



# Prospects and obstacles for Kherson residents to return to the community

## Online Sociological Survey Report

This research was conducted by the Charitable organization “Community Foundation of Kherson “Zakhyst” as a part of it's project implemented under the USAID/ENGAGE activity, which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Pact. The contents of this research are the sole responsibility of Pact and it's implementing partners and do not necessary reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government

Reproducing and using any part of this product in any format, including graphic and electronic, copying or any other usage is suitable to reference to the source

October

2024

**Methodology:** an online survey using an interactive structured questionnaire, a relevant link was sent to potential respondents from the database (online research panel of the Kherson community). The sample is based on demographic indicators as of January 1, 2022. Given the indicators, the research margin of error does not exceed 5%, with a probability of 0.95. The sample included Kherson residents both currently residing within the community and those who left Kherson after February 24, 2022, to other regions of Ukraine or abroad. Currently, there is no official data on Kherson's residents' migration, so it is not possible to assess the given respondent sample representativity. However, there are reasons to believe that the ratio of respondents still residing within the community presented is greater than de facto one, which may affect the research results.

**Research objective:** to find out the attitude of Kherson residents toward the prospects of returning to the community and identify preventing factors.

**Sample size:** 404 respondents.

**Research client:** Community Foundation of Kherson “Zakhyst”.

**Research prepared by:**

- Mykola Homaniuk (Kherson regional branch of the Sociological Association of Ukraine, Chairman),
- Oleh Sinaiuk (New Image Marketing Group LLP, Director),
- Ihor Danylenko (New Image Marketing Group LLP, Analyst),
- Roman Rudenko (Kherson Regional Branch of the Sociological Association of Ukraine, expert).

The research group carries on activities on increasing and improving the online panel of Kherson city community to align it with the general population indicators and invites all Kherson residents to join the panel. This can be done at: <https://lemur.ua/sign-up>



# Key Outputs

**96% of respondents** have close people who fled Kherson after February 24, 2022.

**More than half of all respondents (51%) believe that driving the enemy a significant distance away from the city is a sufficient condition to return.** This opinion is less popular (46%) among those not residing in Kherson than among current Kherson residents (55%). Another condition in terms of its supporters is the return of Ukrainian control over the territories it had as of 2022, that is, before the full-scale invasion launched by the Russian Federation. There is a major difference in the popularity of this factor among different respondents: it is supported by 35% of those who fled, and by only 19% of those who stayed.

**All respondents claimed the following as the most important social and economic factors of return:** opening medical institutions (69%), industrial facilities (64%), rebuilding damaged and destroyed property (63%), renewal of pre-school and secondary education institutions functioning in a classroom format (60%). It can be stated that opening various institutions is more important for those not residing in Kherson than for those who stayed. The biggest difference is observed concerning opening medical institutions (80% to 60%), educational establishments (64% to 57%), and retail sales facilities (58% to 42%).

Most respondents believe that 50% to 80% of Kherson residents will return to the city **when bombing stops** (65% of responses).

The respondents are even more optimistic about the return of the population **if Ukraine restores control over its 1991 borders**. Thus, 81% believe that from 60% to 100% of Kherson residents will then return.

The next question concerns the respondents' personal opinion on whether it is worth returning to Kherson if the bombing stops. In total, there were 79% positive answers (32% – yes, 47% – rather yes).

The respondents noted the following as their **main reasons to return**: housing and other real estate (89%), relatives (63%), no fear of renewed hostilities (60%), difficulties in adapting to a new place (44%), and employment (43%). That said, for those not residing in Kherson, housing is even more important (96% compared to 83% of current residents), as well as such emotional factors like pleasant memories (26%) and friends (24%).

The major reason for not returning to Kherson is **the fear of hostilities being renewed** (72% in total). The next reasons are: successful adaptation to the new place (68%), prospects for children or relatives (59%), a new job (52%), and new housing in the current place of residence (49%). It is worth noting that those who stayed in Kherson sometimes rate factors related to life as an emigrant higher than those not residing in Kherson. For example, successful adaptation (70% to 66%), prospects for children and relatives (64% to 53%), and a new job (54% to 49%). The most notable difference between the two groups is the fear of hostilities being renewed (82% of those who fled, 63% of those who stayed in Kherson).

More than half (56%) of the respondents claimed that all or most of their relatives are going to return to Kherson. 21% answered that only a few of their relatives are considering returning.

**Among 182 respondents not residing in Kherson, 56% are planning to return, and 24% are somewhat planning.** 20% are not planning or could not answer. The reasons for not returning were fear, successful adaptation in the new place, prospects for children, a new job, and housing.



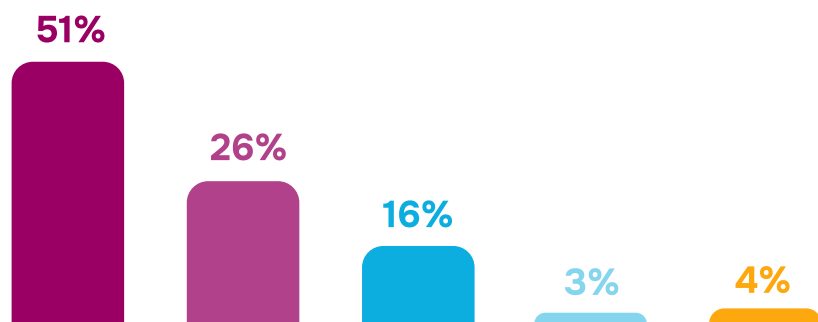
# Answer Breakdown

## Military and political reasons to return to Kherson (N=404), %

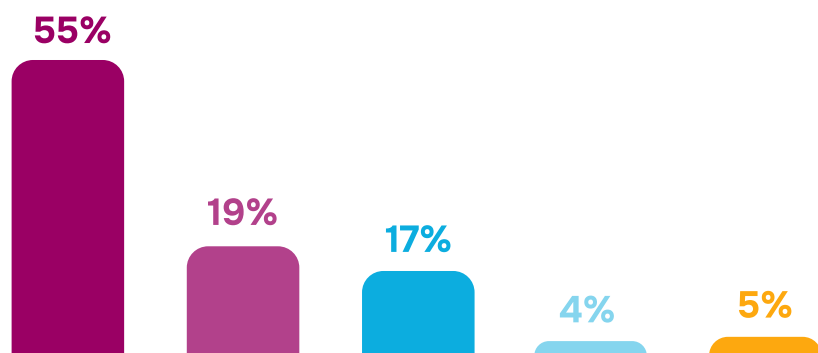
Q.: Nowadays, many people are discussing those who fled after February 24, 2022 returning to Kherson. In your opinion, what are the military and political reasons for Kherson residents to return to their city?

- Driving the enemy away to a significant distance
- Ukraine recovers control over its territories as of 2022 borders
- Ukraine recovers control over its territories as of 1991 borders
- Signing a ceasefire agreement with the enemy, fixing the current contact line
- Not sure

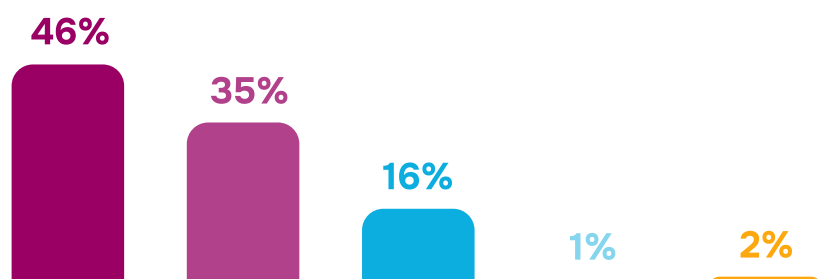
### All respondents



### Residing in Kherson



### Not residing in Kherson



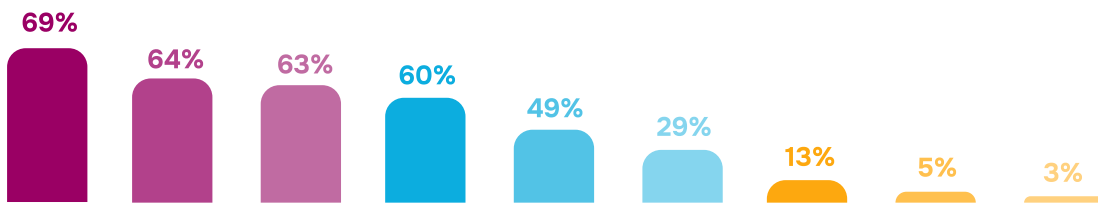
## Reasons to return (N=404), %

**Q.:** In your opinion, what are the social and economic reasons for Kherson residents to return to their city?

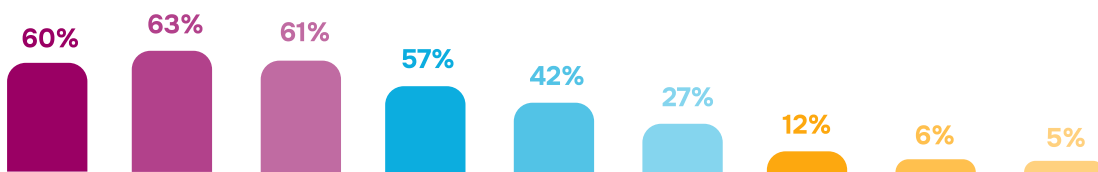
### Multiple choice

- Opening medical establishments
- Opening industrial facilities
- Rebuilding damaged and destroyed property
- Renewal of pre-school and secondary education institutions functioning to an in-person classroom format
- Opening retail sales facilities
- Renewal of higher education institutions functioning in a classroom format
- Opening cultural establishments
- Other
- Not sure

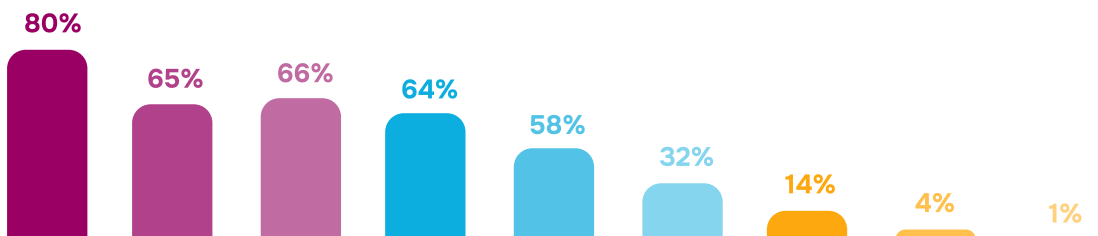
### All respondents



### Residing in Kherson



### Not residing in Kherson

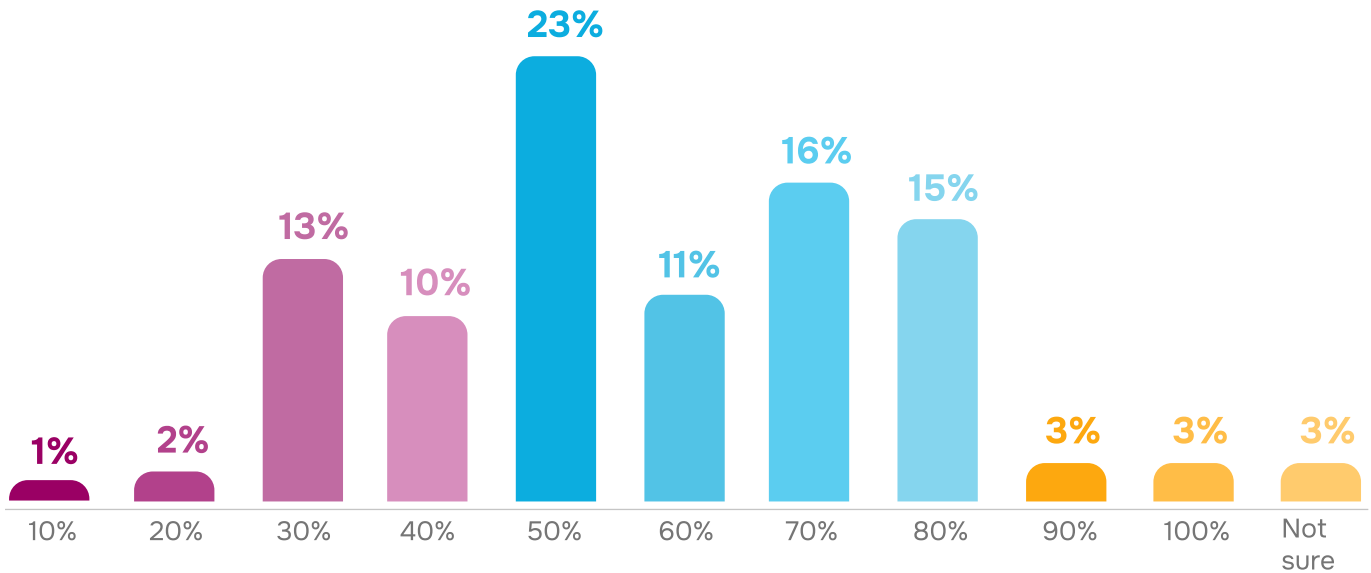


#### Other answers:

- employment options, availability of jobs / availability of any job;
- security.

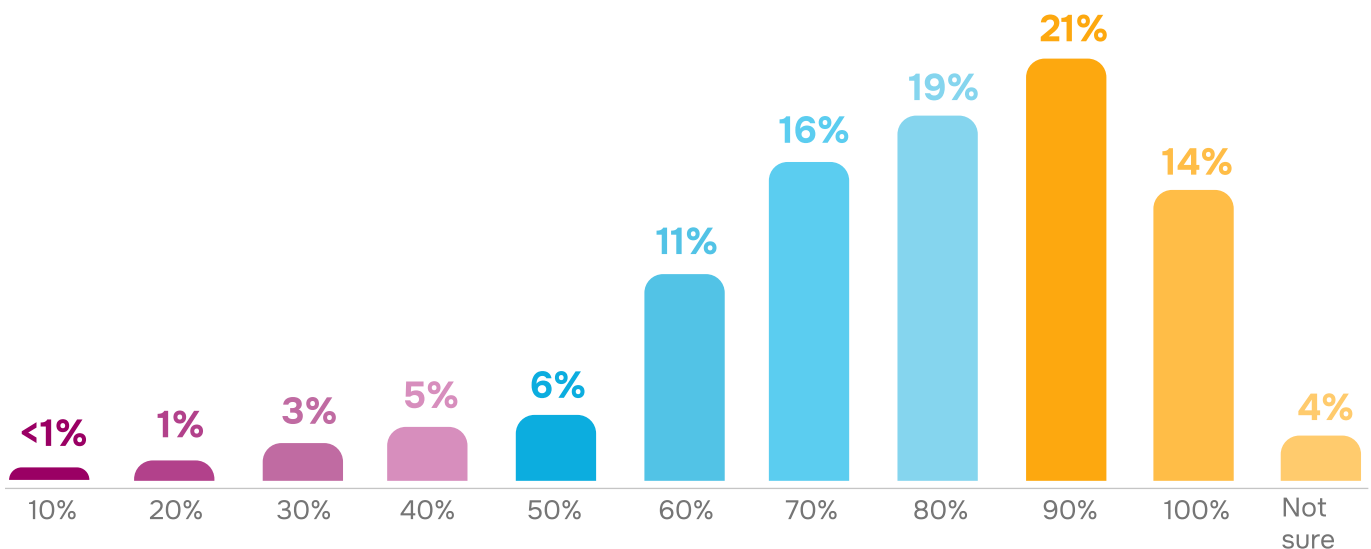
### Return after the bombing stops (N=404), %

Q.: In your opinion, what percentage of Kherson residents would return to the city if the bombing stops?



### Territorial integrity as a factor of return (N=404), %

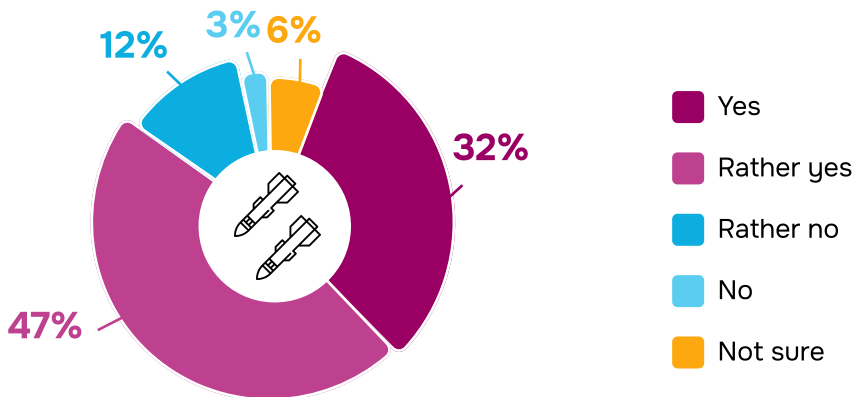
Q.: In your opinion, what percentage of Kherson residents would return to the city if Ukraine recovered control over its borders as of 1991?



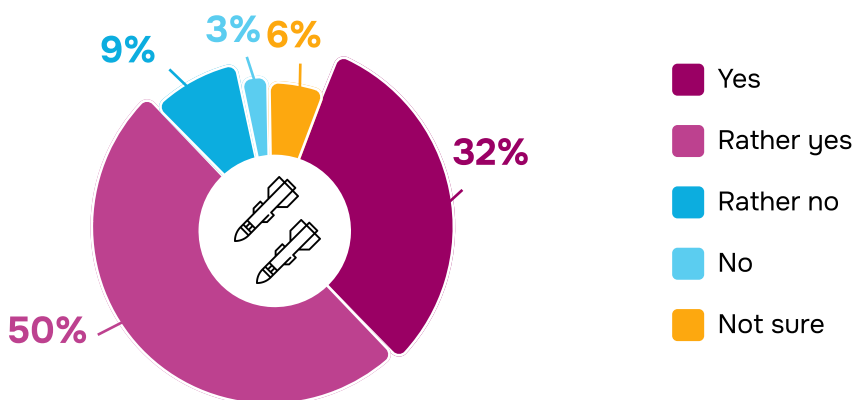
### Personal assessment of return after bombing stops (N=404), %

Q.: In your opinion, should Kherson residents return to the city if the bombing stops?

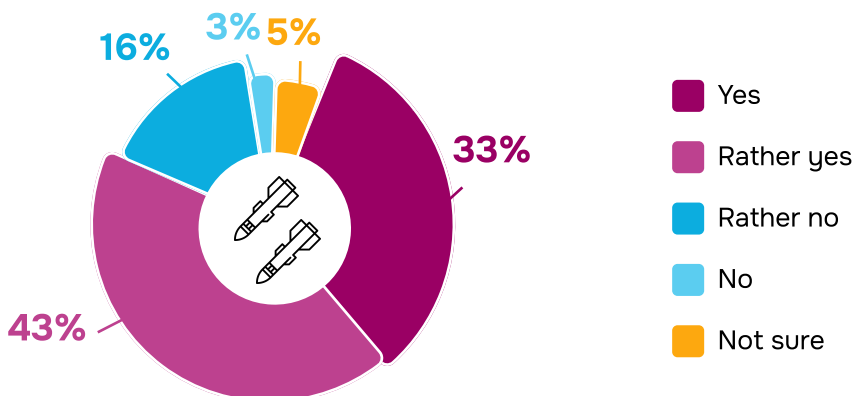
#### All respondents



#### Residing in Kherson



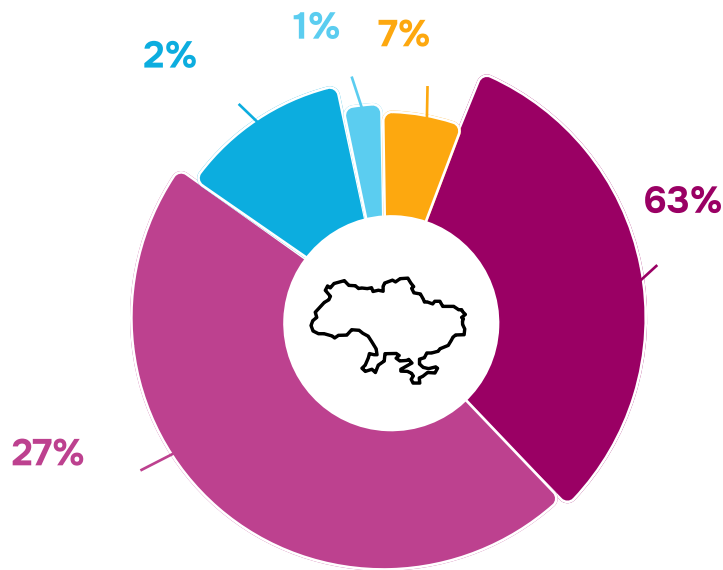
#### Not residing in Kherson



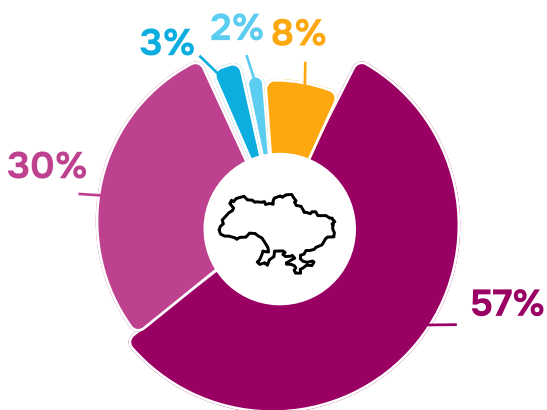
### Territorial integrity as a factor of return (N=404), %

**Q.:** In your opinion, should Kherson residents return to the city if Ukraine recovers control over its borders as of 1991?

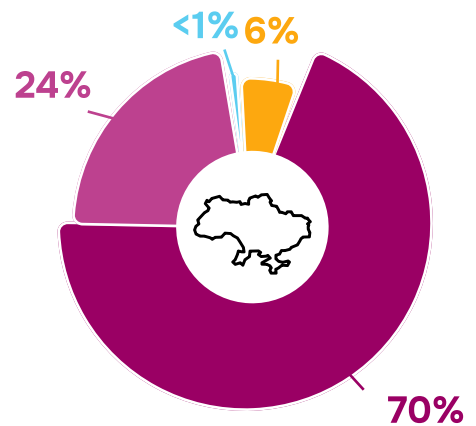
All respondents



Residing in Kherson



Not residing in Kherson



■ Yes     
 ■ Rather yes     
 ■ Rather no     
 ■ No     
 ■ Not sure

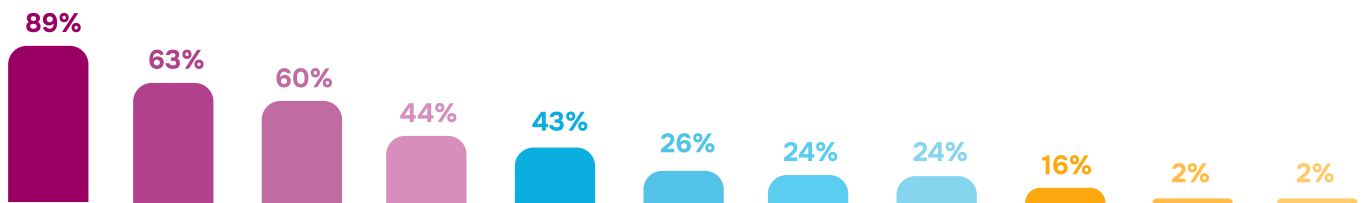
## Main reasons to return (N=404), %

Q.: Please state the main reasons for Kherson residents to return to the city?

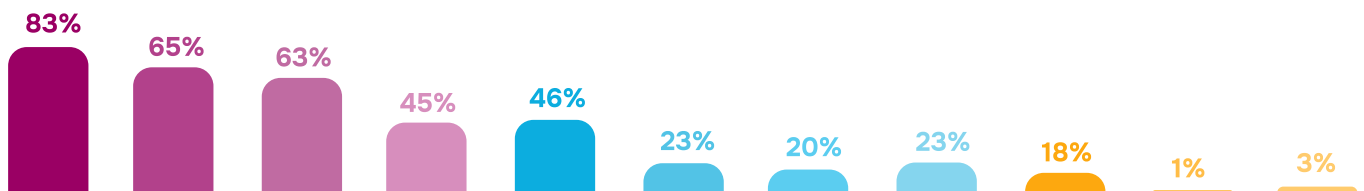
Multiple choice

- Housing and other real estate
- Relatives
- No fear of hostilities possibly being renewed
- Difficulties with adapting in the new place
- Job
- Pleasant memories
- Friends
- Favorable climate
- Prospects for children, relatives
- Other
- Not sure

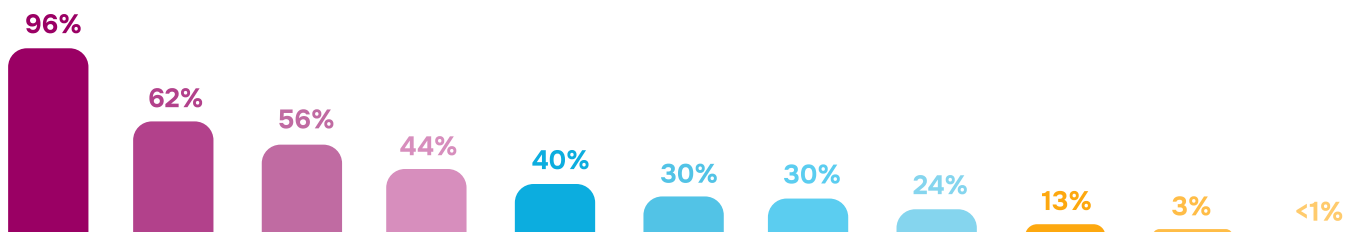
### All respondents



### Residing in Kherson



### Not residing in Kherson



#### Other answers:

- nostalgia / missed the city;
- got bored in a foreign country;
- opened educational institutions for children.

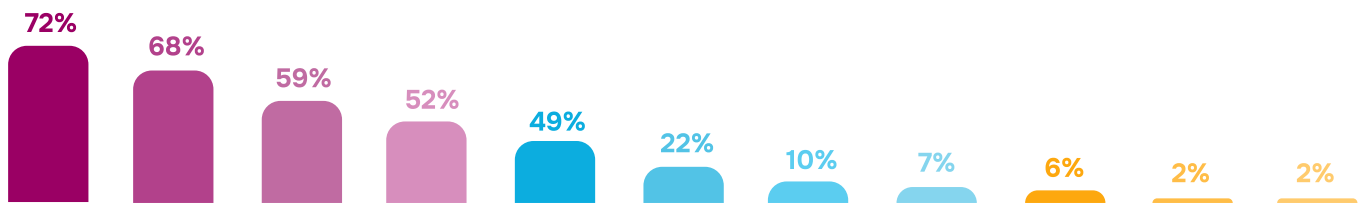
## Main reasons not to return (N=404), %

Q.: Please state the main reasons for Kherson residents NOT to return to the city?

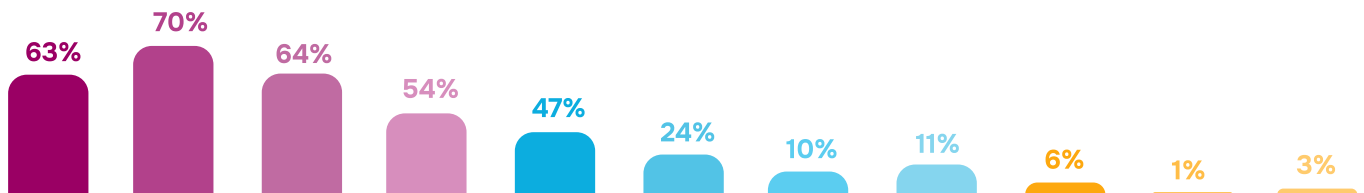
### Multiple choice

- Fear of hostilities possibly being renewed
- Successful adaptation in the new place
- Prospects for children, relatives
- New job
- New housing at current place of residence
- Unpleasant memories
- New friends
- New relatives
- Favorable climate
- Other
- Not sure

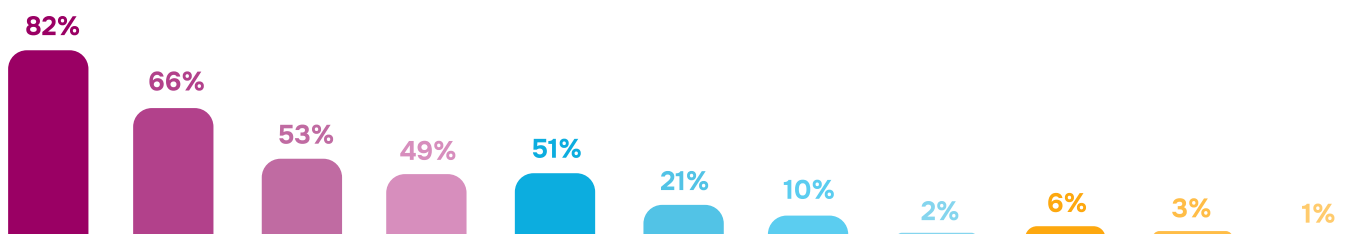
### All respondents



### Residing in Kherson



### Not residing in Kherson



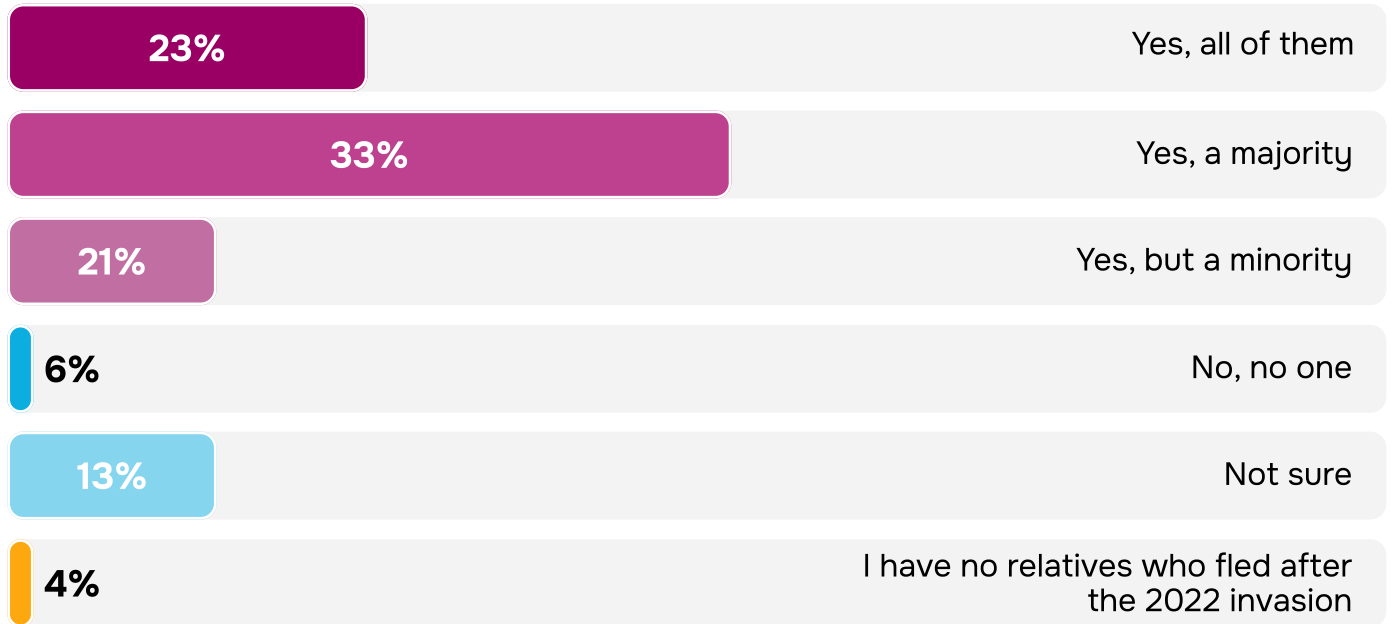
#### Other answers:

- better economic and social living conditions than the same in Kherson;
- nowhere and no one to return to;
- destroyed housing, lack of resources for its restoration;
- corruption and arbitrariness of local / central authorities;
- continued military draft.



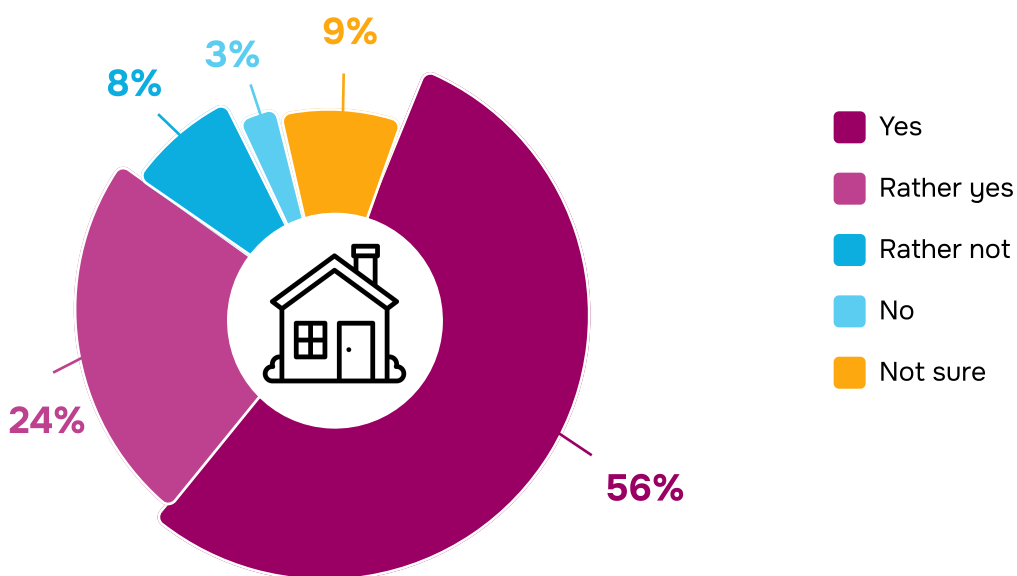
### Return of relatives (N=404), %

Q.: Are your relatives going to return to Kherson?



### Personal return (N=182) (not residing in Kherson), %

Q.: Are you going to return to Kherson?



**Personal return (N=19) (not residing in Kherson and not planning to return)**

Q.: Why so?

Multiple choice

	Number of answers
<b>Fear of hostilities possibly being renewed</b>	<b>13</b>
Successful adaptation in the new place	7
Prospects for children, relatives	6
New job	5
New housing at current place of residence	4
Favorable climate	3
Unpleasant memories	2
New relatives	1
New friends	1
Other	2
Not sure	1

**Other answers:**

- “Given the rate of the budget embezzlement by the military administration, it will take a very long time to restore the economy, and a lot of time has already been wasted. There is no point in waiting for them to ‘pig out’”;
- “Kherson was not a well-developed city even before the war, and now it is a depressed settlement.”

# Respondents' profile

## Gender



## Age



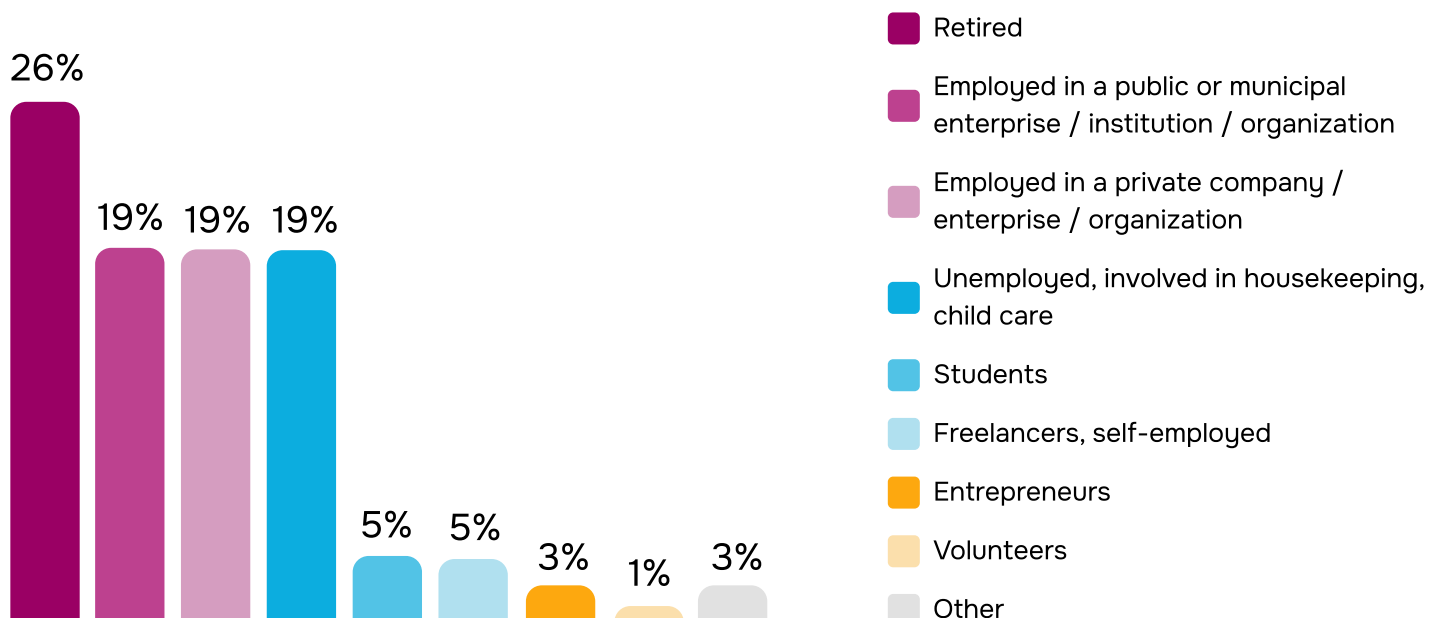
## Place of residence before February 24, 2022



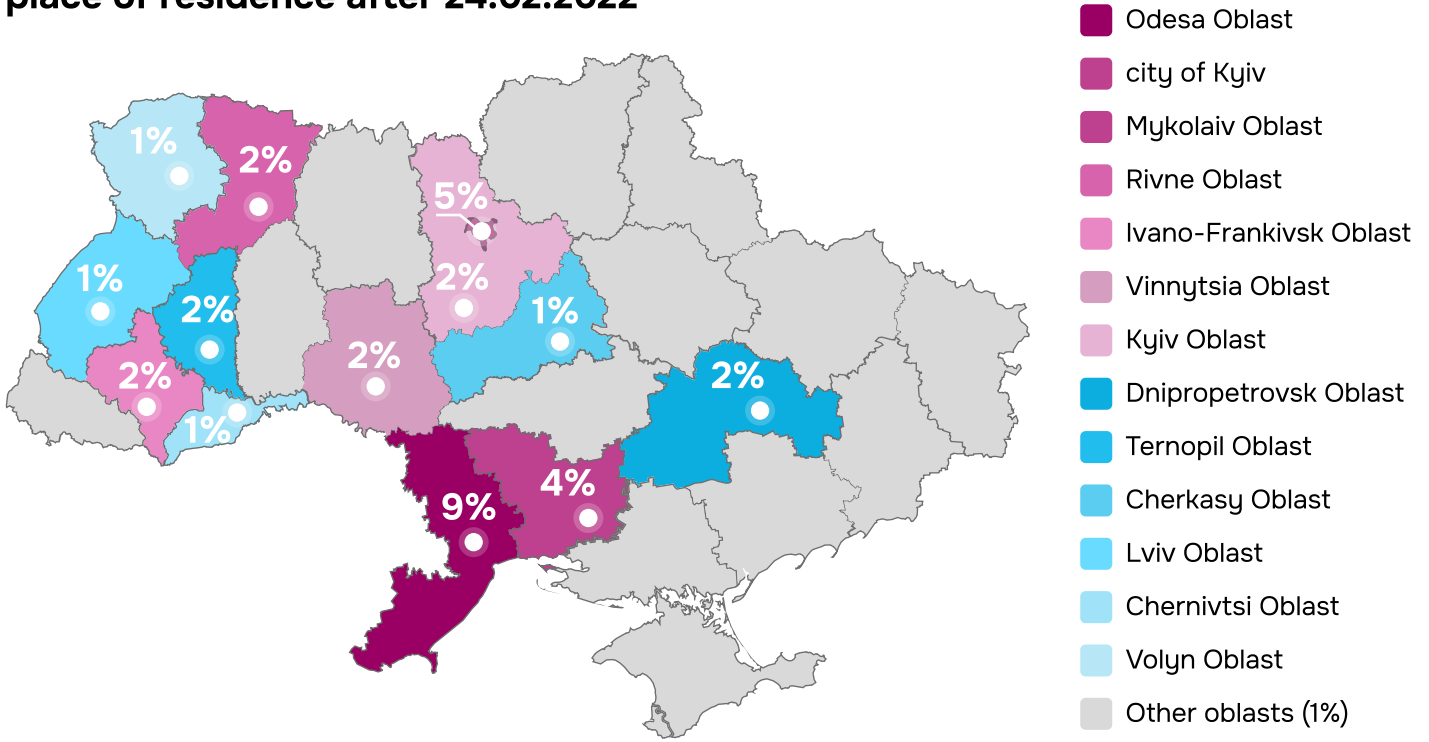
## Current place of residence



## Employment

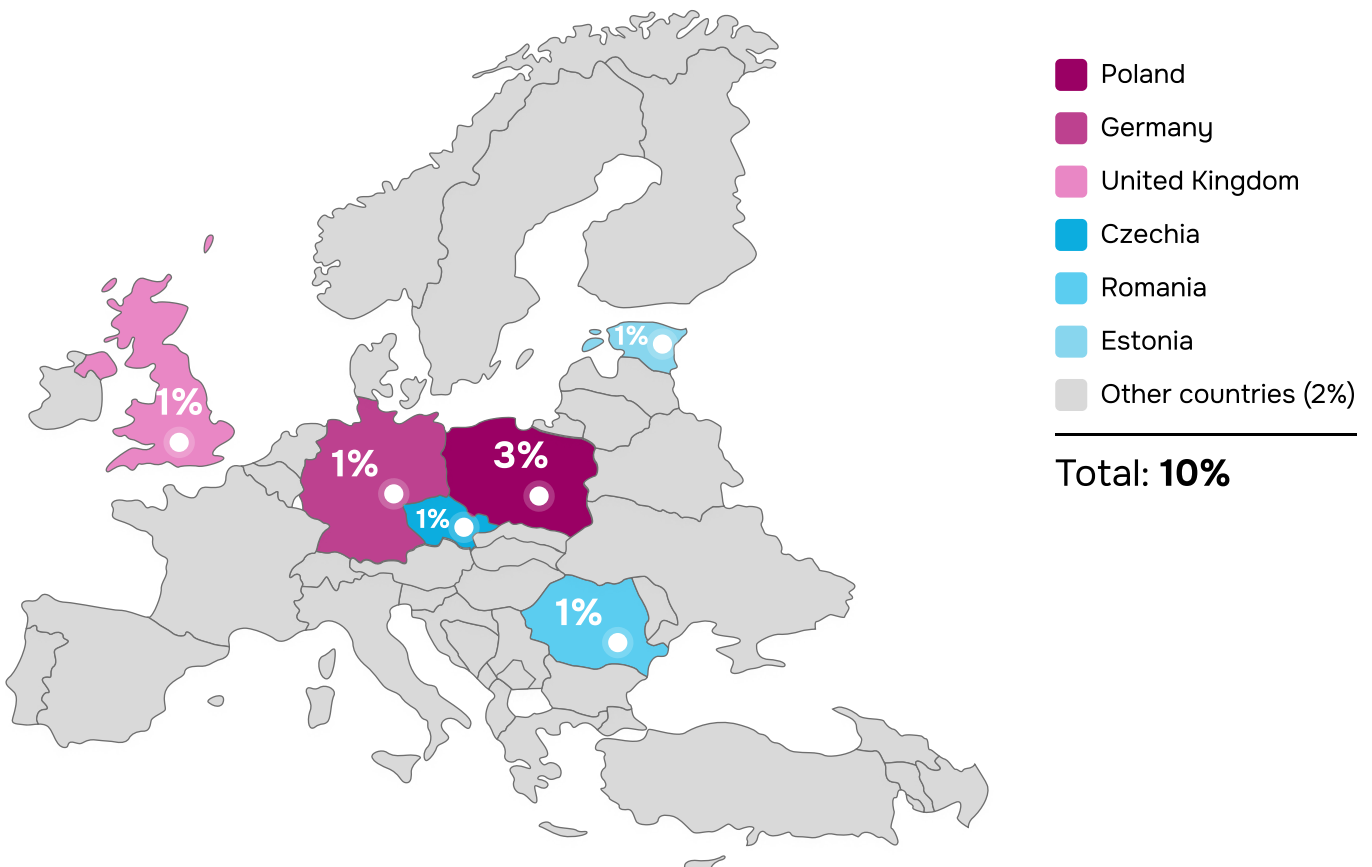


### Region of residence for people who changed their place of residence after 24.02.2022



Total: **35%**

### Country of residence for people who changed their place of residence after February 24, 2022



Total: **10%**