

**PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Security report 2024**

## **Germans feel increasingly insecure**

- **Migration and extremist groups scare Germans**
- **Over 80 percent of German citizens have little or no confidence in the federal government's migration policy**
- **Islamists, clans and right-wing extremists are perceived as a major threat**
- **Only ten percent of the population expect the war to end in Ukraine's favor**
- **Concerns that Germany could become involved in armed conflicts are at a high level**
- **Growing doubts about the reliability of the USA**

### **The population's sense of security is declining sharply**

The population currently feels less safe in Germany than in previous years. This is shown by the latest security report, which has been continuously compiled since 2011 on the basis of representative population surveys. In previous years, the proportion of the population who felt safe in Germany was always above 70%, and in the pandemic year 2020/21 it was as high as 82%. Since 2022, however, the proportion has fallen from 76% to 61%. The feeling of safety is particularly low in eastern Germany and in the weaker social classes.

### **Groups with risk potential**

The majority see several groups as currently posing a major threat, particularly Islamist groups, Arab clans, right-wing extremists, „Reichsbürger“ movement and conspiracy theorists. 44 percent also see a threat from AfD supporters. The potential threat posed by the AfD is perceived to be significantly greater in the western German population than in the eastern federal states.

"West and East Germany are currently drifting apart. This is a problem that receives far too little attention," says Prof. Dr. Renate Köcher.

### **Uncertainty due to the influx of refugees**

Almost half of German citizens (48%) are convinced that crime in Germany will increase significantly as a result of the influx of refugees. This proportion is significantly higher than in 2016, when only 37% of the population expected a significant increase in the crime rate. One in three people feel less safe in their own place of residence than before due to the refugee situation. This applies to an above-average extent to the population in eastern Germany and, in particular, the weaker social classes.

The current refugee policy is predominantly viewed critically. 65% of the population think it is wrong, while only 12% support the government's course. Confidence that the government will get to grips with the problems is low: only 4% have great confidence, 42% have no confidence at all and 44% are skeptical.

### **The population's concerns: inflation, war, the uncertain global situation and the influx of refugees**

In addition to the large number of refugees, the population's main concerns continue to be inflation, the war in Ukraine and, more recently, threats from the Middle East, the unpredictable global situation and growing risks to domestic security. The majority are also very worried

- on economic development in Germany,
- the development of energy and especially heating costs,
- political stability in Germany and
- the risk that Germany could be drawn into military conflicts.

### **Support for Ukraine**

The war in Ukraine continues to worry the vast majority of the population. 48% even feel personally threatened by the war; this means that the personal feeling of threat remains stable at a high level compared to the previous year.

According to the majority, the outcome of the war is still uncertain. 34% assume that Russia will win the war in Ukraine, only 10% expect a positive outcome for Ukraine and 56% are not confident in making a prediction.

Compared to the previous year, expectations of victory have shifted significantly in favor of Russia.

In view of the controversial discussion in the United States about support for Ukraine, the question arises as to how Germany should react if the USA reduces its support. In this case, only 31% of the population thought it would be right for Germany to follow the American example and also reduce its support; 29% voted for unchanged support and a further 20% for an increase in German aid.

### **Uncertainty in the run-up to the US elections**

Due to the controversial debates in the US about aid to Ukraine and Donald Trump's success in the primaries, doubts are once again growing in Germany as to whether the US is a reliable ally. During Donald Trump's last term in office, the majority of the German population was convinced that the

USA was not a reliable partner. It was only when President Biden took office that trust grew again: last year, 46% of the population were convinced that the USA was a reliable ally, while 27% expressed decided doubts. Since then, however, an erosion of trust has been observed; currently, 39% of the population still believe that the alliance with the USA is stable, while 29% express doubts.

"The results of the latest security report are sobering: Germans' confidence that Ukraine will win the war is clearly dwindling. And only 20 percent of Germans are prepared to give Ukraine more support. This is an alarming signal in this decisive phase of the war," emphasizes the co-editor of the Security Report, Professor Dr. Klaus Schweinsberg.

### **Concern about the situation in the Middle East**

The situation in the Middle East now worries the population in a similar way to the war in Ukraine. 85% consider the war between Russia and Ukraine to be worrying, while 84% consider the situation in the Middle East following the escalation in the Gaza Strip due to the terrorist attack by Hamas to be worrying. In addition, 43% consider the conflict between China and Taiwan to be particularly worrying.

### **The biggest threats to peace**

Russia in particular is still considered the number one threat to peace. 75% of the population consider Russia to be the country that poses the greatest threat to peace in the world in the coming years. 54% also associate Iran with major threats to peace in the world, 52% with China and just under one in two with North Korea. While Russia, China and North Korea currently tend to be rated as less of a threat to peace by the population than a year ago, there is growing concern about Iran: in 2022, 36% of the population were convinced that Iran also posed a major threat to peace in the world, while 54% currently fear this.

Here too, the East German population takes a different stance to the West German population: they are far less likely to see Russia as a country that poses a major threat to peace; the East German population also associates Belarus, North Korea and China far less with threats to peace, while the USA is far more likely: 24% of the population as a whole, but 40% of the East German population, believe that the USA is also one of the countries that pose a particularly great threat to peace. Conversely, 75 percent of the population consider Russia to be one of the countries that pose a particularly great threat to peace, but only 53 percent in East Germany.

### **Overwhelming majority in favor of greater investment in internal and external security**

In view of the numerous crises and risks, the population is calling for greater investment in security measures. This applies in particular to protective measures against natural disasters, the protection of critical infrastructure such as the energy and water supply, as well as equipping the police and the German armed forces. All of these measures are supported by more than two thirds of the population. 89% call for better protective measures against natural disasters, 79% for more investment in police equipment and 72% for more investment in equipment for the German armed forces. However, 60

percent of Germans have the impression that no progress has been made in equipping the Bundeswehr. And 39 percent no longer believe that progress has been made. Skepticism has grown significantly in the last twelve months.

"Chancellor Scholz has announced a *Zeitenwende* („historic turning point“) for the Bundeswehr, and the majority of citizens are wondering where and how this will actually happen. Support for investment in the Bundeswehr is at an all-time high among the population, and the government is not taking advantage of this tailwind. This is not only politically foolish, but also irresponsible in view of the real threat from Russia," criticizes Professor Klaus Schweinsberg.

### **About the security report:**

The security report was developed in 2011 by the Center for Strategy and Higher Leadership in Cologne and has been compiled annually ever since.

On behalf of the Center for Strategy and Advanced Management, the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research (IfD) conducts an annual representative survey on the population's risk perceptions and assessments. The Security Report 2024 is based on a total of 1,018 face-to-face oral interviews with a representative cross-section of the population aged 16 and over. The survey was conducted between January 5 and 18, 2024. The study was led by Professor Dr. Renate Köcher and Professor Dr. Klaus Schweinsberg.

Further results at: [www.sicherheitsreport.net](http://www.sicherheitsreport.net)

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### **The Center for Strategy and Higher Leadership**

The Centrum für Strategie und Höhere Führung specializes in coaching and training executives. One focus of its activities is training for decision-making in complex situations and under high uncertainty. The Center was founded in 2009 by Professor Dr. Klaus Schweinsberg. It is based in Cologne and Heiligenberg.

## **The Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research**

The Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research (IfD Allensbach), often simply referred to as the "Allensbach Institute", was founded in 1947 by Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1916-2010). Today, it is one of the most renowned addresses for survey research in Germany. Professor Dr. Renate Köcher is the managing director of IfD Allensbach. The institute is owned by the Stiftung Demoskopie Allensbach.