

Munich Security Index 2022

Against a rising tide of mutually reinforcing crises – including the climate crisis, a global health crisis, and democratic backsliding – it is important to assess and compare risk perceptions in different parts of the world and track changes over time in the way people view risk. The overall picture painted by the second edition of the Munich Security Index, based on surveys conducted in November 2021, is one of growing concern about risk. Overall, the people polled are now even more risk-aware than they were in February and March of 2021, when the first wave of research was conducted. This increased awareness pertains, among other things, to the perceived risk posed by mass migration, food shortages, climate change, extreme weather events, rising inequality, and cyberattacks. But it is also evident in risk perceptions toward other countries – China and Russia chief among them. Only four of the 31 risks covered in the index have not seen an overall increase in threat perception: the Covid-19 pandemic (as Delta and Omicron were not yet a major worry for many countries when the polling took place), a potential future pandemic, a national economic or financial crisis, and international organized crime. While the risks posed by climate change and environmental threats continue to be top concerns for the people surveyed, the greatest overall increase in risk perception relates to food shortages and mass migration as a result of war or climate change. Yet risk perceptions and the extent to which these have increased since the last edition of the index still differ greatly by nation: while Germany has seen the greatest increase in worries about risks, overall concern about risks has decreased in China and Brazil.

About the Munich Security Index

The MSC and Kekst CNC have together built a new data set to answer core questions that help understand citizens' risk perceptions: do people think that the world is becoming a riskier place? Is there a global consensus on some of the grave risks that humanity is facing today – from climate change and pandemics to the risks posed by countries like China and Russia? And how prepared do societies feel to tackle these various threats? By combining five metrics – overall risk, potential damage, expected trajectory, perceived imminence, and feelings of preparedness – the index, underpinned by a survey of 12,000 people globally, provides an in-depth view of how G7 and BRICS nations view 31 major global and domestic risks. The index also enables an evaluation of how risk perceptions change over time.

The Munich Security Index is also available on our website:



Explaining the Index

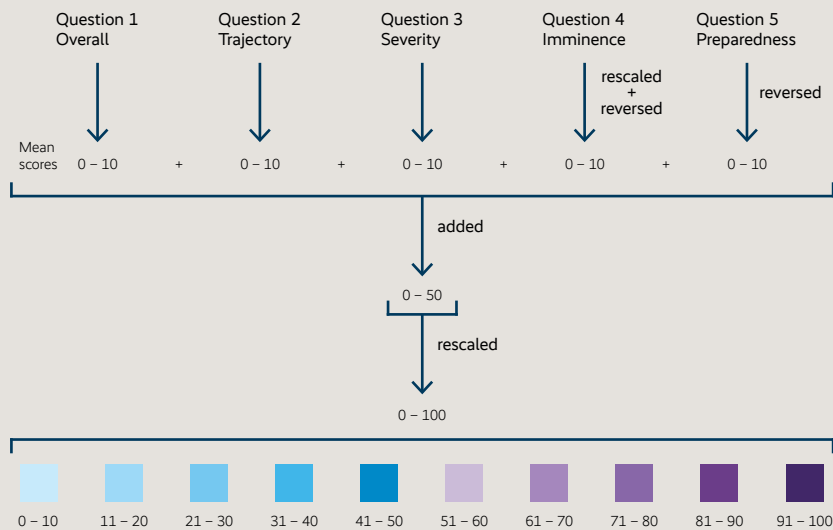
Index components

The Munich Security Index combines the crucial components that make a risk more serious. Public perceptions of trajectory are combined with imminence and severity alongside a measure to give equal weight to perceptions of preparedness.



Index scores

To produce the final risk index score for each risk in each country we add the mean scores for all five of the inputs above – overall risk, trajectory, severity, imminence, and preparedness. The resulting total is then rescaled to run from 0 to 100 for ease of interpretation. The final risk index score is an absolute figure (with 100 the highest and 0 the lowest possible score) that can be compared between demographics, countries, and over time.



Besides a risk heatmap (see page 36) that features all twelve countries surveyed and how they score on each of the 31 risks covered, the Munich Security Index 2022 also includes an overview of how risk perceptions have changed since the last Munich Security Index was published (see pages 37–38).

The index also provides more detailed insights into the individual risk profiles of the twelve countries surveyed (pages 40–51).

Country profiles

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Extreme weather and forest fires	71	+10	63	28
Climate change generally	69	+9	58	28
Destruction of natural habitats	69	+7	60	29

Change in index score

Change in the risk index score since the last Munich Security Index was published. The 2021 version of the index was based on surveys conducted in February and March 2021.

Share thinking risk is imminent

Percentage of respondents who answered “now or in the next few months,” “in the next year,” and “in the next 5 years” in answer to the question “For each of the following, please say how imminent a threat you think it is.”

Share feeling unprepared

Percentage of respondents who rated their country’s preparedness as less than 6 on a 0 – 10 scale in answer to the question “For each of the following, please say how prepared your country is to deal with this threat.”

Figure 1.6

The risk heatmap, November 2021, score

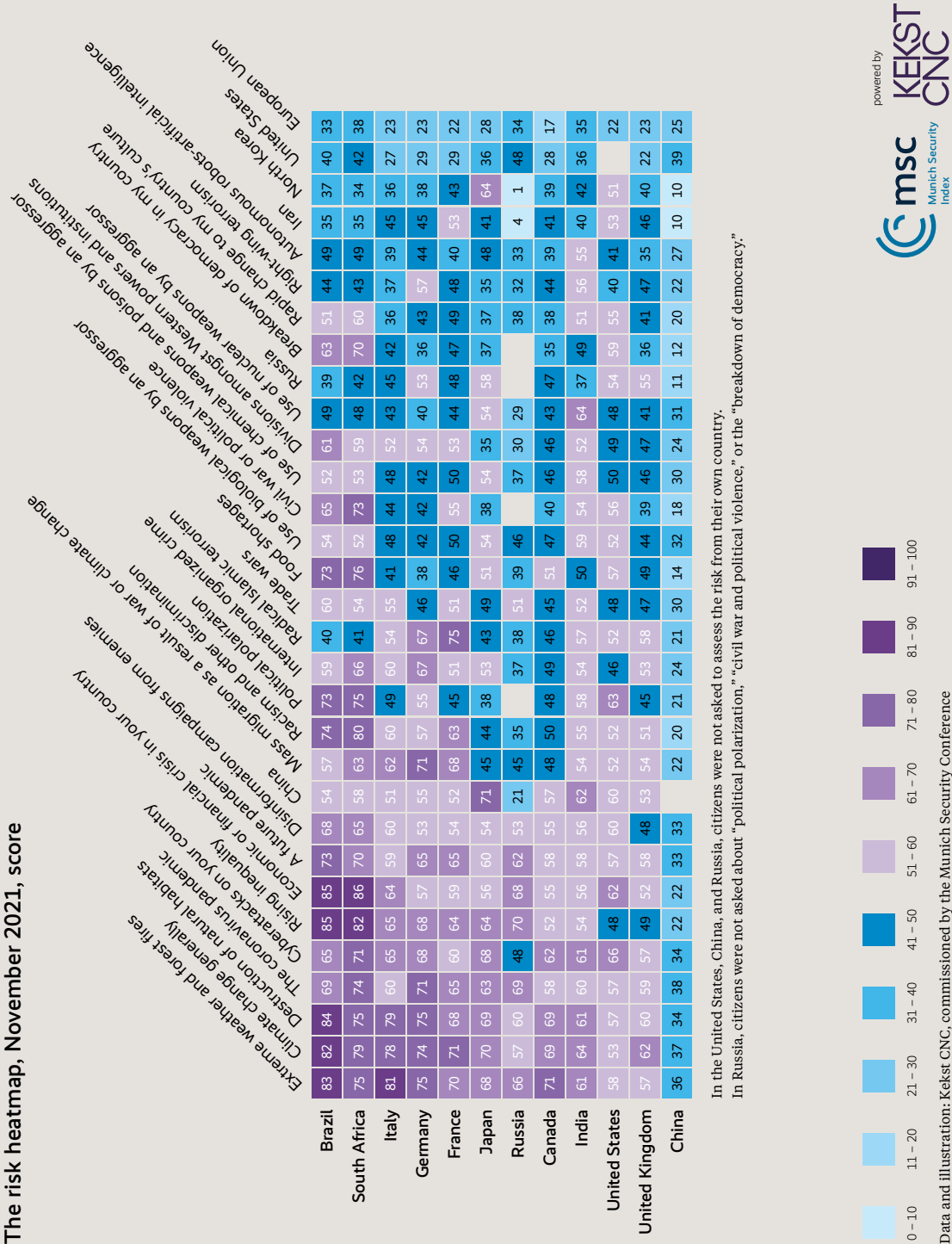
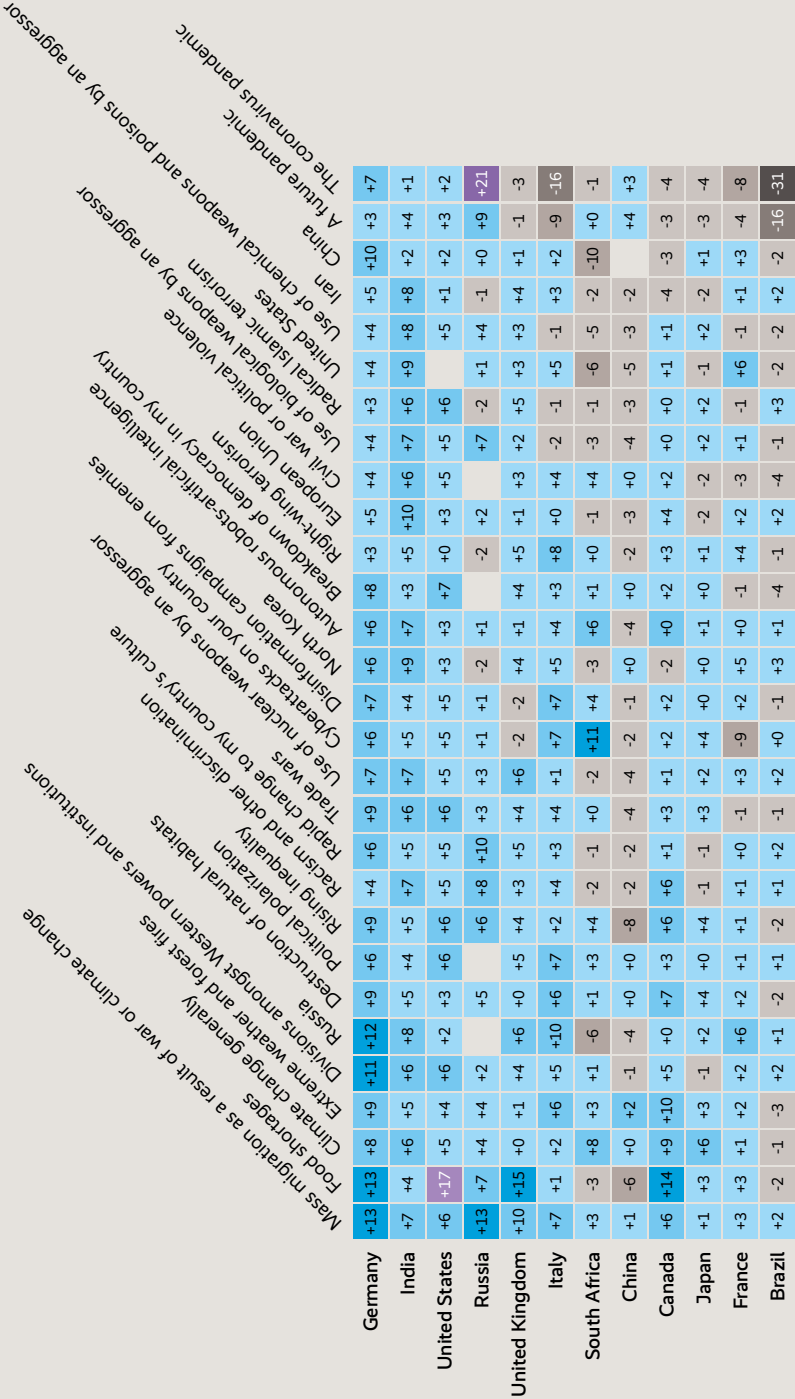


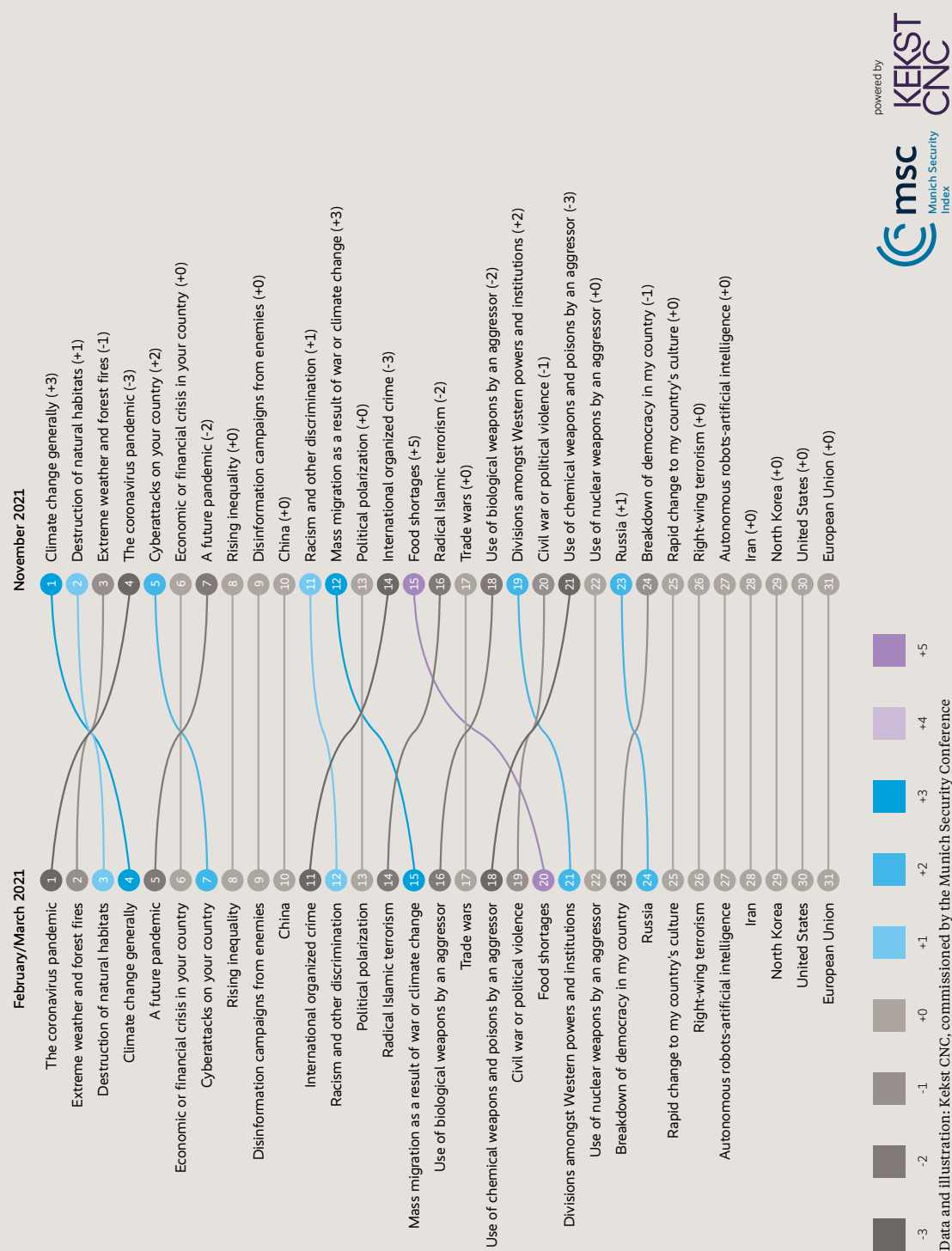
Figure 1.7

The change heatmap, November 2021, change in index score since February/March 2021



In the United States, China, and Russia, citizens were not asked to assess the risk from their own country.
In Russia, citizens were not asked about "political polarization," "civil war and political violence," or the "breakdown of democracy."

Figure 1.8 The risk bump chart, ranking of risks by all countries surveyed, November and February/March 2021



Canada: Risk perception in line with Western counterparts

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Extreme weather and forest fires	71	+10	63	28
Climate change generally	69	+9	58	28
Destruction of natural habitats	69	+7	60	29
Cyberattacks on your country	62	+2	57	26
The coronavirus pandemic	58	-4	66	16
A future pandemic	58	-3	44	22
China	57	-3	43	33
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	55	+2	58	24
Economic or financial crisis in your country	55	+0	49	26
Rising inequality	52	+6	54	26
Food shortages	51	+14	45	27
Racism and other discrimination	50	+6	57	19
International organized crime	49	+0	46	23
Political polarization	48	+3	50	22
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	48	+6	42	29
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	47	+0	28	39
Russia	47	+0	40	32
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	46	+1	27	39
Radical Islamic terrorism	46	+0	45	26
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	46	+5	41	24
Trade wars	45	+3	47	22
Right-wing terrorism	44	+3	44	24
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	43	+1	24	38
Iran	41	-4	34	29
Civil war or political violence	40	+2	36	25
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	39	+0	34	28
North Korea	39	-2	31	30
Rapid change to my country's culture	38	+1	32	24
Breakdown of democracy in my country	35	+2	27	29
United States	28	+1	27	24
European Union	17	+4	21	20

1

Canadian respondents perceive extreme weather and forest fires, climate change in general, the destruction of natural habitats, cyberattacks, and the coronavirus pandemic as the top risks. Alongside respondents from European nations, risks associated with climate change rank highly.

2

Though it has dropped from being the highest-rated risk in early 2021 to number five in late 2021, two-thirds of Canadian respondents still think the threat of the coronavirus pandemic is imminent. Meanwhile, the risk of a future pandemic is also considered high, a feeling echoed by respondents from Russia, the United Kingdom, and France.

3

Canadians are in line with US respondents' worries about China (with index scores of 57 and 60, respectively). In this regard, respondents in Canada view the Chinese threat slightly more seriously than European counterparts like France (52), Italy (51), and the United Kingdom (53).

63%

of Canadians think extreme weather and forest fires are an imminent threat.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

France: Eye-to-eye with Germany

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Radical Islamic terrorism	75	-1	70	20
Climate change generally	71	+1	60	23
Extreme weather and forest fires	70	+2	61	23
Destruction of natural habitats	68	+2	61	23
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	68	+3	58	32
The coronavirus pandemic	65	-8	71	14
A future pandemic	65	-4	58	23
Rising inequality	64	+1	59	22
Racism and other discrimination	63	+1	65	17
Cyberattacks on your country	60	-9	58	18
Economic or financial crisis in your country	59	+0	54	20
Civil war or political violence	55	-3	47	23
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	54	+2	58	15
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	53	+2	48	18
Iran	53	+1	43	21
China	52	+3	38	21
Trade wars	51	-1	51	17
International organized crime	51	+0	49	18
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	50	+1	29	23
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	50	-1	31	22
Rapid change to my country's culture	49	+0	37	29
Right-wing terrorism	48	+4	50	17
Russia	48	+6	40	21
Breakdown of democracy in my country	47	-1	35	28
Food shortages	46	+3	39	23
Political polarization	45	+1	50	12
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	44	+3	28	19
North Korea	43	+5	31	21
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	40	+0	41	20
United States	29	+6	29	21
European Union	22	+2	27	20

1 The top risks in the eyes of French respondents are radical Islamic terrorism, climate change in general, extreme weather and forest fires, the destruction of natural habitats, and mass migration as a result of war or climate change.

2 Four out of five of the risks rated highest by French respondents are related to the climate – more than in any other nation surveyed, along with Germany. 32 percent of French respondents said they feel unprepared for mass migration due to war or climate change, the highest figure for any threat covered.

3 French respondents are, by some distance, the most worried about radical Islamic terrorism, with an index score of 75. European peers, Italy (54) and the United Kingdom (58), are less concerned about the terrorism risk. Germany is more closely aligned (67). A high percentage of respondents in both Germany and France feel the risk of radical Islamic terrorism is imminent (70 and 67 percent, respectively).

32% of the French public feel unprepared for mass migration due to war or climate change.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

Germany: More risk-aware now than in early 2021

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Extreme weather and forest fires	75	+9	68	37
Destruction of natural habitats	75	+9	66	36
Climate change generally	74	+8	63	34
The coronavirus pandemic	71	+7	75	29
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	71	+13	65	38
Cyberattacks on your country	68	+6	69	34
Rising inequality	68	+9	65	34
Radical Islamic terrorism	67	+3	68	29
International organized crime	67	+0	68	29
A future pandemic	65	+3	57	34
Right-wing terrorism	57	+3	63	24
Racism and other discrimination	57	+4	65	24
Economic or financial crisis in your country	57	+0	51	28
Political polarization	55	+6	60	23
China	55	+10	43	34
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	54	+11	50	30
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	53	+7	59	28
Russia	53	+12	42	32
Trade wars	46	+9	42	29
Iran	45	+5	38	30
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	44	+6	45	31
Rapid change to my country's culture	43	+6	41	30
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	42	+4	20	47
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	42	+4	21	46
Civil war or political violence	42	+4	38	34
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	40	+7	20	43
Food shortages	38	+13	35	31
North Korea	38	+6	30	32
Breakdown of democracy in my country	36	+8	28	35
United States	29	+4	27	27
European Union	23	+5	27	24

1

The top risks perceived by German respondents are extreme weather and forest fires, the destruction of natural habitats, climate change in general, the coronavirus pandemic, and mass migration resulting from war or climate change.

2

Germany is the only European country to rate the coronavirus pandemic as more of a risk at the end of 2021 than in early 2021. 75 percent of respondents feel the risk of the pandemic is imminent – the highest percentage of any country bar Russia (82 percent) and South Africa (77 percent).

3

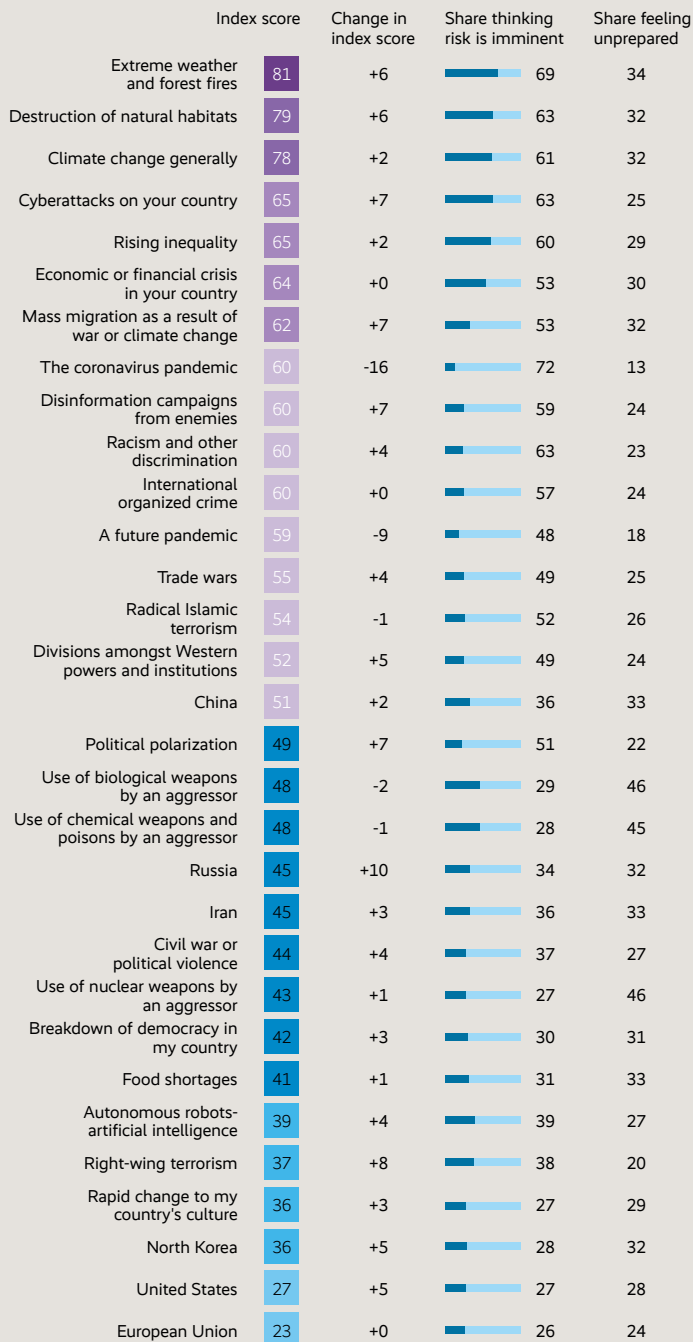
Across the board, German respondents are more risk-aware in 2022 than they were in 2021. Since the last index, mass migration due to war or climate change, divisions among Western powers and institutions, Russia, and food shortages have all experienced a sharp increase in index scores. Over a third of Germans (38 percent) feel unprepared for the impact of mass migration due to war or climate change, higher than any other Western country.

75%

of German respondents feel the risk of the coronavirus pandemic is still imminent.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

Italy: More relaxed about the pandemic, worried about the environment



1 The top risks of concern in Italy are extreme weather and forest fires, the destruction of natural habitats, climate change in general, cyberattacks, and increasing inequality.

2 Compared with early 2021, the coronavirus pandemic is the risk to have decreased the most in the eyes of Italian respondents. Only 13 percent feel unprepared for this threat, significantly less than German respondents (29 percent). Similarly, a future pandemic is viewed by Italians as only a medium-tier risk; in contrast, respondents in other countries view it as a major threat.

3 Italians seem relatively calm about risks that preoccupy other European nations. The risk of rapid change to a country's culture and right-wing terrorism are more prominent in Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. Italians are also more relaxed about the threat posed by Iran, Russia, and China when compared with their European counterparts.

13% of Italian respondents feel unprepared for the coronavirus pandemic – a substantial decrease.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

Japan: Threats from China, Russia, and North Korea

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
China	71	+1	44	28
Climate change generally	70	+6	51	25
Destruction of natural habitats	69	+4	48	25
Cyberattacks on your country	68	+4	56	27
Extreme weather and forest fires	68	+3	51	25
Rising inequality	64	+4	49	31
North Korea	64	+0	43	30
The coronavirus pandemic	63	-4	70	14
A future pandemic	60	-3	45	22
Russia	58	+2	35	29
Economic or financial crisis in your country	56	+0	32	25
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	54	+2	17	39
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	54	+2	18	41
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	54	+2	16	40
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	54	+0	46	29
International organized crime	53	+0	39	28
Food shortages	51	+3	24	30
Trade wars	49	+3	37	21
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	48	+1	42	24
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	45	+1	26	30
Racism and other discrimination	44	-1	42	25
Radical Islamic terrorism	43	+2	29	32
Iran	41	-2	28	27
Political polarization	38	+0	32	26
Civil war or political violence	38	-2	25	27
Breakdown of democracy in my country	37	+0	17	29
Rapid change to my country's culture	37	-1	23	26
United States	36	-1	20	25
Right-wing terrorism	35	+1	20	28
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	35	-1	22	27
European Union	28	-2	17	25

1

The top risks that concern respondents from Japan are China, climate change in general, the destruction of natural habitats, cyberattacks, and extreme weather and forest fires.

2

Japan is the only country surveyed to rank three other countries (China, Russia, and North Korea) within its top ten perceived risks. Furthermore, Japanese respondents are more concerned about each of these countries individually than any other country surveyed. As in early 2021, China is considered the biggest single threat to Japan.

3

Echoing their concern about the threat posed by foreign nations, Japanese respondents are the most worried about the threat of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons). Aside from Japan, these are considered medium-tier risks in only one other country: China.

↑
+6

The number of places up the risk index ranking that climate change has moved in Japan.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

United Kingdom: Climate change has become top risk

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Climate change generally	62	+0	54	19
Destruction of natural habitats	60	+0	55	21
The coronavirus pandemic	59	-3	66	16
A future pandemic	58	-1	52	17
Radical Islamic terrorism	58	+5	60	15
Cyberattacks on your country	57	-2	59	14
Extreme weather and forest fires	57	+1	54	20
Russia	55	+6	46	25
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	54	+10	50	27
China	53	+1	44	24
International organized crime	53	+0	57	14
Economic or financial crisis in your country	52	+0	51	18
Racism and other discrimination	51	+3	58	17
Rising inequality	49	+4	54	20
Food shortages	49	+15	53	21
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	48	-2	55	16
Right-wing terrorism	47	+5	50	14
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	47	+4	47	18
Trade wars	47	+4	54	17
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	46	+3	32	22
Iran	46	+4	43	20
Political polarization	45	+5	46	15
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	44	+2	30	22
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	41	+6	26	19
Rapid change to my country's culture	41	+5	39	22
North Korea	40	+4	35	20
Civil war or political violence	39	+3	40	18
Breakdown of democracy in my country	36	+4	32	21
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	35	+1	38	17
European Union	23	+1	30	17
United States	22	+3	27	20

1 Since the last wave of research, climate change has taken over as the top risk in the United Kingdom. The destruction of natural habitats is second – with an unchanged index score of 60, despite all the attention on COP in Glasgow during the polling. Three of the top seven risks perceived in the United Kingdom are climate-related risks, but none of them have increased meaningfully since the start of 2021.

2 For the United Kingdom, the big increases in index scores concern mass migration, Russia, and food shortages. The risk of food shortages has increased by 15 points and 14 places.

3 Respondents in the United Kingdom are less concerned about the breakdown of democracy, civil war and political violence, and rapid change to their culture. Here, the UK's risk profile is most aligned with Germany, Italy, and Japan, while in France, these topics are viewed as greater threats.

54% of the British public think that the risk from climate change is imminent.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

United States: Split on the risk of climate change

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Cyberattacks on your country	66	+5	60	19
Political polarization	63	+6	56	22
Economic or financial crisis in your country	62	+0	56	23
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	60	+5	59	21
China	60	+2	50	21
Breakdown of democracy in my country	59	+7	47	27
Extreme weather and forest fires	58	+4	54	20
The coronavirus pandemic	57	+2	60	15
A future pandemic	57	+3	47	19
Destruction of natural habitats	57	+3	52	19
Food shortages	57	+17	52	23
Civil war or political violence	56	+5	47	24
Rapid change to my country's culture	55	+5	50	24
Russia	54	+2	46	19
Climate change generally	53	+5	48	21
Iran	53	+1	48	17
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	52	+5	34	20
Radical Islamic terrorism	52	+6	48	16
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	52	+6	46	27
Racism and other discrimination	52	+5	54	19
North Korea	51	+3	45	18
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	50	+5	33	18
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	49	+6	44	19
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	48	+5	32	15
Trade wars	48	+6	49	16
Rising inequality	48	+6	50	21
International organized crime	46	+0	47	15
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	41	+3	39	18
Right-wing terrorism	40	+0	42	18
European Union	22	+3	26	14

1

The US continues to be an outlier on climate change in the risk index. American respondents rank climate change in general as a medium-tier risk. In this wave of research, it is up five points but only ranks 15th among all other risks. There also continues to be a strong partisan divide on this issue.

2

The second-largest risk perceived by Americans is political polarization. The risk of a breakdown of democracy has risen six places to sixth in the US risk ranking.

3

The risk that the US faces from China is up two points in this wave of research but is supplanted from being the second-highest risk, down to fifth place. The share of respondents who feel China presents an imminent risk is down two points.

4

As supply chain issues continue to bite, the risk of food shortages has leaped up a massive 17 places in the US risk ranking and increased by 17 points since the last wave of research. This move matches the global trend but is the largest for any country surveyed.

↑
+17

The number of places up the risk index ranking that food shortages jumped in 2021 in the US.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

Brazil: A rare case of decreasing risk perception since the start of 2021

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Rising inequality	85	-2	72	42
Economic or financial crisis in your country	85	+0	69	43
Destruction of natural habitats	84	-2	67	41
Extreme weather and forest fires	83	-3	69	40
Climate change generally	82	-1	65	39
Racism and other discrimination	74	+1	70	33
A future pandemic	73	-16	64	32
Political polarization	73	+1	66	33
Food shortages	73	-2	59	41
The coronavirus pandemic	69	-31	72	26
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	68	-1	61	38
Cyberattacks on your country	65	+0	55	41
Civil war or political violence	65	-4	56	39
Breakdown of democracy in my country	63	-4	50	38
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	61	+2	55	36
Trade wars	60	-1	55	34
International organized crime	59	+0	49	42
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	57	+2	53	37
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	54	-1	33	56
China	54	-2	42	45
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	52	-2	33	54
Rapid change to my country's culture	51	+2	46	36
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	49	+2	29	56
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	49	+1	45	43
Right-wing terrorism	44	-1	41	41
Radical Islamic terrorism	40	+3	36	49
United States	40	-2	37	41
Russia	39	+1	35	42
North Korea	37	+3	31	44
Iran	35	+2	31	41
European Union	33	+2	33	39

1 The very high level of concern about the coronavirus pandemic we saw in Brazil in early 2021 has eased by the end of the year. The risk index score is down 31 points, and the pandemic is now a medium-tier risk for Brazilians. Concerns about a future pandemic are now higher than concerns about the current pandemic.

2 According to Brazilian respondents, rising inequality is currently the biggest threat – tied with the risk of an economic or financial crisis. The index scores for both risks are largely unchanged but assume top spots in Brazil by virtue of declines in other risks.

3 The destruction of natural habitats has marginally decreased as a risk, even if at high levels in a global comparison. Along with climate change, severe weather and forest fires, a considerable proportion of respondents in Brazil (40 percent) feel very unprepared for this risk.

40% of respondents in Brazil feel very unprepared for the risk posed by the destruction of natural habitats.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

China: Risk from the US has decreased and a future pandemic is on the radar

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
United States	39	-5	36	4
The coronavirus pandemic	38	+3	55	4
Climate change generally	37	+0	40	4
Extreme weather and forest fires	36	+2	37	4
Cyberattacks on your country	34	-2	42	4
Destruction of natural habitats	34	+0	35	4
A future pandemic	33	+4	50	5
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	33	-1	44	5
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	32	-4	27	6
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	31	-4	25	5
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	30	-3	23	6
Trade wars	30	-4	57	5
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	27	-4	35	5
European Union	25	-3	28	3
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	24	-1	29	6
International organized crime	24	+0	32	5
Right-wing terrorism	22	-2	29	6
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	22	+1	24	6
Rising inequality	22	-8	27	6
Economic or financial crisis in your country	22	+0	25	5
Radical Islamic terrorism	21	-3	30	7
Political polarization	21	+0	26	6
Racism and other discrimination	20	-2	28	7
Rapid change to my country's culture	20	-2	24	6
Civil war or political violence	18	+0	20	7
Food shortages	14	-6	19	5
Breakdown of democracy in my country	12	+0	16	7
Russia	11	-4	18	8
Iran	10	-2	20	10
North Korea	10	+0	17	11

1

The threat from the US is still the top risk felt in China, but perceptions of it have softened compared to the start of 2021 (down five points). US respondents also felt that the reciprocal threat from China has decreased. Only 36 percent of Chinese respondents think that the threat posed by the US to China is imminent.

2

Among Chinese respondents, the coronavirus pandemic and a future pandemic are perceived as higher risks than at the start of 2021 (index scores are up three and four points, respectively). 50 percent of respondents feel that a future pandemic is an imminent risk in the next five years, second only on that metric to the current coronavirus pandemic.

3

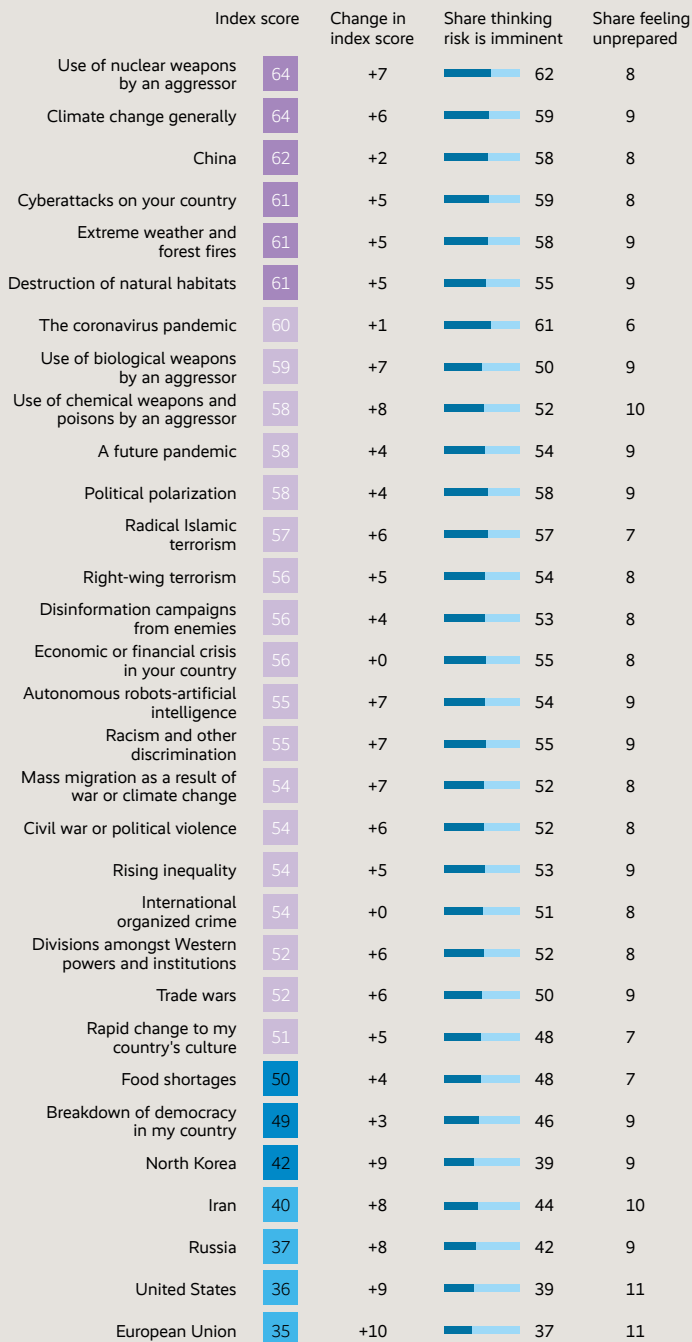
Climate change has dropped one place in the risk ranking of Chinese respondents but has an unchanged index score of 37. Extreme weather is up two points (to 36), and all three climate-related risks are among the top six risks in China.

50%

of Chinese respondents feel that a future pandemic is an imminent risk in the next five years.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

India: The only country with nuclear weapons at the top of its list



1 Climate change is tied with nuclear-armed conflict as the top risk in India. Both threats have increased substantially since the last wave of research (seven and six points, respectively). The risk of extreme weather events is also up five points, as is the destruction of natural habitats. All three climate-related risks are among the top six risks in India.

2 China is the third-ranked risk in India and up two points since the start of 2021. 58 percent of Indian respondents think it is a risk likely to come to fruition within the next five years.

3 Cyberattacks are the fourth-ranked risk in India, up two places.

58% of Indian respondents think China will become a relevant risk in the next five years.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

Russia: A country seeing risks at every turn

	Index score	Change in index score	Share thinking risk is imminent	Share feeling unprepared
Rising inequality	70	+6	65	33
The coronavirus pandemic	69	+21	82	25
Economic or financial crisis in your country	68	+0	64	32
Extreme weather and forest fires	66	+4	62	29
A future pandemic	62	+9	65	29
Destruction of natural habitats	60	+5	43	28
Climate change generally	57	+4	42	24
Disinformation campaigns from enemies	53	+1	67	12
Trade wars	51	+3	59	21
Cyberattacks on your country	48	+1	64	13
United States	48	+1	46	15
Use of biological weapons by an aggressor	46	+7	34	19
Mass migration as a result of war or climate change	45	+13	41	24
Food shortages	39	+7	35	24
Radical Islamic terrorism	38	-2	46	13
Rapid change to my country's culture	38	+10	34	24
Use of chemical weapons and poisons by an aggressor	37	+4	26	19
International organized crime	37	+0	43	12
Racism and other discrimination	35	+8	47	17
European Union	34	+2	39	12
Autonomous robots-artificial intelligence	33	+1	41	17
Right-wing terrorism	32	-2	41	13
Divisions amongst Western powers and institutions	30	+2	37	13
Use of nuclear weapons by an aggressor	29	+3	20	10
China	21	+0	23	17
Iran	4	-1	18	11
North Korea	1	+0	17	11

1

According to Russian respondents, as in the last iteration of the index, rising inequality is the greatest risk. 65 percent of respondents in Russia say that inequality is imminent. With a risk index score of 70, it is up six points since early 2021. 33 percent of Russian respondents feel very unprepared for what rising inequality entails – the highest share for any risk Russia faces.

2

The coronavirus pandemic has jumped up the list of risks that Russian respondents perceive to themselves. It is up 21 points – more than any other risk in any other country.

3

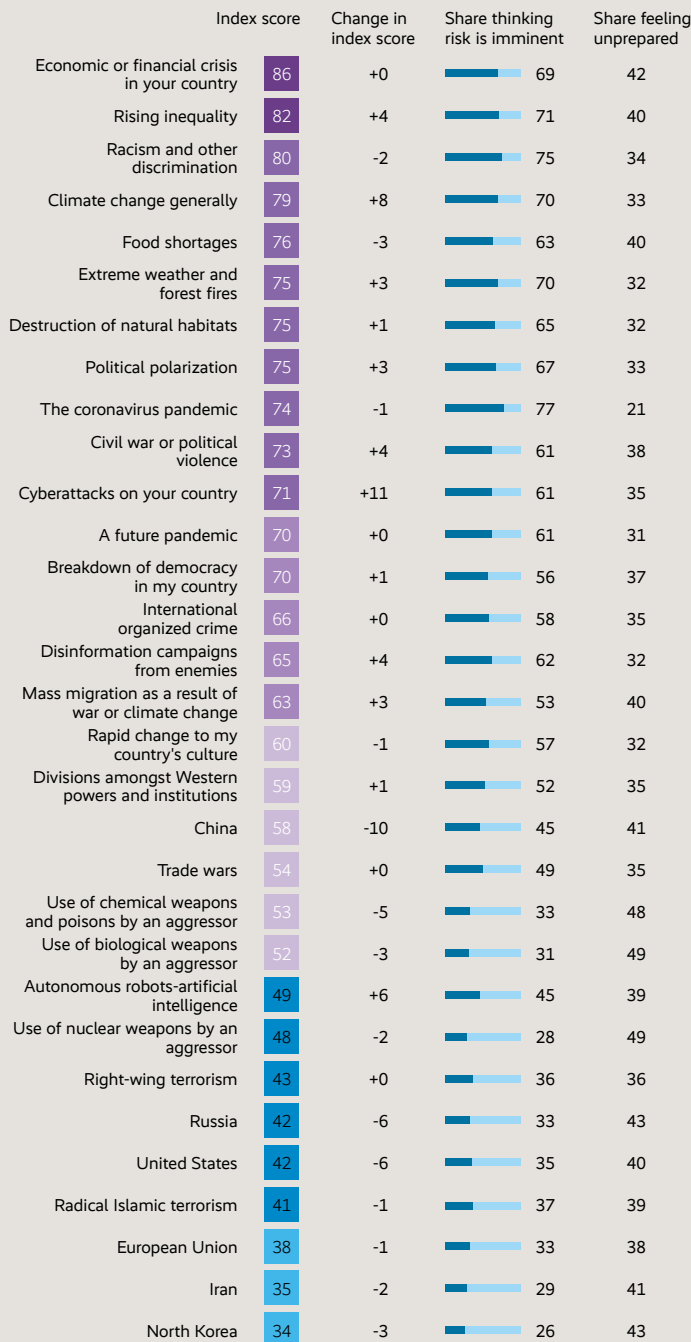
The third-highest scoring risk in Russia is an economic or financial crisis. The index score for this risk has not changed since early 2021, and 64 percent of Russian respondents see it as an imminent risk.

64%

of Russians see an economic or financial crisis as an imminent risk.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

South Africa: The country with the highest individual risk



1 An economic or financial crisis in the country is the top risk perceived by South African respondents. With an index score of 86, it is the highest risk perception in any country surveyed, just ahead of rising inequality in Brazil. The risk of food shortages, on the other hand, has decreased by two points since the last polling, defying the global trend. Yet, with an index score of 76, the risk remains real for South Africans.

2 The risk from rising inequality ranks second for South African respondents and is up four points since the start of 2021. 71 percent of respondents perceive inequality as an imminent threat.

3 For the risk of racism and discrimination, the threat of civil war and political violence, and the risk of a breakdown of democracy, South Africa has the highest index scores of any country surveyed.

71% of South African respondents perceive rising inequality as an imminent threat.

Data and illustration: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference

Selected Highlights from the Munich Security Index 2022

Since the last wave of research on risk perceptions in February and March 2021, concern about risk has grown among G7 and BRICS countries. Against that backdrop, which patterns of change and consistencies stand out regarding respondents' views about who or what poses a risk?

As at the beginning of 2021, we asked people to evaluate other countries as allies or threats (Figure 1.9). The pattern of diverse risk perceptions in non-Western countries that were evident in the last wave of research is still apparent; however, it appears that fragmentation in the West – another finding from early 2021 – has somewhat decreased. While Italy still has more favorable views of China and Russia than the United States, Canada, and its European peers, the differences in risk perception have decreased. Italian respondents now seem more risk-aware of Russia and China than they were about nine months ago. When looking at changes in threat perception among all 12 countries surveyed and among countries who are members of NATO (Figure 1.10), several points stand out. The brutal crackdown on protests by the Belarusian regime has provoked the largest deterioration in risk perception across all countries. Interestingly, among NATO countries, views of Hungary and Poland have also worsened significantly. This deterioration is likely linked to growing assaults on the rule of law in both countries. Globally, there has been a substantial decrease in the extent to which countries view the United States as a risk – likely the lagged effect of the new US administration, which came into office in early 2021.

Figure 1.9
Citizens' perceptions of other countries, share saying country is an ally minus share saying country is a threat, November 2021, percent

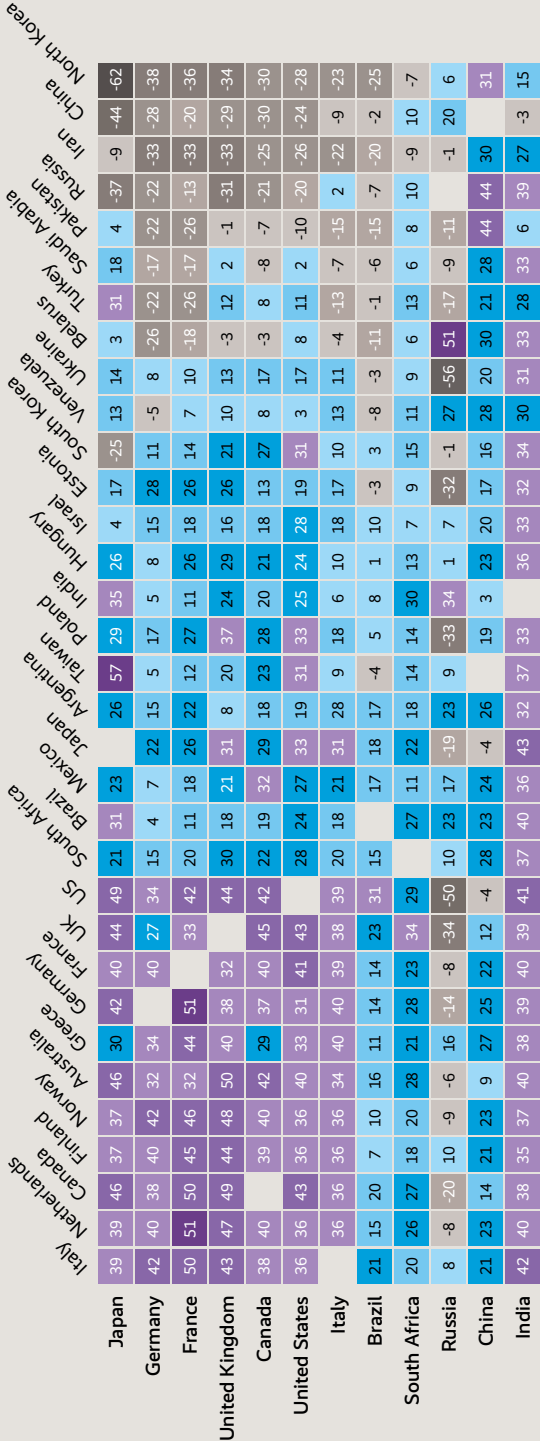


Figure 1.10

Perceptions of other countries as threats or allies, change between February/March and November 2021

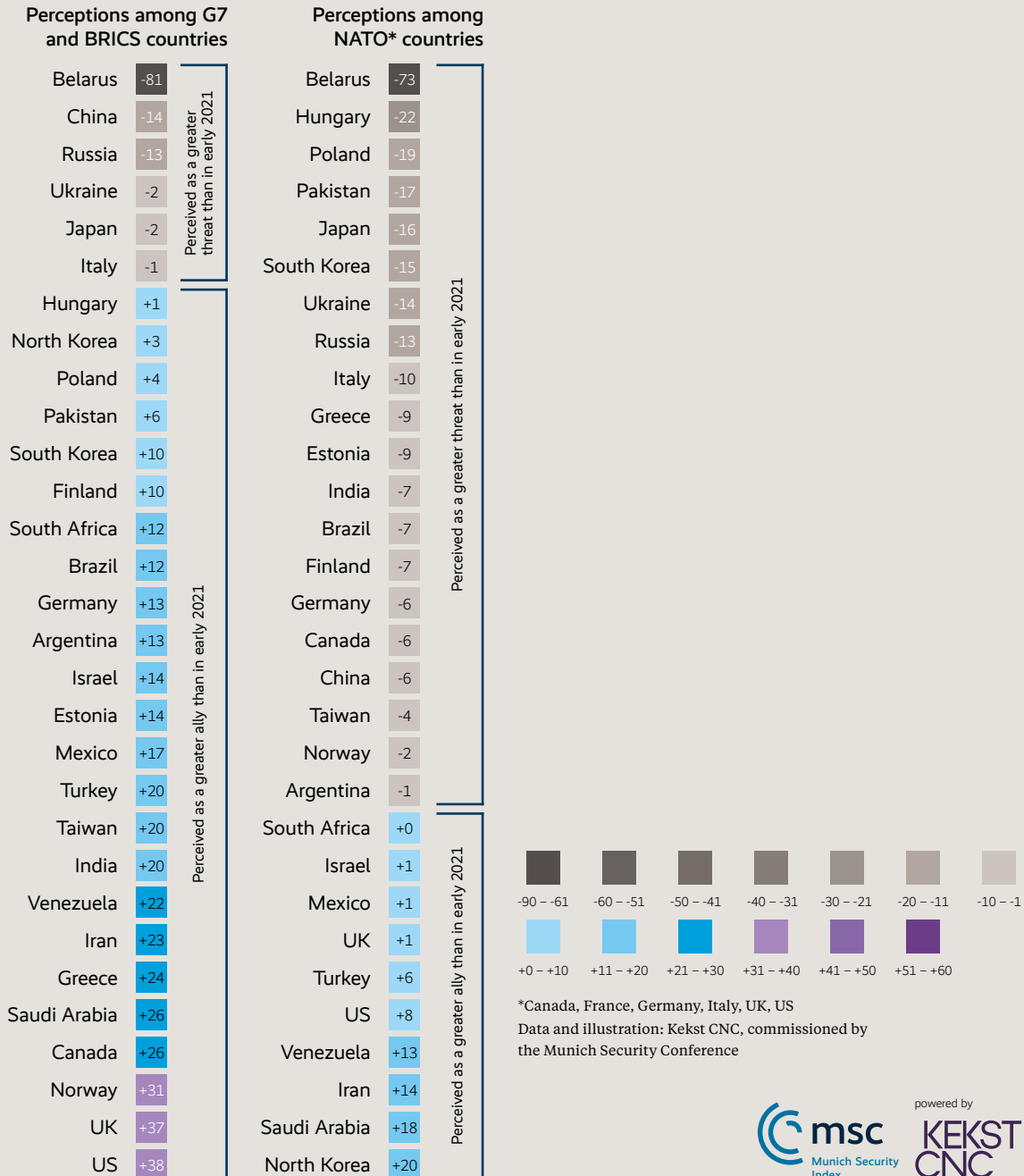
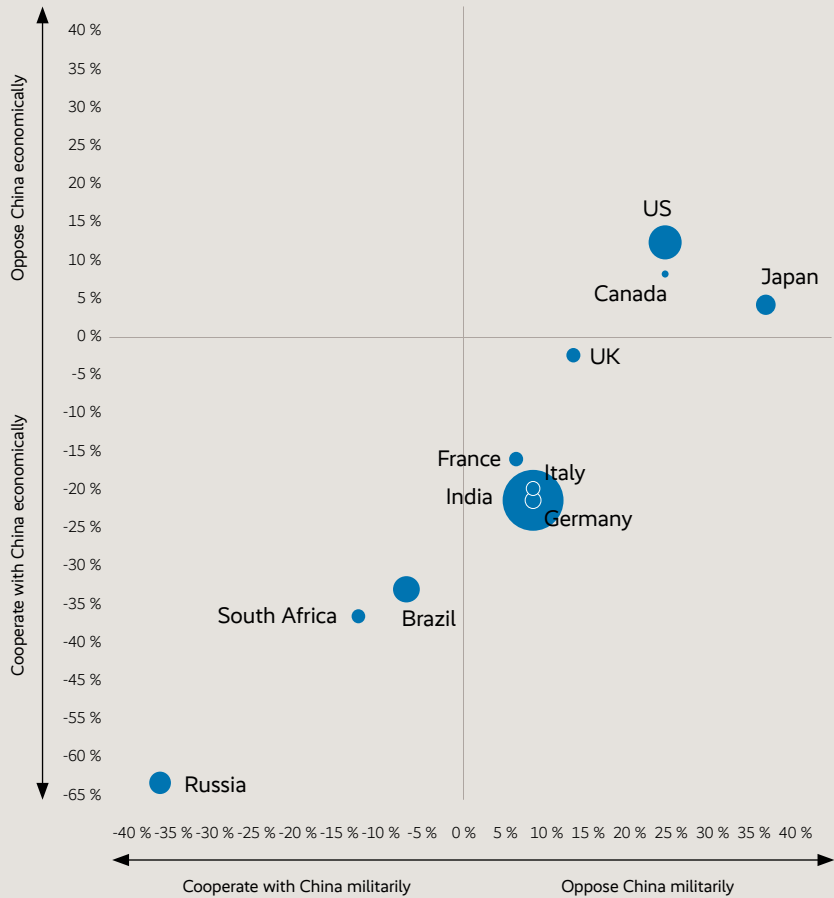


Figure 1.11

Citizens' preferences for their country's response to the rise of China, share saying that their country should oppose China minus share saying that their country should cooperate with China, November 2021, percent

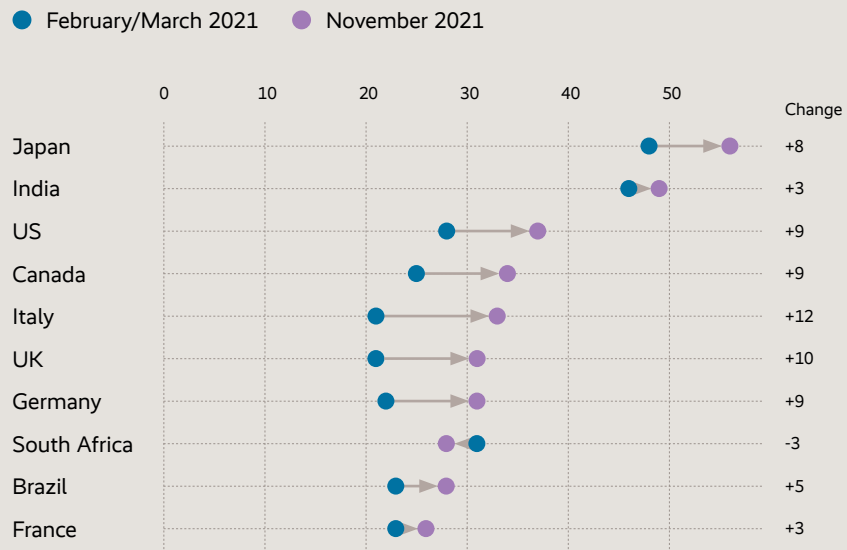
● Size of circles = size of population



Data: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference.
Illustration: Munich Security Conference

Figure 1.12

Citizens' views on China invading Taiwan, share saying risk is high, February/March and November 2021, percent



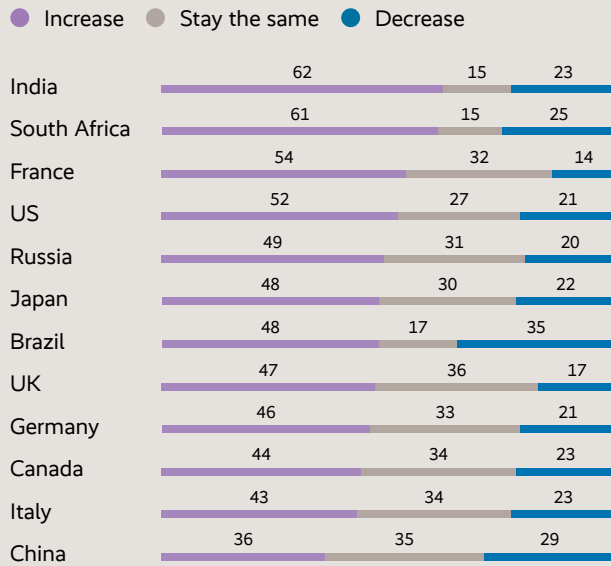
Data: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference.
Illustration: Munich Security Conference



When it comes to people's views on the best approach for dealing with China (Figure 1.11), little has changed since the last wave of research. It is still only respondents from Canada, Japan, and the United States, who are willing to oppose China economically. In contrast, respondents from European and BRICS countries continue to express reluctance. A country-specific risk that many perceive has recently grown is the risk of China invading Taiwan (Figure 1.12). Given growing threats from China, the share of respondents who think that an invasion of Taiwan poses a high risk to the world has increased substantially since early 2021.

Figure 1.13

Citizens' expectations about the risk posed by the coronavirus pandemic, November 2021, percent



How do you think the risk to your country posed by the Covid-19 pandemic will change in the next year?

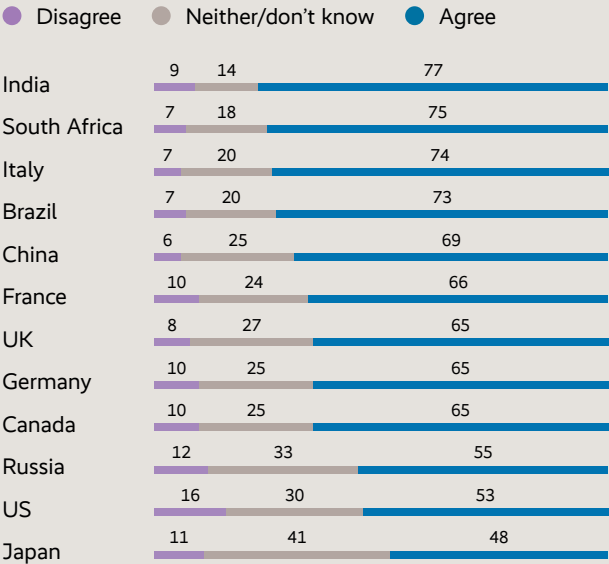
Data: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference.
Illustration: Munich Security Conference



On issue-specific risks, both changes and continuities are evident. According to the 12 countries surveyed, the risk of the coronavirus pandemic – although still high on everyone's risk ranking – has somewhat decreased. Clearly, respondents were not yet (or barely) affected by the Delta and Omicron variants during the polling. Yet, when asked how the risk Covid-19 poses to their country might change in the next year, most respondents in G7 and BRICS countries stated they expect the risk to increase (Figure 1.13). In China, which is holding on to a costly zero-Covid strategy that the government promotes with self-confident messaging, risk perceptions were lowest. However, existing concerns that China's approach may leave it less prepared for new variants are likely less present in Chinese public discourse.

Figure 1.14
Citizens' support for binding net zero emission targets,
November 2021, percent

Do you agree or disagree
that states should agree
to binding targets to
get to net zero CO₂
emissions?



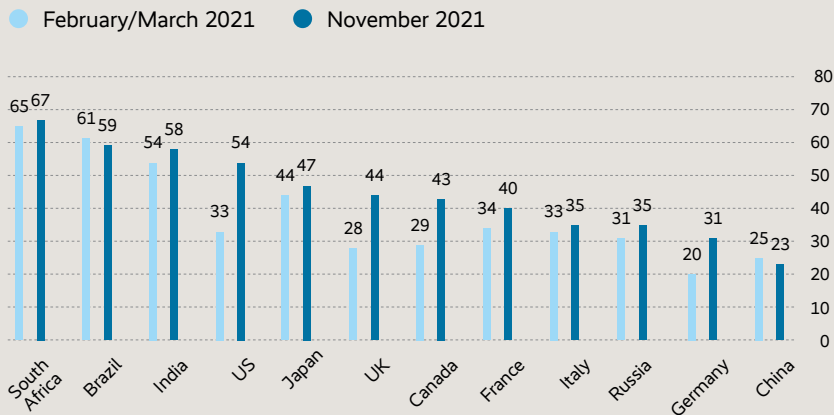
Data: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the
Munich Security Conference.
Illustration: Munich Security Conference



Countries' worries about climate change, already a top concern during the last wave of research, has grown even further. Possibly linked to this, the support for binding net-zero emission targets, which was already strong in early 2021, has increased even more (Figure 1.14). However, given that distrust in other countries meeting their climate change obligations has also grown (Figure 1.4), this finding must be taken with a grain of salt.

Figure 1.15

Citizens' assessments of food shortages, share saying risk will increase, February/March and November 2021, percent



Data: Kekst CNC, commissioned by the Munich Security Conference.
Illustration: Munich Security Conference



A risk that has seen the most significant increase in concern since early 2021 is food shortages (Figure 1.15). This may well be the result of the Covid-19 pandemic accentuating the vulnerability of supply chains while also having increased food insecurity in many – even highly developed – parts of the world. In Western countries, the share of people who expect food shortages in their country to increase in the next year has risen significantly since the last wave of research. Brazil, India, and South Africa have also remained at very high levels.

List of Figures

Possible deviations from a total of 100 percent in visualized data result from rounding.

Explaining the Index

1. The answer scale is reversed to account for the natural direction of time. More imminent being sooner is closer on our answer scale and less imminent being later is further away on our answer scale, but we in fact want to give a higher score to risks that are more imminent – hence we reverse.
2. The answer scale is reversed because higher answer scores for each of the five inputs should be associated with more serious risk. Without rescaling, it is exactly the reverse: high answer scores are associated with high risk preparedness and thus with less serious risk.

Selected Highlights from the Munich Security Index 2022

1.9 Citizens' perceptions of other countries, share saying country is an ally minus share saying country is a threat, November 2021, percent

Data and illustration provided to the Munich Security Conference by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “For each country/jurisdiction below, please say whether you think they pose a threat or are an ally to your country or neither [0–10, where 0 is ‘threat,’ 5 is neither, and 10 is ‘ally’].” The scores run from a potential -100 (if 100 percent of a population said that x was a threat) to +100 (if 100 percent of a population said that x was an ally).

1.10 Perceptions of other countries as threats or allies, change between February/March and November 2021

Data and illustration provided to the Munich Security Conference by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “For each country/jurisdiction below, please say whether you think they pose a threat or are an ally to your country or neither [0–10, where 0 is ‘threat,’ 5 is neither, and 10 is ‘ally’].” “NATO” comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US. Fieldwork for the previous Munich Security Index, published in the Munich Security Report 2021 and used as a reference point here, took place between February 17 and March 17, 2021.

1.11 Citizens' preferences for their country's response to the rise of China, share saying that their country should oppose China minus share saying that their country should cooperate with China, November 2021, percent

Illustration by the Munich Security Conference based on data provided by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “What do you think your country should do in response to the rise of China as a military and economic power?” Respondents were given the following options: “fully cooperate with China,” “somewhat cooperate with China,” “stay neutral,” “somewhat oppose China,” “fully oppose China,” and “don't know.” Figures shown are the net of the total percentage for “oppose” minus the total

percentage for “cooperate.”

1.12 Citizens' views on China invading Taiwan, share saying risk is high, February/March and November 2021, percent

Illustration by the Munich Security Conference based on data provided by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “Here are some specific risks. How great a risk do the following things pose to the world? China invading Taiwan [on a 0–10 scale, where 0 is a ‘very low’ and 10 is a ‘very high’ risk]?” The figure indicates the percentage of respondents who think the risk is greater than 6 out of 10. Fieldwork for the previous Munich Security Index, published in the Munich Security Report 2021 and used as a reference point here, took place between February 17 and March 17, 2021.

1.13 Citizens' expectations about the risk posed by the coronavirus pandemic, November 2021, percent

Illustration by the Munich Security Conference based on data provided by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “Please say for each of the following whether you think the risk posed in your country will increase, decrease, or stay the same in the next year: the coronavirus pandemic.” Respondents were given the following options: “increase a lot,” “increase a little,” “stay the same,” “decrease a little,” and “decrease a lot.” Figures shown here are the net of the total percentage for “increase” and the net of the total percentage for “decrease,” with the gray area representing the rest.

1.14 Citizens' support for binding net zero emission targets, November 2021, percent

Illustration by the Munich Security Conference based on data provided by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your country and climate change? We should agree to binding targets to get to net zero CO₂ emissions.” Respondents were given the following options: “strongly agree,” “slightly agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “strongly disagree,” and “don’t know.” Figures shown here combine the net responses agreeing and disagreeing, with the gray area representing the rest.

1.15 Citizens' assessments of food shortages, share saying risk will increase, February/March and November 2021, percent

Illustration by the Munich Security Conference based on data provided by Kekst CNC. In answer to the question “Please say for each of the following whether you think the risk posed in your country will increase, decrease, or stay the same in the next year: food shortages.” Respondents were given the following options: “increase a lot,” “increase a little,” “stay the same,” “decrease a little,” and “decrease a lot.” Figures shown are the aggregate of “increase a lot” and “increase a little.” Fieldwork for the previous Munich Security Index, published in the Munich Security Report 2021 and used as a reference point here, took place between February 17 and March 17, 2021.