

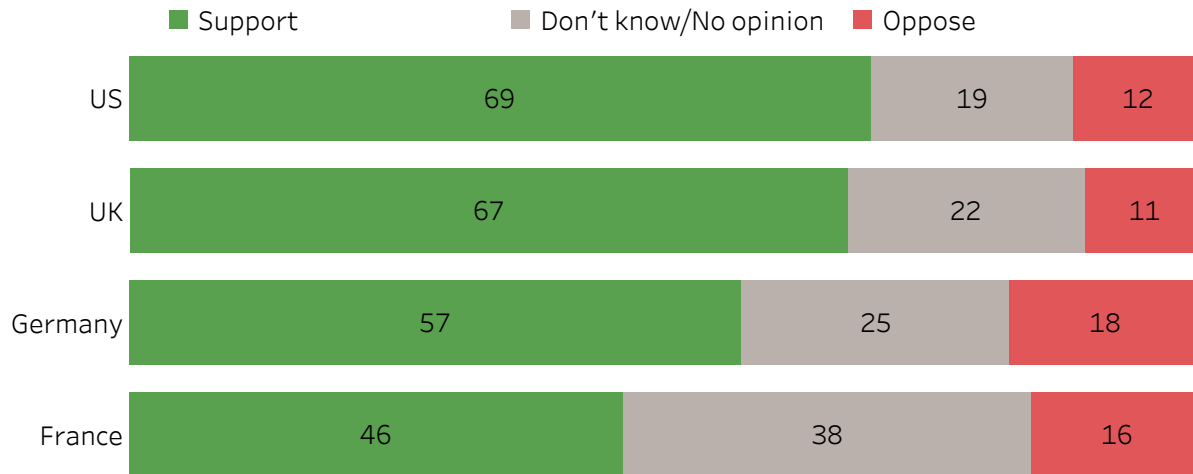
## WEEKLY POLITICAL COMPASS

**Russia/Ukraine** talks are unlikely to produce substantive outcomes. **China** tries to straddle between Moscow and the West. Meanwhile, **Japan** will begin easing border restrictions, **Turkey's** stance on the passage of Russian warships to the Black Sea remains ambiguous, opposition parties are working on impeachment proceedings against **Peru's** president, and intra-party negotiations are likely to intensify in **Nigeria**.

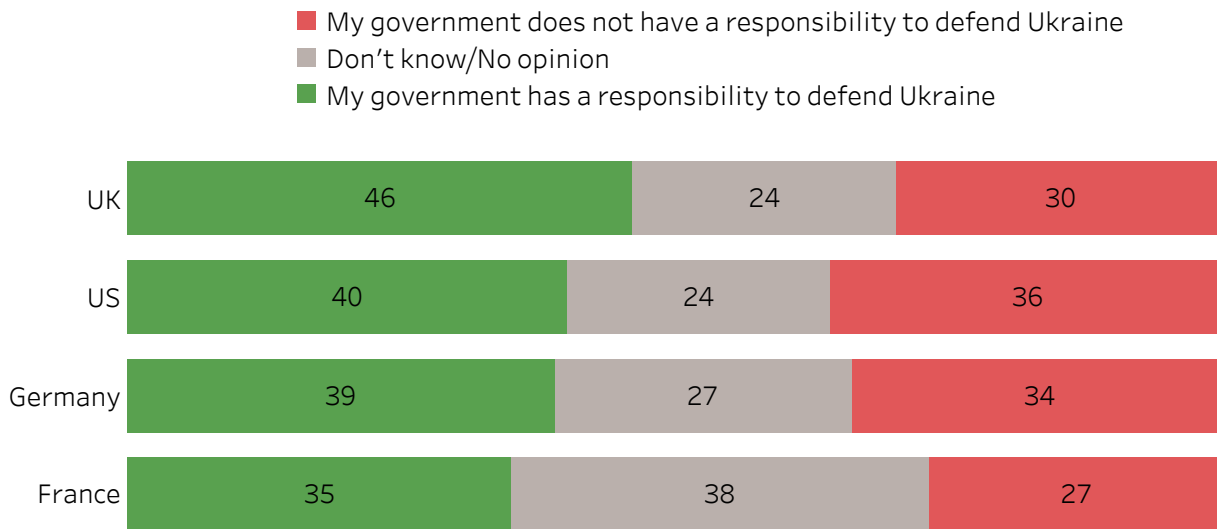
### CHART OF THE WEEK

## A majority of people in democracies is supportive of the newly announced sanctions

"Banning Russia from using SWIFT, a global system used by banks and financial institutions to manage financial transfers"



## Most people believe that their government has a responsibility to defend Ukraine but some remain skeptical



Source: Morning Consult. Survey conducted on 24 February, the day when Russia's invasion of Ukraine started. 1,717 US respondents and 1000 respondents in the UK, France, and Germany

Democratic governments – including the UK, US, EU, Japan, Australia, and others – have ramped up **sanctions against Moscow**, including blocking Russia's access to the Swift international banking payment system. Recent survey data suggests that the public in large, developed economies is highly supportive of these measures. In addition, over the weekend many European governments announced that they would increase military aid to Ukraine, including weapons, while the EU has put forward a EUR 450mn package for lethal aid to Ukraine. Western countries now seem more united against Russia's invasion of Ukraine than just a week ago, and a major public opinion shift might be occurring against the backdrop of Moscow's actions. China's reactions to the West's sanctions against Russia, which effectively increases the economic dependence of Moscow on Beijing, should be watched in the coming days.

## WHAT TO WATCH

### Russia/Ukraine

**The meeting between Russian and Ukrainian delegations today, 28 February, to discuss a potential ceasefire is unlikely to result in any substantive agreement.** The Kremlin appears to be committed to eliminating Ukraine's political leadership, while the movement of Russian military forces suggests preparations for new, likely heavier, military action against the capital Kyiv and other key cities in the coming days. In Russia, this week will reveal multiple effects of severe Western sanctions. It is important to watch whether the sanctions trigger any larger anti-war protests and create cracks in President Vladimir Putin's administration or, on the contrary, foment anti-Western sentiment and calls for strong counter-sanctions and escalation with the West.

### China/Russia/Ukraine

**In China's most extensive statement yet on the Ukraine crisis, Foreign Minister Wang Yi laid out five points outlining Beijing's position on 25 February.** The five points call for respecting Ukraine's sovereignty while also recognizing Russia's "legitimate security interests," as Beijing [seeks to straddle](#) between Moscow and the West.

## ON THE HORIZON

### ASIA PACIFIC

#### Japan

**From 1 March Japan will begin easing border restrictions by raising the daily cap for non-tourist arrivals to 5,000 and reducing post-arrival quarantine rules.** With the Omicron wave continuing to abate, the peak business lobby Keidanren is pushing the government to further simplify immigration procedures.

#### Malaysia

**The first full week of campaigning starts this week for the 12 March Johor state elections, the first where house-to-house visits and public campaigns will be allowed since September 2020, although large rallies are still prohibited.** The outcome is expected to help the ruling coalition, especially the United Malays National Organization, as the opposition Alliance of Hope has struggled to build a united front. It is the first election where the voting age has been lowered to 18 from 21.

#### Philippines

**Starting 1 March, all mobility, commercial and business restrictions will be lifted in the Philippine capital region, with mask-wearing and vaccination being the main public health requirements.** With the Omicron-driven spike having ended earlier this month, the Philippines is now ahead of its regional peers in reopening the local economy. The most notable exception, however, is that schools will still need approval from the education ministry, although the academic year ends in only a few weeks. The greater metropolitan Manila area and its surrounding provinces account for roughly 40% of the country's GDP.

### EUROPE

#### Turkey

**Even though Turkey called Russia's invasion of Ukraine a "war" on 27 February, Ankara's stance remains determinedly ambiguous concerning the implementation of parts of the Montreux convention that would potentially limit the passage of Russian warships to the Black Sea.** No restrictions have been announced yet and, in any case, Turkey cannot block all Russian warships accessing the Black Sea due to a clause in the pact exempting those returning to

their registered base. Meanwhile, Ankara's rhetorical shift has helped to distract the attention away from the fact that Turkey has not adopted any sanction against Russia.

## LATIN AMERICA

### Peru

**Opposition parties are working on submitting impeachment proceedings against President Pedro Castillo after new corruption revelations came to light over the weekend.** It has emerged that Karelím Lopez, a government lobbyist, has implicated Castillo directly as she cooperates with prosecutors investigating corruption in public works contracts. Castillo, who survived an impeachment bid last December, will be safe from impeachment for as long as he can muster 44 votes in the 130-seat Congress; 87 votes (a two-thirds majority) are required for an impeachment. Political fragmentation and legislators' aversion to risking their own positions could help Castillo survive, though signs that the five-seat Together for Peru (JPP) bloc's support could be crumbling suggest that Castillo's position is weaker than ever. Levels of support for impeachment should become clearer today, 28 February, as Congress will be in session this evening.

## MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

### Nigeria

**Intra-party negotiations are likely to intensify this week as political parties refocus their attention on which candidates will represent them in the upcoming February/March 2023 general elections.** This development follows the official release of the electoral calendar by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Party primaries are now expected to be conducted between 4 April to 3 June 2022, while the Presidential and National Assembly elections will be held on 25 February 2023 and Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections on 11 March 2023. The release of the electoral timetable follows President Muhammadu Buhari's 25 February approval of the long-delayed [Electoral Act Amendment Bill](#). With the legislation now in place, the outlook for the conduct of the election is significantly improved, and focus is now likely to shift on campaigns.

### South Africa

**Abroad President Cyril Ramaphosa faces criticism for his failure to unequivocally condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while at home the final report on 'state capture' will trigger fresh scrutiny of corruption.** Both will sharpen divisions within the governing ANC. Acting chief justice Raymond Zondo's third and final report, due to the president on Monday, is expected to cover corruption at Eskom and in the Free State, and shed light on Bosasa's dealings with the ANC under ex-president Jacob Zuma. Zondo's final recommendations could be the most uncomfortable for Zuma allies yet, and will increase pressure on Ramaphosa to act against corruption.

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**Macro Research**  
+44 20 7186 8894  
[Macro@teneo.com](mailto:Macro@teneo.com)

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