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Understanding the EU's efforts in Ukraine: The influence of threat perception on public support for sanctions against Russia since the 2022 invasion

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Introduction

Within the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), sanctions are a favourite in the toolbox. There is a tendency in the EU to use sanctions as a default tool to respond to various foreign policy challenges (Onderco, 2017), which might explain why the EU currently has over 40 different sanction regimes (European Commission, n.d.). While sanctions have always been a popular tool, EU sanctions reached unprecedented levels after Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The EU first imposed sanctions against Russia for undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine in March 2014 when Russia illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol. The list of sanctioned persons and entities was expanded when Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine and Russian armed forces began attacking the country on 24 February 2022. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Council of the EU has adopted 15 packages of sanctions against Russia and exponentially expanded the list of sanctioned persons and entities that now apply to a total of almost 2400 listed individuals and entities. The sanctions include targeted restrictive measures such as travel bans and asset freezes, economic sanctions, diplomatic measures and visa measures (Council of the EU, n.d.).

Academic literature has largely focused on studying the effectiveness of EU sanctions because of this stark increase in restrictive measures and the EU's reliance on sanctions in its foreign policy objectives (Portela & Kluge, 2022). Think tanks and academics alike have assessed the effectiveness of EU's sanctions based on their political (Portela & Kluge, 2022; Borozna & Kochtcheevda, 2024) and economic effects (Mahlstein McDaniel, Schropp, & Tsigas, 2022; Portela & Kluge, 2022). Given the endurance of the war and the continuing expansion of EU sanctions against Russia, it is important to broaden the debate on sanctions beyond effectiveness and to also understand how sanctions in the EU come about. Sanctions are decided by unanimity in the Council of the EU as part of the EU CFSP, which means that member states are the driving decision-makers in the process. This makes it particularly relevant to study what influences member states to approve sanctions against Russia.

Following Putnam's (1988) two-level games framework, the degree of support from domestic groups (Level I), i.e. public opinion, defines the win-set of political leaders at the Council of the EU (Level II). Therefore, public opinion is not to be neglected at the negotiating table. Yet, little research has been done on public support for sanctions on Russia. Prati and Taylor (2023) studied empathic concern as a driver of support for EU sanctions after Russia's full-scale invasion and found that support is best predicted by the view that Ukraine is part of

the European community. Their research shows that a psychological sense of community is important to understand the support for sanctions against Russia. Onderco (2017) studied public attitudes on the sanctions against Russia that the EU imposed after 2014 and found that citizens are mostly influenced by geopolitical factors in their support for sanctions. More general research on sanctions has focused on what type of sanctions are supported by the public (McLean & Roblyer, 2017; Pospieszna, Onderco, Van der Veer, 2023). Despite expanding research into EU sanctions (Portela & Kluge, 2022; Pospieszna, Onderco & Van der Veer, 2023) and the general academic consensus on the importance of public opinion in EU foreign policy (Peters, 2014; Wang & Moise, 2023), existing literature lacks studies that delve into what factors influence public attitudes to sanctions. Therefore, this study aims to make a contribution to the understanding of what drives citizens' support for sanctions in the case of the EU sanctions against Russia that were implemented after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. More broadly, this will contribute to a better understanding of the EU's efforts against Russia since the invasion.

According to defensive realist theory, threat is a driving instrument in the realisation of European foreign policy (Waltz, 1979). European states are more likely to increase cooperation in an attempt to counterbalance a common foreign threat, especially if their behaviour is considered aggressive, as has been found to be the case with Russia (Russo, 2016). Threat perception is not only a driving factor for states but can also be a driver of individuals (Taliaferro, 2001). Russo (2016) investigated the opinions of national members of parliament before and after the Russo-Georgian war in 2008 and found that threat perception of Russia among these politicians helped increase support for a common European foreign policy. Understanding how individuals are influenced by perceived Russian threats can thus help provide micro-level foundations for the EU's foreign policy efforts. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question: *What is the influence of threat perception of Russia on citizens' support for EU sanctions against Russia since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022?*

I argue that over the course of the war in Ukraine, threat perception of Russia among EU citizens will increase. Following the defensive realist logic that states ally to balance against threats, Russia's increasing level of aggression over the past decade has sealed its position as a threat to the EU. Putin first showed his expansionist intentions in 2014 but only in 2022 did the EU finally have their 'wake-up call' to Russia's threat (Balfour, 2022). The lasting war is a testament to this, which is why I argue that threat perception will increase as the war endures. Additionally, I argue that support for sanctions will increase as threat perception of Russia increases. States are more likely to take action in the foreign policy realm when there is an

immediate external threat, which is not just felt at the high political levels but also at lower levels (Taliaferro, 2001). Given that the aim of the EU's sanctions is to undermine Russia's war economy and consequently undermine Russia's ability to pose a threat, I argue that citizens' support for sanctions against Russia will increase as their threat perception of Russia increases.

To test these assumptions, this study will compare data from the Eurobarometer waves of 2022 and 2023. For this analysis, aggregate level data of 2024 will also be included to gain more insight into the development of threat perception and support for sanctions as the war in Ukraine endures. The results of this analysis show threat perception to be an important predictor of support for EU sanctions, even though its effect is relatively small. These results have implications for scholarship on EU sanctions but also more broadly on scholarship on the EU's efforts since the war in Ukraine as they provide insights into the influence of public opinion on CFSP policy.

Theory

The main theoretical framework this study uses to analyse the EU's foreign policy efforts against Russia and support for EU sanctions is defensive realism. Defensive realism falls under the neorealist school. Neorealists consider the international system as anarchic, which means that states cannot be certain of each other's intentions, causing them to engage in power politics. Kenneth Waltz first outlined this neorealist balance of power theory in 1979. Defensive realists build on this theory but posit that states focus on maintaining their security (i.e. states are security maximisers) rather than maximising their power (i.e. states are power maximisers). The 'balance of threat' theory was introduced by Stephan Walt in his 1985 article and his 1987 book *The Origins of Alliances*, in which he argued that "states ally to balance against threats rather than against power alone" (p. 5). This means that what matters in international relations is how states view each other as a threat and not their respective levels of power. Walt thus argued that the balance of threat (defensive realism) is more significant than the balance of power (neorealism). Since threat is a central element in defensive realist theory, this sub-branch is most suitable to explain the effect of citizens' threat perception of Russia on their support for sanctions.

What is more, Walt (1985) argued that perceptions play a crucial role in the international system. States facing an external threat will oppose the states that pose a threat. According to Walt, a state is more likely to be perceived as a threat when it is materially superior, geographically close, in possession of viable offensive capabilities and is perceived to have

aggressive intentions. While EU-Russia relations have had moments of optimism in the post-Soviet era (Russo, 2016; Balfour, 2022), Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, was a blatant display of hostility and showed a massive increase in the scale of aggression (Balfour, 2022). While Russia already met almost all of Walt's criteria, Russia's actions in Ukraine in 2022 have cemented its status as a threat to the EU. Given that the war is ongoing and Putin's expansionist intentions remain consistent, the following hypothesis that will be tested is:

H1: As the war endures, the threat perception of Russia in the EU will increase.

Another reason why defensive realism is a suitable theoretical framework to understand citizens' support for sanctions against Russia and the realisation of EU foreign policy is because it allows for domestic and individual factors to be included. Defensive realist theory sets out the conditions under which factors at the lower level play a role in shaping foreign policy at the higher level. Favourable conditions to mobilise domestic resources for foreign policy efforts are when there is an immediate external threat and when citizens feel clear changes in their external environment (Taliaferro, 2001). Russia's invasion of Ukraine constituted an immediate external threat and thoroughly changed Europe's security situation, thereby creating favourable conditions for changes in the EU's foreign policy towards Russia (Balfour, 2022). Crises and external threats create an incentive to enhance cooperation within the EU CFSP (McNamara & Kelemen, 2022). Following defensive realist logic, the EU creates a common response to counterbalance a common enemy: Russia. This explains the EU's 'geopolitical awakening' and its various foreign policy efforts against Russia, of which the sanctions against Russia are central (Balfour, 2022). The aim of the EU's sanctions against Russia is "to impose severe consequences on Russia for its actions and to effectively thwart Russia's ability to continue its aggression" (Council of the EU, n.d.). In other words, the sanctions are aimed to undermine Russia's war economy and Russia's ability to pose a threat to Ukraine and the EU. Since European countries increase cooperation in the case of an external threat and sanctions are aimed to undermine external threats, the second hypothesis that will be tested is:

H2: As threat perception of Russia increases, citizens' support for sanctions against Russia will increase.

Research design

Data and case selection

To analyse the relationship between threat perception and support for EU sanctions against Russia, a quantitative analysis that provides the ability to analyse a large number of survey results will be conducted (Halperin & Heath, 2017). The Eurobarometer, a polling instrument used by the European Commission to keep track of public opinion and attitudes in European countries, will be used for this analysis. The sampling of respondents is based on random probability and the Eurobarometer selects a sample proportional to the population size and density of the country. The Eurobarometer survey is a cross-national study that is conducted twice a year which makes it possible to compare and contrast threat perception and support for EU sanctions as the war in Ukraine endures. The first wave of the Eurobarometer that will be analysed for this study is late 2022, which is the first survey that was conducted after Russia's invasion in February that year. To follow how threat perception and support for EU sanctions develop yearly, the late 2023 wave of the Eurobarometer will also be analysed. The data of the late 2024 Eurobarometer wave will only be included in the analysis for H1 and not for H2 because only the aggregate percentage data is currently available. Therefore, it is only possible to compare the development of aggregate threat perception and support for sanctions but not to analyse the influence of threat perception on support for sanctions, for which individual-level data is required.

The Eurobarometer survey includes data from all the European member states but is also conducted in other European countries. In this study, I will exclude the data from non-EU member states because they are not present at the negotiating table when deciding on new sanctions against Russia. This study explicitly focuses on decision-making in the Council of the EU under CFSP and it is, therefore, not relevant to study citizens' threat perception and support for EU sanctions in countries that are not a member of the EU. In 2022 this creates an N of 21.627, in 2023 an N of 21.316 and in 2024 an N of 21.525.

Variables

The dependent variable in this analysis is support for EU sanctions against Russia. To measure citizen's support for EU sanctions against Russia, the Eurobarometer asks respondents the question: "The EU has taken a series of actions as a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of these actions taken?" The first action that respondents have to agree or disagree with is "imposing economic sanctions on

Russian government, companies and individuals". Support for sanctions against Russia is measured on a scale from 'totally disagree' (1) to 'totally agree' (4).[1] In 2022, the mean for support for sanctions was 3.189 (SD = 0.947) and in 2023 3.125 (SD = 0.947).

The independent variable in this analysis is threat perception of Russia. The Eurobarometer includes variables on respondent's threat perception of Russia to the EU and to their own country. The Eurobarometer asks respondents to what extent they agree or disagree with the statements: "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of the EU" and "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of (your country)". They measure threat perception on a scale from 'totally disagree' (1) to 'totally agree' (4).[2] As the distinction between national or EU-level threat perception is not relevant for my analysis, these variables will be averaged together.[3] This will create a variable that measures general threat perception of Russia. The lower the value on a scale of 1 to 4, the lower the threat perception of Russia. In 2022, the mean for support for threat perception was 3.258 (SD = 0.804) and in 2023 3.130 (SD = 0.825).

Model

The dependent variable support for sanctions and the independent variable threat perception are both ordinal variables with a scale from 1 to 4. Therefore, an ordinal regression analysis was first conducted. However, since the values of the dependent variable vary between 1 and 4 and the values of the independent variable vary between 1 to 4 with intervals of 0.5, there is a linear relationship between the variables, and it is also possible to conduct a linear regression. The two types of regression showed similar results, but as linear regression models provide one coefficient that can be interpreted instead of four or more, it is easier to compare coefficients with a linear regression model, especially for a study that covers multiple years. For this reason, a simple linear regression is more suitable than an ordinal regression model to study the relationship between threat perception of Russia and support for sanctions against Russia over the course of the war in Ukraine.

[1] This variable has been recoded from 'totally disagree' (4) and 'totally agree' (1) to 'totally disagree' (1) and 'totally agree' (4).
[2] This variable has been recoded from 'totally disagree' (4) and 'totally agree' (1) to 'totally disagree' (1) and 'totally agree' (4).
[3] This was done after testing for Spearman's correlation value, which showed high correlation values between the two variables.

To ensure that the observed relationship between the independent and dependent variable is not spurious, several control variables are included in the model. The socio-demographic control variables that are included in my analysis are age and gender.[4] Other relevant control variables are ideology, whether respondents have a positive or negative image of the EU and the extent to which respondents feel that the war in Ukraine has led to serious financial consequences to them personally. Ideology is included to control for possible ideological biases of support for European sanctions. Onderco (2017), for example, has argued that citizens with a right-wing ideology are more likely to support sanctions than citizens with a left-wing ideology. It is important to control for whether citizens have a positive or negative view on the EU because existing work has shown that citizens are less likely to approve of EU sanctions if they have negative attitudes towards the EU (Frye, 2019). Personal financial consequences are included as a control variable because previous literature has found that citizens' support for sanctions is less likely if they suffer financially because of them (Onderco, 2017).

This simple linear regression model, with the inclusion of various control variables to measure their relative influence on support for sanctions against Russia, has been tested for the assumption checks of linear regression and all assumptions were met. This will create two separate models where the effect of threat perception of Russia on support for EU sanctions against Russia is measured. An analogy between the two models is made after having conducted a linear regression in the two waves of the Eurobarometer. In this manner, the coefficients of support for sanctions against Russia over the course of the war can be put next to each other and compared. Aggregate-level data of the Eurobarometer 2022, 2023 and 2024 will also be included for the analysis of H1 and as a reference for the analysis of H2.

Results

Table 1: Threat perception of Russia over the course of the war in Ukraine

	2022	**2023**	**2024**
Total 'agree'	78,5%	75,5%	74,5%
Total 'disagree'	22,5%	20.5%	22%

[4] The socio-demographic control variable 'Education' was excluded due to high collinearity values.

For H1, I argued that the threat perception of Russia will increase as the war in Ukraine endures. In Table 1, the average percentage of respondents that agree and disagree with the statement that Russia is a threat is shown. These percentages show a decrease in threat perception over the course of the war. In late 2022, almost a year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 78.5% of respondents see Russia as a threat. In 2022, this decreases by 3 percentage points to 75.5%. In 2024 threat perception of Russia continues to decrease to 74.5%, albeit a lesser decrease than in the previous year. This downward trend proves that, conversely, threat perception of Russia has decreased since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Despite the small decrease, these results thus provide evidence against H1, which is hereby rejected. Threat perception decreases instead of increases over the course of the war.

Table 2: Support for sanctions against Russia over the course of the war in Ukraine

	2022	**2023**	**2024**
Total 'agree'	74%	72%	71%
Total 'disagree'	21%	21%	24%

Table 3: Simple linear regression models for 2022 and 2023

	Model 1, 2022	**Model 2, 2023**
(Constant)	0.938	0.972
	(0.042)***	(0.042)***
Threat perception	0.487	0.518
	(0.007)***	(0.007)***
Age	0.031	0.021
	(0.006)***	(0.00)***
Gender (Ref. = Male)		
Female	-0.023	-0.042
	(0.011)*	(0.011)***
Ideology	-0.011	0.001
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Image of the EU	0.243	0.218
	(0.006)***	(0.006)***
Personal financial consequences	-0.069	-0.079
	(0.006)***	(0.006)***
Adj. $\boldsymbol{R^2}$	0.277	0.300
N	21,627	21,316

Note: Simple linear regression model coefficients with standard errors in brackets. *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.5

For H2, I argued that as threat perception of Russia increases, citizens' support for sanctions against Russia will increase. Thus, for the second hypothesis I tested whether support for sanctions is positively influenced by threat perception of Russia, regardless of whether threat perception increases or decreases over the course of the war (H1). For reference, in Table 2, the average percentage of citizens that support sanctions against Russia over the course of the war is shown. Generally, there is a small decline of three percentage points from 74% in 2022 and 71% in 2024. However, average support for sanctions thus remains high.

In Table 3 the results of the simple linear regression models that were conducted based on the data from 2022 and 2023 are shown. In both 2022 and 2023, the coefficients for threat perception are positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The scale of support for EU sanctions against Russia ranges from 1 to 4, where a value of 4 represents the highest level of support for sanctions. This means that if citizens perceive Russia as a threat, their level of support for sanctions against Russia is predicted to increase by 0.487 in 2022 and 0.518 in 2023. These results provide evidence in support of H2 because the coefficients are positive in both years and because there is an increase in support for EU sanctions if threat perception of Russia increases. Moving the full range of the independent variable results in an increase of 0.487 or 0.518 of the dependent variable. Still, this increase represents one eighth of the range of the dependent variable and shows threat perception to have a significant but not an extremely extensive impact on support for sanctions. Thus, even though these findings confirm H2, citizens' support for sanctions against Russia only increases slightly if citizens' threat perception of Russia increases.

Additionally, the model tested the effect of various control variables that were included in the analysis. All coefficients were statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ threshold in both models, except for ideology and gender. Noteworthy control variables are citizens' image of the EU and whether they feel to have personal financial consequences of the sanctions against Russia. Firstly, if respondents' image of the EU increases by 1 and thus becomes more positive, their support for EU sanctions is predicted to increase by 0.243 in 2022 and 0.218 in 2023 on a scale from 1 to 4. Even though the increase is relatively small, it is noteworthy that respondents' image of the EU plays a role in their general support for EU sanctions. Secondly, if respondents' feel they experience personal financial consequences of the sanctions, their support for EU sanctions is predicted to decrease by -0.069 in 2022 and -0.079 in 2023. This coefficient is the only negative predictor for support of EU sanctions. Despite the small and perhaps negligible size of the coefficient, it is noteworthy that respondents' financial situation is negatively related to their support for EU sanctions. Yet, these results demonstrate that respondents' image of the

EU is most influential on their support for sanctions. The coefficients for threat perception as well as the control variables in 2022 and 2023 are very similar with only small variances. In 2023, the predicted change in support for sanctions only increases by 0.031 more than it does in 2022.

To sum up, these results provide support for H2, which argues that as threat perception of Russia increases, citizens' support for sanctions against Russia will increase, even though support only increases slightly. Aside from threat perception, citizens' image of the EU is a relevant predictor of their support for EU sanctions. It is interesting that the difference between 2022 and 2023 is negligible. Additionally, when including the data from 2024, it is noteworthy that aggregate support for sanctions slightly decreases over the years.

Conclusion

The war in Ukraine has been extensively discussed by academic literature, as well as the EU's efforts since the war broke out on February 24, 2022. The sanctions against Russia have been studied in light of their political and, mostly, economic effects. Yet, little attention has been paid to public attitudes towards sanctions in Russia, despite academic consensus on the importance of public opinion in EU foreign policy. This paper aimed to contribute to existing work on citizens' support for EU sanctions against Russia by researching determinants of this support. To this end, this paper specifically focused on threat as a driving factor for public support for sanctions. Using defensive realist logic, I argued that threat perception of Russia would rise over the course of the war in Ukraine. Second, I argued that a rise in threat perception of Russia would increase support for EU sanctions against Russia. To test these claims, two linear regression models of the Eurobarometer data from 2022 and 2023 were conducted and the aggregate data from the 2024 Eurobarometer was also included in the analysis.

The analysis showed that, conversely, citizens' threat perception of Russia has decreased since the start of the war. On the other hand, the results confirmed the second hypothesis that if citizens' threat perception of Russia increases, their support for sanctions will also increase. The analysis showed threat perception to be an important, albeit not a very strong predictor of support for sanctions. The small impact of the independent variable can be explained because the data suffers from a ceiling-effect. Citizens' threat perception of Russia as well as their support for EU sanctions are high on average, which means that there is little variability in the data. Consequently, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent

variable is difficult to measure. Future studies should investigate other factors that might be of influence on public support for sanctions with data that has more variability.

Aside from the ceiling-effect, another limitation of this study lies in the level of analysis. This study focused on attitudes at the individual level to understand public support for sanctions. However, in the end, the outcomes of the negotiations on sanctions against Russia are not decided by public opinion alone. A whole web of actors, such as lobbyist groups, national governments and European institutions, influences the outcome of such negotiations. While this study contributed to the understanding of individual-level factors, future research could delve deeper into the respective influence of all actors involved in the negotiation process to provide a more comprehensive image of how EU sanctions come about.

This paper has both academic and practical implications. By studying threat perception as predicting factor of public support for EU sanctions, this study contributed to the existing academic literature on public support for EU sanctions. These findings help improve the understanding of what factors influence public opinion on the EU's efforts in Ukraine. Additionally, these findings have practical implications for EU sanctions policy and wider EU foreign policy efforts. As mentioned, public opinion plays an important role in negotiation settings. This study has shown citizens' threat perception, as well as their image of the EU, to be relevant predictors in their support for sanctions. Thus, the findings of this study help better understand how EU sanctions come about and what has driven the public in their support for the EU's efforts against Russia since February 24, 2022.

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Appendix A: Descriptive statistics of the dependent variable

Table A1: Frequency table of support for sanctions against Russia, 2022

	Frequency	Percentage
Totally disagree	3813	10.1%
Tend to disagree	4937	13.1%
Tend to agree	10,434	27.6%
Totally agree	16,470	43.6%
Missing cases	2139	5.7%
Total	*35,654*	*100%*

Figure A1: Support for sanctions against Russia, 2022

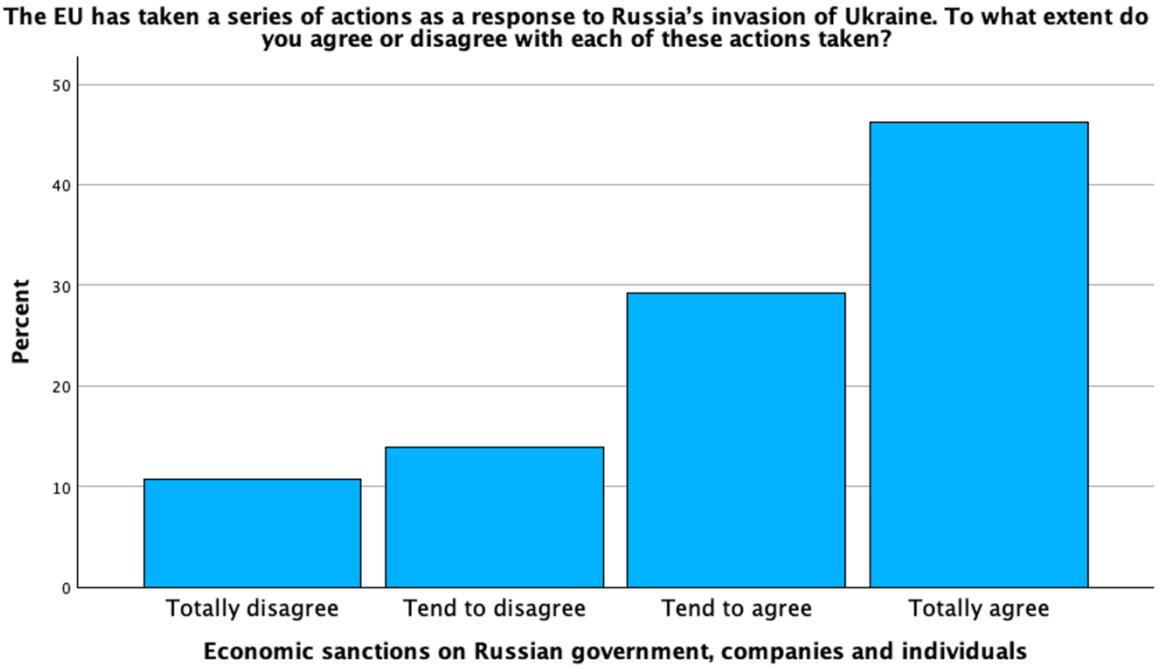
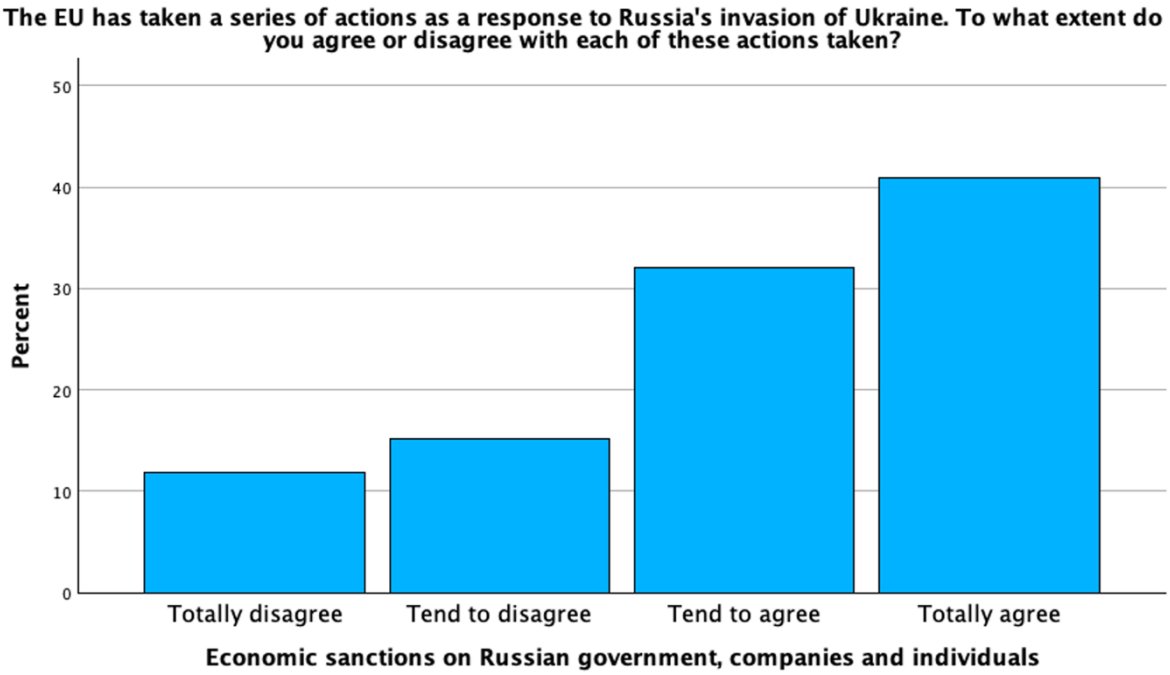


Table A2: Frequency table of support for sanctions against Russia, 2023

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Totally disagree	3929	11%
Tend to disagree	5050	14.2%
Tend to agree	10,686	30%
Totally agree	13,626	38.3%
Missing cases	2284	6.4%
Total	*33,291*	*100%*

Figure A2: Support for sanctions against Russia, 2023



Appendix B: Control variables

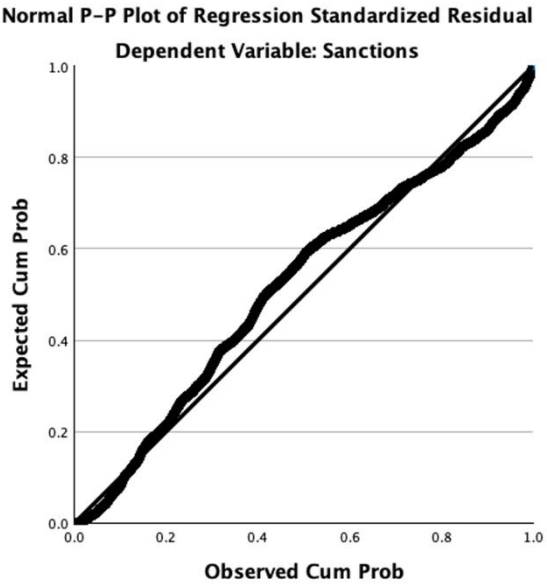
Table B1: Measurement and coding details of the control variables

Control variable	Measurement	Coding details
Age	1 = "15 to 24 years" 2 = "25 to 39 years" 3 = "40 to 54 years" 4 = "55 and older"	The refusals have been excluded.
Gender	1 = "Male" 2 = "Female"	
Ideology	1 = "Left (1-4)" 2 = "Centre (5-6)" 3 = "Right (7-10)"	The refusals have been excluded.
Image of the EU	1 = "Very negative" 2 = "Fairly negative" 3 = "Neutral" 4 = "Fairly positive" 5 = "Very positive"	The Eurobarometer asks respondents: "In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or negative image?" This variable was recoded from 1 = "Very positive", 2 = "Fairly positive", 3 = "Neutral", 4 = "Fairly negative" and 5 = "Very negative". The don't know answers have been excluded.
Personal financial consequences	1 = "Totally disagree" 2 = "Tend to disagree" 3 = "Tend to agree" 4 = "Totally agree"	The Eurobarometer asks respondents: "Thinking about the consequences of the war in Ukraine, please tell to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. The war in Ukraine has serious financial consequences for you personally." This variable was recoded from 1 = "Totally agree", 2 = "Tend to agree", 3 = "Tend to disagree" and 4 = "Totally disagree". The don't know answers have been excluded.

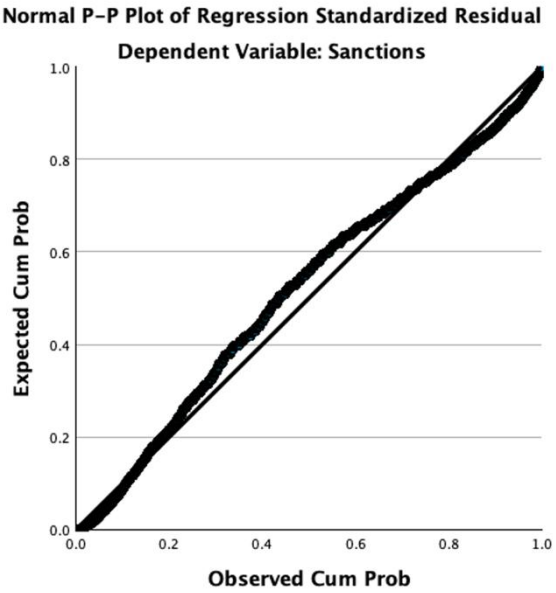
Appendix C: Assumption checks

Normality

2022



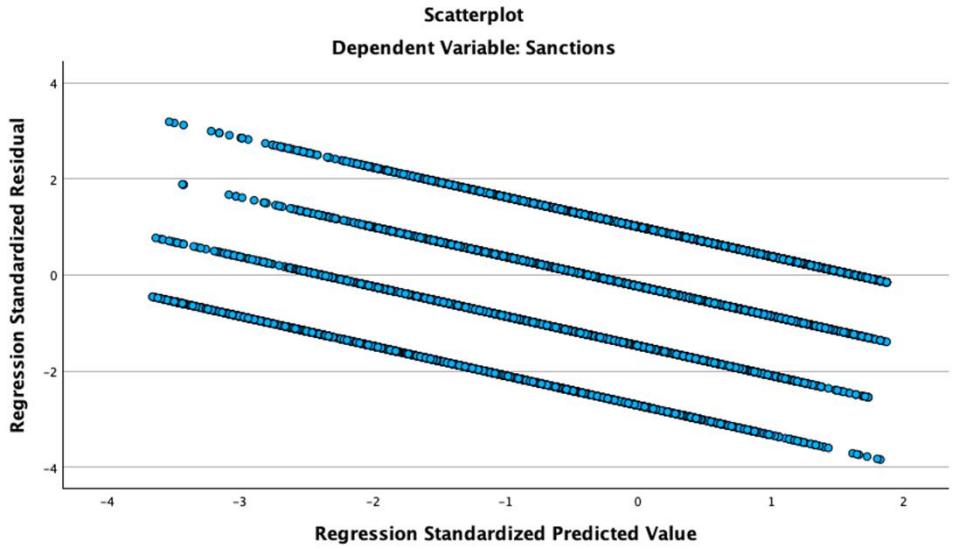
2023



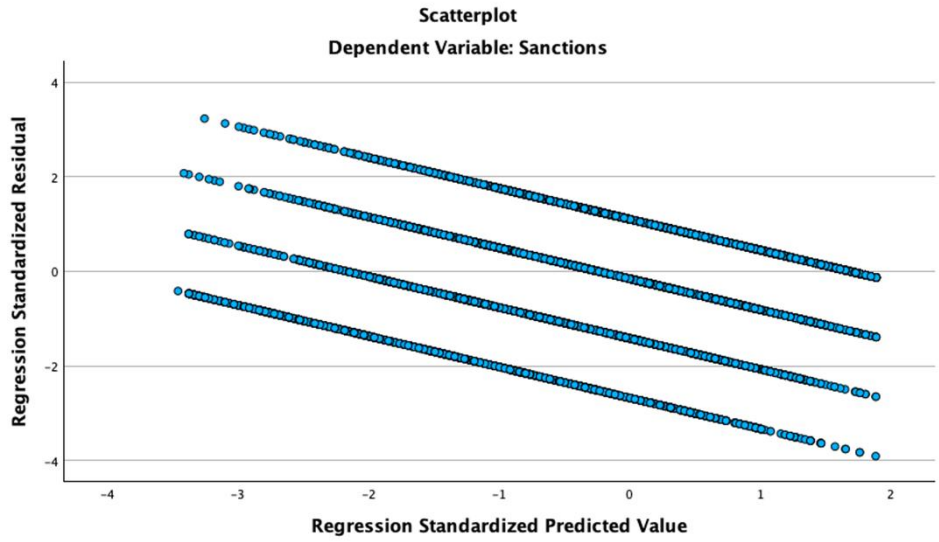
This graph shows the residuals to be normally distributed among the mean of 0.

Homoskedasticity

2022



2023



The graphs have four separate lines because of the nature of the dependent variable, which has four possible values of 1, 2, 3 and 4. This explains the appearance of this graph and shows the assumption of homoskedasticity to be met. This means that the residuals have similar variance at each level of the independent variables.

Multicollinearity

Table C1: VIF statistics

	Model 1, 2022	**Model 2, 2023**
(Constant)		
Threat perception	1.087	1.075
Gender (Ref. = Male)		
Female	1.022	1.025
Age	1.005	1.002
Ideology	1.004	1.004
Image of the EU	1.081	1.084
Personal financial consequences	1.016	1.015

Since the VIF values are below 5, there is no cause of concern for multicollinearity. This means that the independent variables are not highly correlated.

Appendix D: Linear regression model

Table D1: Simple linear regression models for 2022 and 2023

	Model 1, 2022	**Model 2, 2023**
(Constant)	0.938	0.972
	(0.042)***	(0.042)***
Threat perception	0.487	0.518
	(0.007)***	(0.007)***
Age	0.031	0.021
	(0.006)***	(0.00)***
Gender (Ref. = Male)		
Female	-0.023	-0.042
	(0.011)*	(0.011)***
Ideology	-0.011	0.001
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Image of the EU	0.243	0.218
	(0.006)***	(0.006)***
Personal financial	-0.069	-0.079
consequences	(0.006)***	(0.006)***
Adj. $\boldsymbol{R^2}$	0.277	0.300
N	21,627	21,316

Note: Simple linear regression model coefficients with standard errors in brackets. *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.5