

FOCUS GROUPS: GERMANY

**for Common Sense Communications, Ukraine
a Comms Hub partner**

**Findings & Recommendations
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTEXT	3
INSIGHTS	4
SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATIONS	11
APPENDIX 1	19
APPENDIX 2	25

FOCUS GROUPS: Context

Overview: Two focus groups were conducted in Germany on April 26 2023 by Common Sense Communications and Comms Hub to explore the attitudes of a base audience of Germans about the war in Ukraine.

Audience: The audience was recruited for the groups using segmentation questions pioneered by the Comms Hub in Germany over the last five years. The questions included measurements of each participant's:

1. Disposition towards authoritarianism,
2. Consistency of support for democracy, and
3. Attitudes towards the European Union and European institutions.

Participants had to be born in Germany. Their parents had to be born in Germany as well. Moreover, they were between 25 and 64 years of age.

Discussion: The focus group discussion was organized around a guide developed by Common Sense Communications, Ukrainian allies in Germany, and Comms Hub (see Appendix 1).

The discussion included the testing of 12 different communications produced especially for the focus groups (see Appendix 2). The testing of these communications provides a critical look into what messages – visual and text – elicit a responsive chord reaction from the targeted audience.

Caveat -- Audience: The term “audience” is used throughout this report to refer to the participants in the focus groups. This is not a representative sample of all Germans. It is a sample of those Germans who are part of a base, civil-society audience in Germany.

Caveat – The Discussion: This report is a rather antiseptic analysis of the participants' conversation. It should be. It is important to understand, however, that this was a very emotional topic for the audience. The emotions tapped here are some of the most potent and heartfelt we have experienced during our decades of work analyzing public opinion. Our moderator, a veteran of years of social science explorations made the same observation to us at the end of the groups.

Understanding the emotional context of this issue is critical to communicating. It is both an open door and a barrier to action. The barrier is simply the feeling of powerlessness our audience feels today about the war. This feeling can be overpowering and lead to inaction. The open door is the audience's emotional connection to the war and, if we invite it correctly, their willingness to take action.

FOCUS GROUP: INSIGHTS

Ukraine is Not a Top-of-Mind Problem: Before the war in Ukraine is raised in the focus groups, nearly every participant,¹ says the climate crisis is the top problem confronting Germany today. To some, climate concerns are broad and include environmental protection and energy. But the core worry for all remains the same: What will Germany and the world do to resolve the increased warming of the planet?

- The urgency of the climate crisis among focus group participants was expected and confirms the accuracy of the recruitment and screening segmentation process.

Uncertainty About the Future Prevails: Both men and women are very uncertain and quite concerned about what the future holds for their country. While a minority are positive about their personal outlook, most Germans, in both groups, answer unsure, skeptical, uneasy, and insecure about what is in store for Germany and the world. Again, in their comments, they do not link this concern directly to Ukraine. But the war – its unpredictability, brutality, and geographic proximity to Germany – definitely shapes their mindset.

To them, the war in Syria, which produced a wave of immigration in Germany, was distant. Ukraine, with its unmistakable echoes of World War II, is close. It is happening to people who look like them. It is destroying lives, livelihoods, and cities they recognize. This is the 1940s all over again. At least this time, as one participant said: *“We are on the right side.”*

The War – Ever Present *BUT* in the Background: The war in Ukraine is not a top-of-mind concern for the Germans in the focus groups.

Women do not mention the war at all – until they are asked directly about it. The strong emotions they feel for Ukraine and Ukrainians have been

¹ The learning and insights reported *only* reflect the perceptions of Germans in the audience segment targeted by the focus groups (see Context). This is a minority of Germans.

compartmentalized – cordoned off from their day-to-day thoughts because the reality is grim and makes them feel powerless. With the news they consume primarily focused elsewhere, they choose to actively avoid thinking about the war. This is a protective reaction to a reality that troubles them greatly and is, to them, unimaginable in the Europe of the 21st century.

Men also distance themselves intellectually and emotionally from the war. Before they are asked directly about it, they² refer to it elliptically as the “current crisis.”

While the war has receded into the background, as news coverage has flagged and emotional fatigue has kicked in, the conflict still contours the public’s underlying view of the present and the future.

Unqualified Support: Every participant in the focus group voices support for Ukraine, blames Putin, and wants the war to stop. They feel powerless and are uncertain about what they can do to help Ukraine and Ukrainians, but they are solidly in Ukraine’s corner.

- This is the attitude expected from the segment of the German population recruited for the focus groups. While this is further confirmation that the audience segmentation questions used to screen for participants are valid, the Germans who participated in the focus groups do not reflect the attitudes of Germany as a whole.

Compassion and Connection: Germans are incredibly supportive and emotionally connected to Ukrainian refugees. They want refugees to know they are “*safe here*” and “*can count on us [Germany]*.” They have and are willing to continue to “offer support in all areas.” They want refugees to know “*we are here for them,*” “*we will stand by them,*” and are in “*solidarity*” with them.

Germans feel deeply about Ukrainian refugees. They connect with them emotionally – their suffering and their loss. Some say they have taken personal action to help them. Many disparage what they perceive as the

² One man used the word Ukraine before we asked a direct question about the war.

slow response of their government to the war (men) as well as its lack of diplomatic efforts (women) to stop the war in the first place.

This heartfelt and deep connection to Ukrainian refugees and Ukraine is exceptional – qualitatively different than the reaction of many Germans in this segment to Syrian refugees³. And it makes their feelings of powerlessness to actually do something to resolve the conflict, especially among women, even more poignant.

Germans compartmentalize their feelings about the war, and distance themselves from it in their daily lives, because their emotions are so deep and difficult to confront. To them, the Russian aggression in Ukraine is barbaric. It is a jarring reminder of the past century – something they thought Europe had left to the past. It shakes them to their core and makes the wonder: what is next?

Top Concern for Germany as a Nation about the War in Ukraine:

Germans are extremely afraid that the war in Ukraine will escalate, expanding to involve them directly. This is something they fear for obvious reasons – a broader war means more suffering, that suffering could touch them directly, spread across the world, and possibly lead to nuclear conflict (though few mention this potential outcome). A few also worry that Germany, Europe are not prepared to deal with the escalation of a ground war. They say Europe is very weak and divided right now. And note, *“we have no ammunition and no weapons.... if [Putin] thinks he has to invade NATO countries now, then we have a huge problem. If he takes a piece away from Poland or from the other regions then it will be fierce.”*

Escalation not only increases suffering and destruction beyond Ukraine, but is also something the Germany and Europe are simply not prepared for, according to some of our participants.

³ This insight is based on private surveys and focus groups conducted between 2017 and 2019 for the predecessor of the Comms Hub.

Top Personal Concern for Germans about the War in Ukraine:

Presently, with the war confined to Ukraine geographically, Germans concerns about how the war is affecting them personally are focused primarily on the increasing cost of living.

Inflation is rising. The price of energy is higher too. The war is the reason why energy prices are increasing and, to many, it is also behind the *“upward price spiral”* and explosion in *“the cost of living.”*

This is an immediate personal concern. Not all are certain inflation is tied directly to the war, but all think the war plays, at least, some inflationary role. And some worry that *“the longer the war lasts, the more difficult it will be to survive....”*

Do Not Blame Russia. Putin is Responsible for the War: Germans place the blame for the war solidly on Putin. The Russian people are not part of the problem for them. It is the autocratic, old, and unpredictable Putin who bears responsibility.

Even though Ukrainian representatives are working to change this narrative, polling and these focus groups demonstrate that messages which accuse the Russian people or Russia for the war will generate a strong negative reaction with Germans in this key audience and, in all likelihood, significantly reduce the effectiveness of communications.

While perceptions can be changed over time, and variations on the “Putin’s war” label might be possible, further testing is necessary to determine this.

Do Not Blame Germany. Germans Disagree that Their Country Bears Responsibility for the War: While a few Germans wish their country had done more diplomatically to stop the war before it started, and others thought Germany had gotten too cozy with Russia over the past few years, almost none of the participants in our focus groups think Germany bears any responsibility for what is going on in Ukraine.

Messages that blame Germany in any way for Putin’s war will backfire spectacularly.

Germany Has Not Done Enough to Help Ukraine: Not one focus group participant thinks Germany has done enough to help Ukraine. While women are split on this question (half said they were unsure if Germany had done enough), all but one man says German has not done enough. (On the other hand, there is general recognition and pride that private German foundations and people stepped up to help out Ukrainians in need.)

What Should Germany Have Done Differently? Men say the government's response was too slow and indecisive. German politicians took too long to make decision. They failed to lead the European response. They were too cautious. *"They beat around the bush for a long time and didn't make a decision fast enough."*

One man's frustration was palpable and spoke for the group: *"Unless I am mistaken, Germany is the biggest economy in Europe, but they [politicians] dragged their feet over absolutely everything. Every decision was drawn out."* This man continued: *"what I am driving at is, are they doing enough or aren't they doing enough? Either they make a decision and we support them, in which case we have to support them to the best of our ability and take the lead in Germany. I mean in Europe ...Personally, I think that's the right thing to do. However, they didn't actually do that."*

The price of the slow response was obvious to the men in the focus group, it strengthened Putin's hand and is making the war longer.

Some women criticized Germany's ineffectual diplomacy before the war started and today. Others opt out of giving specifics, saying they are glad they do not have to make these decisions.

Messaging: The general agreement within our target audience that Germany has not and is not doing enough to help Ukraine is important to understand, but it cannot be an explicit campaign message. It is fine for Germans to criticize their government's response. Ukrainian's voicing the same critique would be counterproductive and unwelcome.

Instead, messaging should underscore the need for Germany to do more and do it faster. In other words, acknowledging and thanking Germany for the help it has given to date and asking for it to do more.

Stronger Together, but a Capacity Dilemma: Several men and women mention the importance of Europe working together to respond to the war: *“We’re only strong when we’re united.”* There is even an acknowledgment that *“we can only hold our own against Russia together.”* While one woman warns that, even together, *“Europe is very weak at the moment.”*

The real concern about Europe’s weakness is one of the key problems limiting the response to Russia. Germans worry that their own country, and Europe in general, does not have the capacity to repulse the Russians. For years, Europe has avoided investing in its military capabilities. This policy has left Europe in a weak position when confronting a hot ground war. And this reality leads inevitably to a dilemma that is well understood by our core target audience: *“I doubt whether our 5 Leopard tanks will decide the war. But if we send 300 there, then we will somehow have Putin standing in Berlin. I think the most that can really happen is humanitarian aid....”*

Finding Peace: To Germans finding peace through strength is risky. It could easily lead to escalation that Germany and Europe are unprepared (at least in their estimation) to counter. For men, however, peace through negotiation that makes territorial concession (except possibly the Crimea) is also unpalatable.

Men recognize Ukraine’s right to self-defense and are more willing to talk about peace through strength. Some think it is possible to defeat Russian by taking stronger actions now – though those actions would have to be carefully calibrated not to enrage Putin and cause a wider war.

Their actual willingness to support stronger actions, however, is conditional and may be more saber-rattling talk than real. It is driven by their underlying assessment that Putin is a sequential breaker of international

rules and that appeasing him will simply lead to more aggression and territorial concessions in the future.

On the other hand, women just want the war to stop. They want peace now that stops the carnage and suffering, and removes the worries confronting them. They are highly sensitized and opposed to rhetoric and messaging that says no to negotiations. For example, the Algerian ad, which read: “You can’t make peace with your abusers” was rejected outright by women who argue you cannot rule out negotiating from the start. (Men also did not like the ad though we are not certain of their rationale for rejecting it.)

Powerless: The brutal, continuing carnage and destruction in Ukraine has left Germans feeling powerless. This feeling of powerlessness is disempowering and feeds their need to distance themselves from thinking about the war. They feel guilty about this, but not having the war in the news everyday is actually a relief to them.

An out-of-sight, out-of-mind approach to the war is comforting and does not exacerbate their fundamental uncertainty and concerns about the future. Communications that do not tell them exactly the actions they can take to help Ukraine and Ukrainians, reinforces their feelings of powerless and allows them to distance themselves further from the war.

Communications must not allow this disempowering distancing from the war to continue unchecked.

Fighting Powerlessness: Communications in Germany must continually raise awareness of the war within this target audience and, in doing so, show Germans how to take action that makes a difference.

First, messaging must tell Germans that it is not too late to act and make a difference in the lives of Ukrainians and in the future of Ukraine. The images of destruction are real. And each day that goes by more is destroyed, but there is still hope and still much left to be saved.

Second, messages must present Germans with practical actions – simple, clear calls to action -- they can take right now to make things

better for Ukrainians living in Germany and Ukraine itself. These must be doable actions and, when someone takes one of these actions, the results need to be tracked so that each German can see how what they did is adding to achieving a better outcome for Ukrainians.

FOCUS GROUP: SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATIONS

Testing the Communications:

Twelve sample ads with visuals and text were tested in the focus groups. Three of these communications were very powerful. This is a remarkable return that demonstrates the emotional resonance of war images with the Germans in our focus groups. The text on all of these ads needs to be adjusted to increase their effectiveness, but overall, this is an excellent base from which to start communications that remind Germans about the war and tell them specifically what they can do to help.

The raising of German awareness about the war is critical. Given a choice, Germans in our audience would rather not think about the war. They feel guilty about this, but the war is a highly emotional and disempowering subject for them. With news coverage of the war flagging, we need to do what we can to keep it front and center in their minds.

Two other ads, which did not make it into the top three, are reviewed below for learning purposes. Only the first of the two (History Repeats) should be considered for a communications campaign. The remaining ads should not be used under any circumstances. They failed to communicate with the target audience in a meaningful way. The conceptual approach of these ads is not redeemable.

While it is important to read the discussion below to understand why certain communications worked, there are some general rules to consider as the communications effort continues:

Senior woman and children are important subjects for visuals and stories.

Simple references to and reminders of widely-known events will resonate deeply with our target audience. For example, the kidnapping of Ukrainian children is known and despised by our German audience. A simple picture (see Child Behind Wire ad) connected with our audience by tapping that emotional reservoir. What other stories of the war are well-known in Germany that could be tapped in a similar way?

Evocative pictures without people that elicit a story in people's minds. The Teddy Bear communication is a perfect example of this. There is not a person in the visual, but the visual provokes stories in the minds of viewers and heartfelt questions about what happened to the people there.

Focus on people not animals – not even people with animals. Our audience cares very much about animals and animal cruelty (shown in images 4 and 12), but that emotion is a distant second to the emotions they feel about the plight of Ukrainian people: *“...to me human beings are the first priority...I would not necessarily see animals as the main argument to help Ukrainian refugees.”*

Focus on people, not the urban and environmental destruction (see Destruction ad below).

Rhetoric, open-ended copy in text, and rhetorical flourishes can be very counterproductive. For example, the “which path will you choose?” question (in the communication History Repeats) was poorly received. This and other comments throughout the focus groups – especially in the women's group -- demonstrate that generic rhetorical flourishes and open-ended questions that push the audience should be completely avoided. Do not pose a choice for or question to people,

ask them directly to take action and tell them what action you want them to take.

Top Testing Communications:

Senior Woman



This communication tested exceptionally well with both men and women. The visual (looking into the eyes of a senior woman) and the language in it resonated strongly with the men. Women liked the visual very much, but two objected to some parts of the text. While this was a minority opinion, their comments, as well as some comments by others in the groups, are instructive lessons to take into account for all communications going forward. Learning from this communication includes:

The need for a clear, specific call to action: Germans resonated deeply with the communication's message, but they did not know what to actually do with those feelings and told us so directly:

"[The communications] definitely touches me but somehow...I think like most people, I thought about the war a lot more in the beginning than I do now, a year later. The question arises...apart from somehow supporting refugees. I can't think of anything I could actively do."

Acknowledgement of Germans and Germany's Support: The text in the communication: "I was greeted here with such warmth" resonated deeply with Germans in our focus group. Simply

acknowledging what Germany has done for Ukraine and Ukrainians is a powerful way to create a human bond with this audience.

Use of the word *Russians*: Focus group participants blame Putin, not Russians for the war. Alternative versions need to be tested further.

Use of the word *Hiding*: Be direct in communicating about the war. Instead of words like “hiding,” describe the actual reason behind the action. In this case, the woman in the picture left Ukraine because it was unsafe. She sought safety and security in German.

Mentioning the future or children in communications: The reaction of participants to images and references to children and the future in the communications tested point to the power of these two elements in messaging. Even the two women who objected to parts of the copy in this communication recommended leaving *“I don’t want my grandchildren to see war.”*

Children are innocents. Reminding Germans that they too are swept up in this war creates another human, responsive chord in messaging.

When using a general call to action, sharpen it! “Support Ukraine” is a general call to action, it needs to be focused to make it more resonate.

When messaging, answer the question: Why should the audience support Ukraine? One answer, offered by the one participant who questioned the text in this communication, was to tweak the support line as follows: “Help us live in a free Europe. Support Ukraine.” This is a simple and nuanced tweak. Only one participant was adamant

about it. But it may add weight to the overall messaging if there is room in a communication for it.

Child Behind Wire



This image disturbed men greatly. It was the top-tested ad among almost all of them. It was also a secondary choice among woman. Importantly, **it reminds** Germans of a story from the war they already know – the kidnapping of Ukrainian children by Putin. And that story sickens them.

In their hearts, they feel children are the future and these children, taken by Putin from their parents, will now be brainwashed in Russian camps. That is barbaric and unacceptable.

It “shouldn’t happen to children.... I was very upset about this when I heard it in the media and this picture brings it up again...It strengthened my feeling of wanting to help.” And from another man, *“If children are fed misinformation in Russian camps.... I can’t imagine anything worse than that...”*

The missing element in this communication is a specific call to action. A specific call to action would generate a significant response.

Teddy Bear

It is about people, not territories. We can't protect these people if we don't control the territories.
Please, support Ukraine's fight for freedom.



This communication was a top choice among women and a secondary choice among men. Without the teddy bear, the visual would not have worked.

The teddy bear took this from a scene of devastation to a story about what happened to the children and the family who used to live there? It invited Germans to think about that and elicited a wide range of emotions from them – especially from women.

The copy, however, juxtaposing people and territories was a non sequitur to our participants that added almost nothing to the communication.

Revised copy must not tell the full story – let the target audience make up their own story that is the true power of this visual. But the text cannot be about people and territory.

Finally, the visual should have a subtle title in one of the corners of the shot (not the teddy bear corner!) that firmly establishes this scene is from Ukraine.

History Repeats

1940 and 2022. Two turning points for Europe. Germany can make a difference and help to build democratic future. Which path will you choose?



This visual was a third-tier choice among participants. It has historical resonance, but was not as emotionally effective as the three ads already mentioned. The key to its success is once again the visualization of children.

One key learning from this ad that builds on other comments voiced during the focus groups – especially among women -- is how ineffective and, at times, counterproductive some of the language used in the communications was. For example, the “which path will you choose?” question was poorly received.

We think this and other comments throughout the focus groups – especially with the women’s group -- indicate that open-ended rhetorical flourishes that push the audience should be completely avoided.

Do not pose a choice for people, ask them directly to take action and tell them what action you want them to take.

Destruction

The magnitude of destruction left by Russia will impact the Ukrainian and European environment for decades. We can't allow more harm to happen. Please help us to stop Russia, support Ukraine.



Initially, this communication resonated powerfully with Germans in our audience.

From their opening comments citing climate and environment as their primary, top-of-mind concern, their resonance with this image makes complete sense. These Germans care deeply about the environment. This photo shows wanton destruction of the environment that will take decades to fix. One East German even mentioned how it made him think of the aftermath of World War II and how, even today, unexploded ordinance is still found.

However, when this communication was compared by focus group participants to other communications featuring children and people, the image on environmental destruction placed a distant second in terms of communicative power. And, please note, it placed second with a German audience that lists the environment as its top concern above all others.

Other Learning: As in the teddy bear ad, it is critical to locate this scene geographically. All visuals like this should be labelled so that the audience is certain the picture is recent and comes from Ukraine.

APPENDIX 1: Discussion Guide

FOCUS GROUPS GUIDE – DRAFT #6 -- FINAL

0. INTRODUCTION (7 minutes)

Moderator:

- Welcome and thanks to the participants
- Brief introduction to the focus group process and rules, participant self-intros (short)

1. TOP OF MIND THOUGHTS – Germany Today (10 minutes)

Moderator: *Thank you. Now I'd like you to fill-in the blank in this sentence with the word or phrase that comes to your mind. [Moderator: After quickly getting a word or phrase from each person, get a sense of the room as to their reasons -- focus on feelings and try not to let any one person dominate discussion.]*

- *I feel (.....BLANK...) about the way things are going in Germany today.*
 - **PROBE:** *What makes you feel (....BLANK...) about the way things are going?*
- *And what do you think is biggest problem confronting Germany_today? [Moderator: Go around the room quickly trying to get a word or phrase from each person]*
 - **PROBE:** *Why do you think this is the biggest problem confronting Germany now?*

2. TOP OF MIND THOUGHTS – War in Ukraine (15 minutes)

Moderator: *Now what is the first thing that comes to your mind when I say Ukraine?*

- *What makes you say this?*
- *How do you feel about what is going on in Ukraine right now?*
 - *Have you picked a side you support in the war?*
 - *Which side do you support?*
 - *How strongly do you think one side is in the right and the other side is in the wrong?*
- *How do you feel about how Germany has responded to it?*
 - **Probe:** *Is there anything you wish Germany would do differently? What?*
 - **Probe:** *Has Germany done enough or not?*

- *Is there anything else Germany should do?*
- *When it comes to Germany, what is your biggest worry about it the war in Ukraine?*
- *When it comes to you personally, what is your biggest worry about the war in Ukraine?*

3. MESSAGE TESTING – “Thank you” messages (25 minutes)

- *If a Ukrainian refugee, who was living in Germany, joined our group right now, what would you say to them?*
 - *Why would you say that?*
- *Now the Ukrainian refugee is about to say something to you.*
 - *What would you like them to say to you about Germany’s involvement in the war?*
 - *What would you like them to say to you personally?*
- *What do you think: Is Germany doing too much or too little to help Ukrainian refugees?*
 - *How do you feel about what Germany is doing to help Ukrainian refugees*
 - *Probe: Pride*
 - *Probe: Too much*

Moderator: *Now I’m going to show you images with some words that Ukrainians would like to say to you and other Germans. For each one, please write down on a piece of paper (? or use chat?) using a scale of 0-5 how much you like the image and its message where “0” meaning you dislike it very much and “5” means you like it very much. Please do not discuss your rating until I ask you to do so.*

[Moderator: Show all four images/ads (one at a time) and ask participants to write down their rating after seeing each image. Do not discuss images until all have been shown and silently rated. Then, do a hand count of ratings for each image (please call out the count to report it. Then, work through the questions below to discuss – at least -- two top testing images. Focus on feelings and why they liked the image/ad.]

PLEASE REVERSE ORDER IMAGES BETWEEN GROUPS

Image 1. Story about mother and child.

Image 2. Story about work.

Image 3. TBD

Image 4. TBD

[Moderator: Ask each participant, using a hand count, which image/ad did you give your highest rating to? Identify the top image for group. Then, ask what ratings participants gave that image (unless it is already in the chat). Then, discuss it – the three prompts below. After discussing the top image, move to the next/second highest rated image/ad.]

- *How does this image/ad make you feel?*

- *What were your first thoughts, associations after you saw this image/ad*
 - *What does this image make you want to say to Ukrainians?*
 - *Does this image make you want to do something? What?*
- *Do you have anything you want to say to the Ukrainians who produced this image?*

[Moderator: After discussing at least the top two] What about the other images/ads? Why didn't you like them as much?

- *Is there something that would make them better?*

4. MESSAGE TESTING – “peace is not a solution” (50 min)

- *How do you hope the war in Ukraine will end? What do you want to happen? Realistically, how long do you think this war will last?*
 - **Probe:** *Do you think it is possible to find a compromise? What it might be? What are the main conditions for lasting peace?*
 - **Probe:** *Should Ukraine leave Crimea and the Donetsk/Luhansk region to Russia if Ukraine were offered a peace agreement?*

Image/Ad Content about Territories -- Ranking Round 1

Moderator: *Now I'm going to show you another set of images. [NOTE: SCALE CHANGE!] Give each one a rating on a scale of 0-5, where “0” means it did not change your feelings of support for Ukraine at all and*

“5” means the image/ad strongly increases your feelings of support for Ukraine. Please do not discuss your rating until I ask you to do so.

PLEASE REVERSE ORDER IMAGES BETWEEN GROUPS

[Moderator: Same discussion approach as was used above BUT note scale change. NOTE: We are assuming here these ads will increase support for Ukraine in its war against Russia or at least do no harm . If the ads decrease support for Ukraine. We need to know that too.]

Image 5. Comparison: occupied territories to territory of Europe.

Image 6. Comparison: occupied territories to territory of divided Berlin after WWII. “There is no difference?”.

Image 7. Comparison: Europe in 1944 and Ukraine now. “We need your support to pass this turning point”.

Image 8. Comparison: occupied Chechnya, Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine. “They won’t stop. NATO is next”.

- *How does this image/ad make you feel?*
- *Why did it change/increase your support for Ukraine?*
- *What were your first thoughts, associations after you saw this image/ad*
- *Do you have anything you want to say to the Ukrainians who produced this image?*

[Moderator: After discussing at least the top two] What about the other images/ads? Why didn’t you like them as much?

- *Is there something that would make them better*

Image/Ad Content about Human Rights -- Ranking Round 2

MODERATOR: Now I’m going to show you another set of images. [EXACT SAME APPROACH & SCALE AS ROUND 1.]

Image 9. Story of Ukrainians on occupied territories. “It is about people, not territories. We can’t protect these people if we don’t control the territories.”

Image 10. Comparison: French and Algerians at the same table. Ukrainians and Russians at the same table. "It is the same situation. We can't make peace with abusers"

Image 11. Ukrainian children are forced to learn Russian language. "700 000 Ukrainian children deported to Russia. Even more might suffer on occupied territories".

Image 12. Comparison: Occupied Ukraine and Democratic Europe. "We want to build our democratic future".

- How does this image/ad make you feel?
- Why did it change/increase your support for Ukraine?

- What were your first thoughts, associations after you saw this image/ad
- Do you have anything you want to say to the Ukrainians who produced this image?

[Moderator: After discussing at least the top two] What about the other images/ads? Why didn't you like them as much?

- Is there something that would make them better

COMPARISON: Round 1 VS Round 2. Final Ranking

[Moderator: show TOP images from each ranking round]

- Comparing these two images, which one is the most convincing to you when it comes to supporting Ukraine?
- Why?

5. RESPONSIBILITY (7 minutes)

Moderator: I want to quickly read you a few statements that some people are saying today. After I read each statement, please put your thumb up if you agree with it and your thumb down if you disagree. Do nothing if your opinion is mixed or you are unsure about the statement.

[Moderator: Count and total thumbs up and down for each statement out loud.]

1. Some people say that Germany bears some responsibility for Russia's attack on Ukraine. **[Thumbs UP/DOWN]**

2. *Some say Germany bears some responsibility for the war because its government has put economic concerns – like the North Stream 2 pipeline before its democratic values. [Thumbs UP/DOWN]*
3. *Others say Germany bears some responsibility for the war because as the leader of Europe and the democratic world, it hasn't reacted strongly enough to previous military Russia's invasions of other countries. And even continued to international agreements with Russia. [Thumbs UP/DOWN]*
4. *Others say Germany bears some responsibility for the war because it did little when Russia invaded the Crimea and Donbas region and has pushed Ukraine to reach a peace agreement with Russia. [Thumbs UP/DOWN]*
5. *Finally, do you think the Russian people bear any responsibility for the war? [Thumbs UP/DOWN]*
6. *If you had to choose would you say:*
 - A. *The Russian people*
 - B. *Vladimir Putin and the Russian authorities*
 - C. *Both the Russian people and Putin and the Russian authorities*

bear responsibility for the war? How many choose A....B....C?

6. CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

- *How do you feel about our discussion today? Is there anything else that we haven't discussed, but you wanted to say?*

APPENDIX 2: Tested Communications

"I know that my wife is safe thanks to you. It gives me strength to continue fighting for democratic values. Continue to support us and European values."



"I never thought that I would be hiding from the Russians in Germany. I was greeted here with such warmth. I want my grandchildren not to see war and live in a free Europe. Please, support Ukraine"



Thank you for supporting our culture. By protecting Ukrainian culture, we protect democratic values.



Thank you for helping me and my pet through the most stressful time of our lives. You cared about both of us. But the fight is not over and many animals are suffering. Please support those who protect our people and animals in Ukraine.



That's how much Ukrainian territory Russia occupied in 3 months. How long will it take to occupy your neighbors - Czech Republic and Switzerland? Think about it..



The magnitude of destruction left by Russia will impact the Ukrainian and European environment for decades. We can't allow more harm to happen. Please help us to stop Russia, support Ukraine.



1940 and 2022. Two turning points for Europe. Germany can make a difference and help to build democratic future. Which path will you choose?



1992 - Moldova, 2008 - Georgia, 2014 - Crimea and Donbas, 2022 - whole Ukraine. See a pattern? Help Ukraine stop Russia now or NATO and German soldiers are next.



It is about people, not territories. We can't protect these people if we don't control the territories. Please, support Ukraine's fight for freedom.



Expecting Ukrainians to negotiate with Russians is the same as forcing Algerians to surrender to the French. You can't make peace with your abusers.



Ukrainian children are forcefully RUSSIFIED in special camps. Europeans can't allow it to continue.



People or animals - it doesn't make any difference for them. We must stop Russian war crimes!

