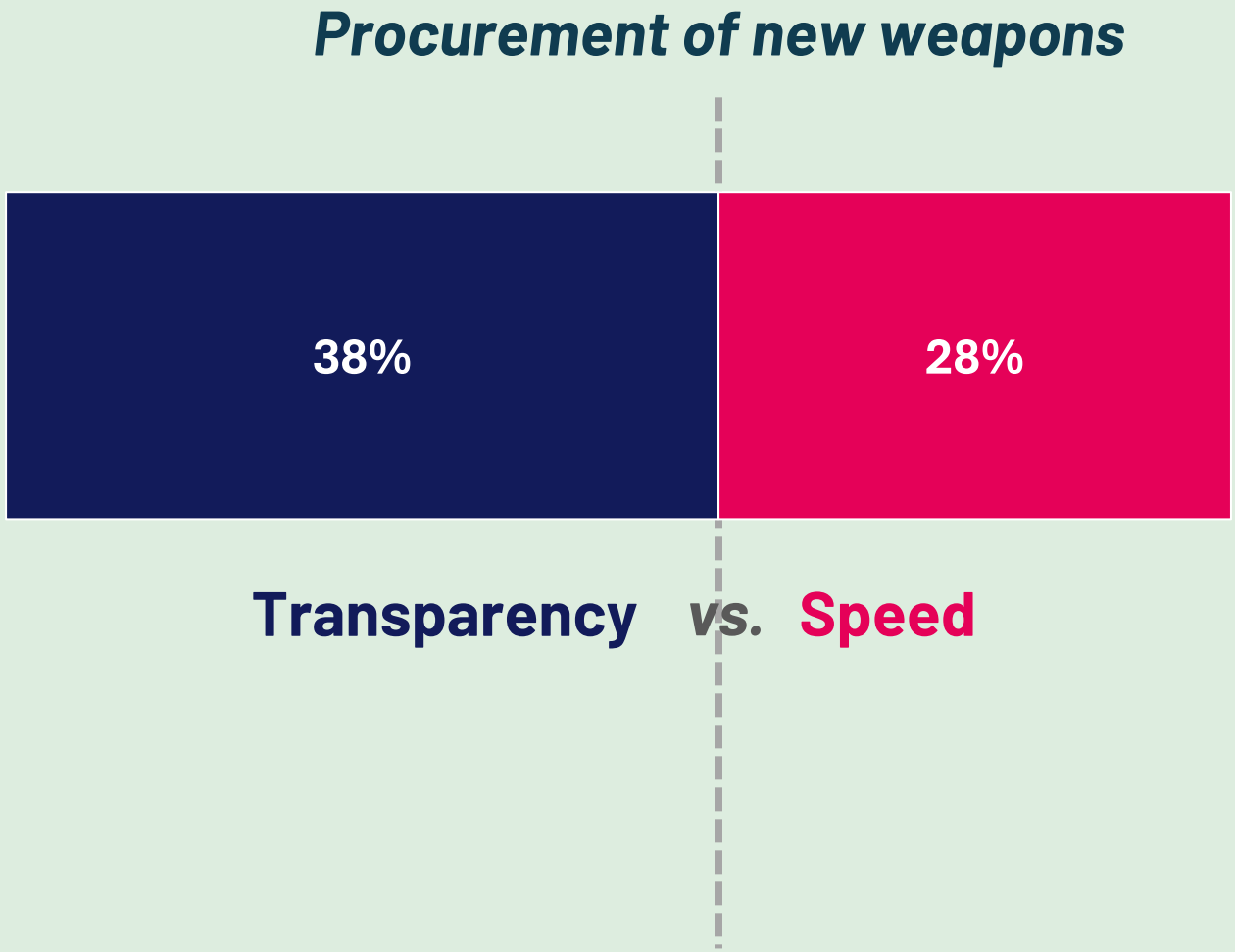


DEMOCRATIC COST

Can we balance security and democratic values?

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Public support requires accountability

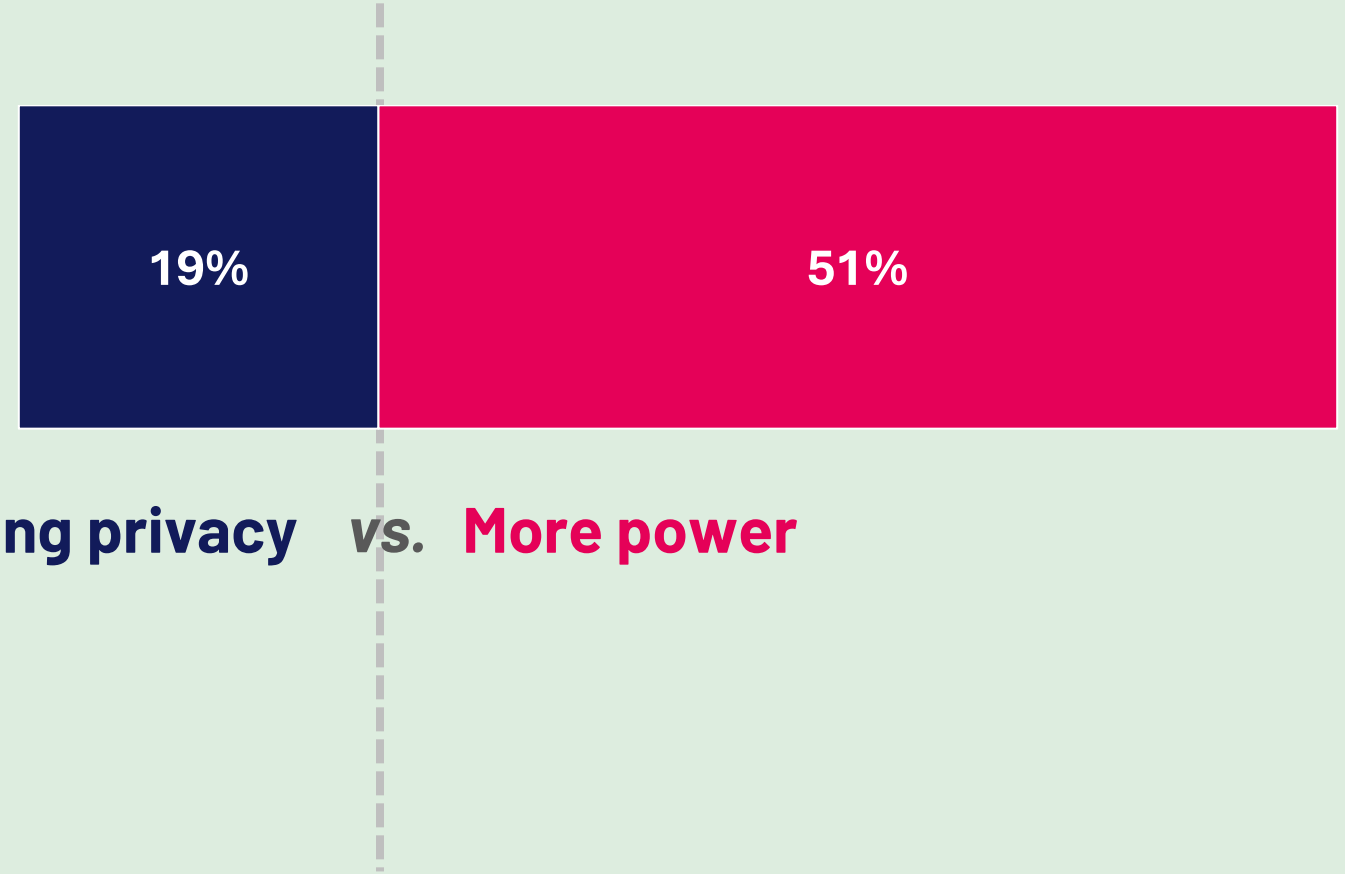


Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O

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Security overrides all other democratic demands

Intelligence & security services



Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O

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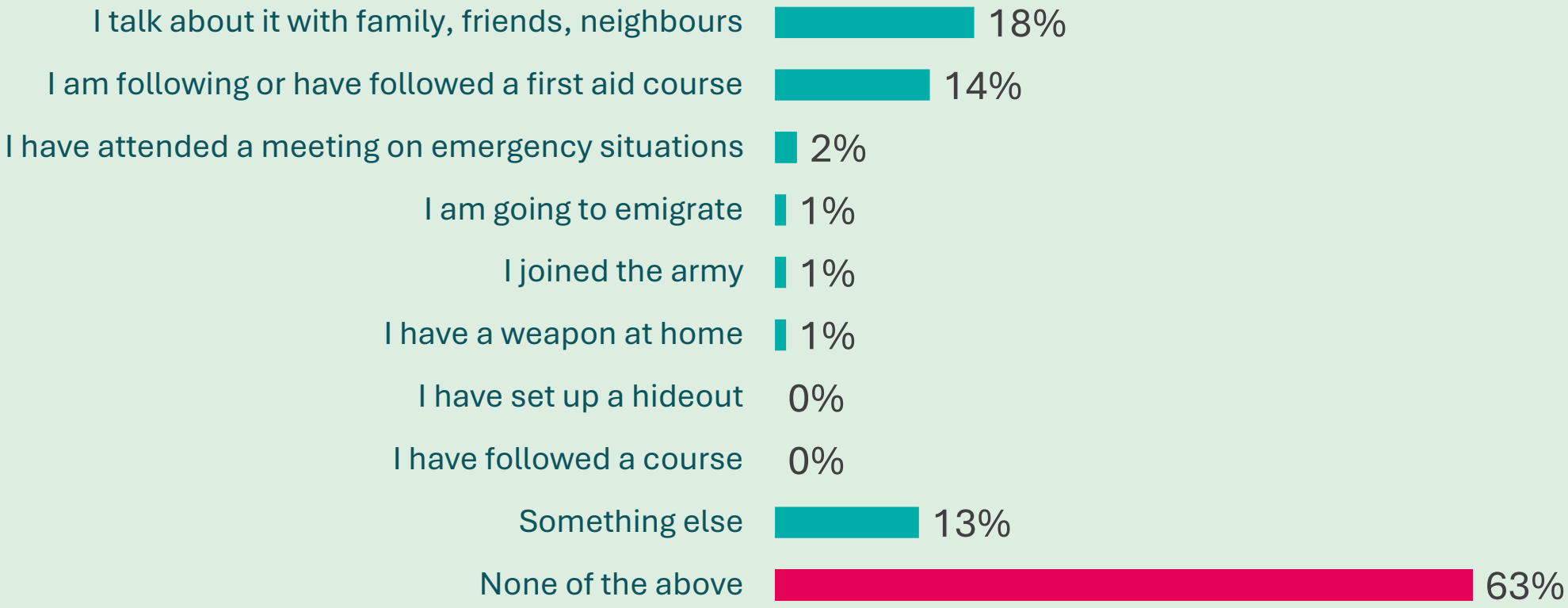


PERSONAL COST

Translating support to participation

‘Crisis? What crisis?’

Are you taking any specific steps to prepare for emergencies, such as a war, a disruption in utilities or a natural disaster?

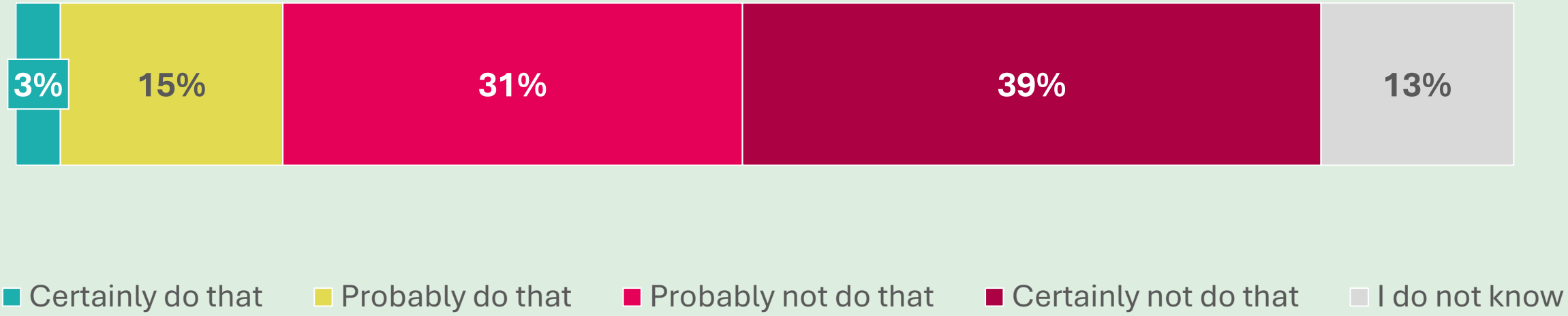


Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O

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Support does not imply sacrifice

What are the chances that you yourself will become a civilian reservist? I'm going to...



Source: October 2026, Ipsos I&O

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CONCLUSION



Key take-aways

1 Security (re)emerges as a political issue

2 Public opinion converges (differences remain)

3 There’s no such thing as a free lunch

Want to know more?



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THANK YOU

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