

# How foreign actors influence the political crisis in Belarus: a survey among Belarusian protesters

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The survey was conducted on Nov 26-28, 2020 among respondents previously recruited by the initiative National Poll (Народный Опрос)

The survey was conducted on Nov 26-28, 2020 among respondents the initiative National Poll (Народный Опрос) had recruited for its prior studies. The study participants were active citizens who were taking part in the protests at the time of the research.

They are mostly under 50 years old (31-40 y/o – 40%, 41-50 y/o – 23%, 18-30 y/o – 20%), tend to have university degrees (78%) and to reside in the capital city of Minsk (56%), while men somewhat prevail among them (51%). Most of the surveyed respondents were actively following the news about the Belarusian protests (89%), positively evaluated them (99%), and had protested themselves at least once [in the summer 2020] (97%).

The respondents were randomly assigned to experimental groups to receive one of 9 scenarios, including the “base case” scenario, describing how foreign actors could influence the situation in Belarus. After the collected data had been cleaned, responses from 9160 participants, roughly equally distributed across the scenarios, were used for the analysis.

# Key takeaways

- Respondents are most likely to protest in the scenarios when the EU imposes harsh political or economic sanctions against the Belarusian regime or when Russia supports the protest: 82.3%, 79.8%, and 78%, respectively.
- These scenarios also make respondents believe that Lukashenko will step down soon: 38.5%, 40%, and 58.1%, respectively.
- The scenarios of harsh EU sanctions look much more realistic to respondents, as compared to Russia's support for the protests.
- Respondents are least likely to protest when Russia dispatches its police units to Belarus – only 69.4% in this particular scenario group; this figure rises to 73% when the EU imposes sanctions on Russia in response.
- Respondents are least likely to believe – only 20.9% in this particular scenario group – that Lukashenko will step down if Russia provides economic support for his regime.

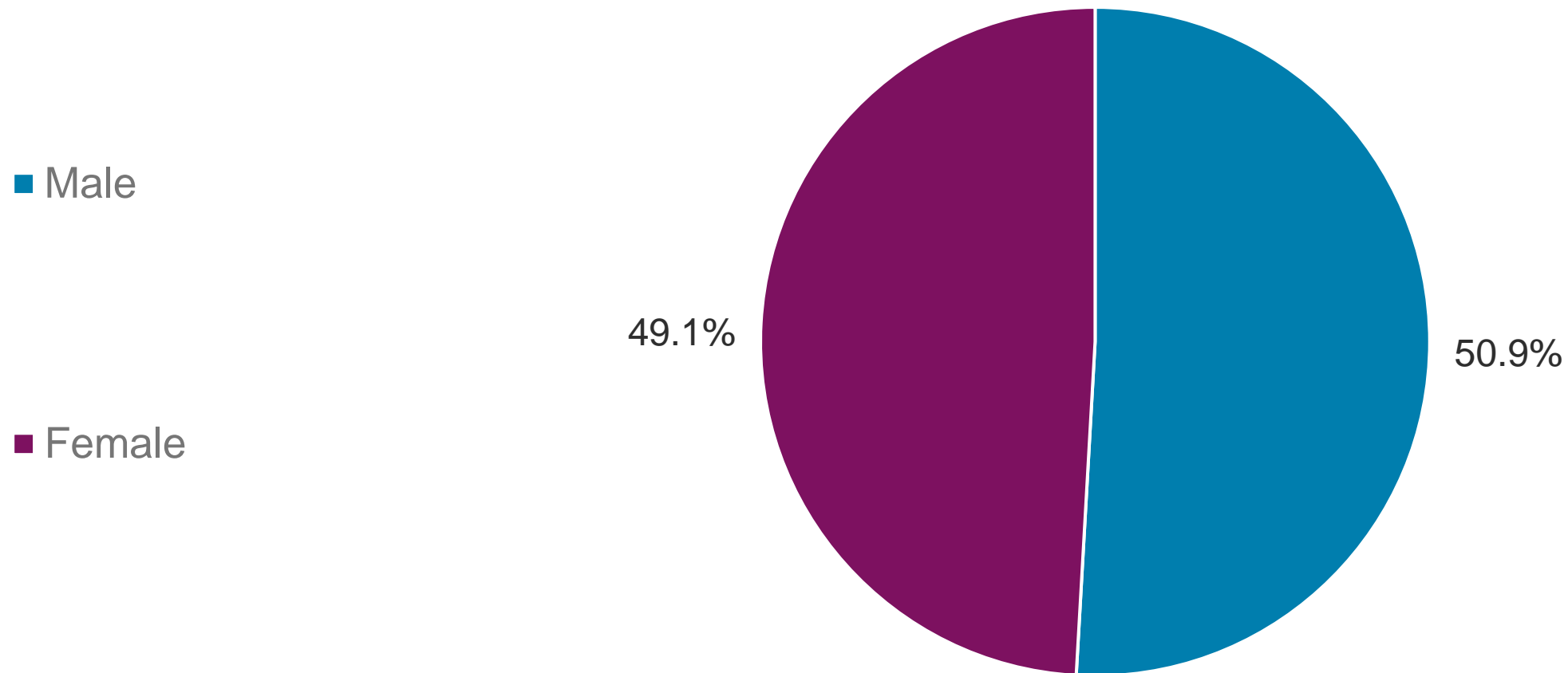
# Key takeaways (continued)

Regardless of the scenario:

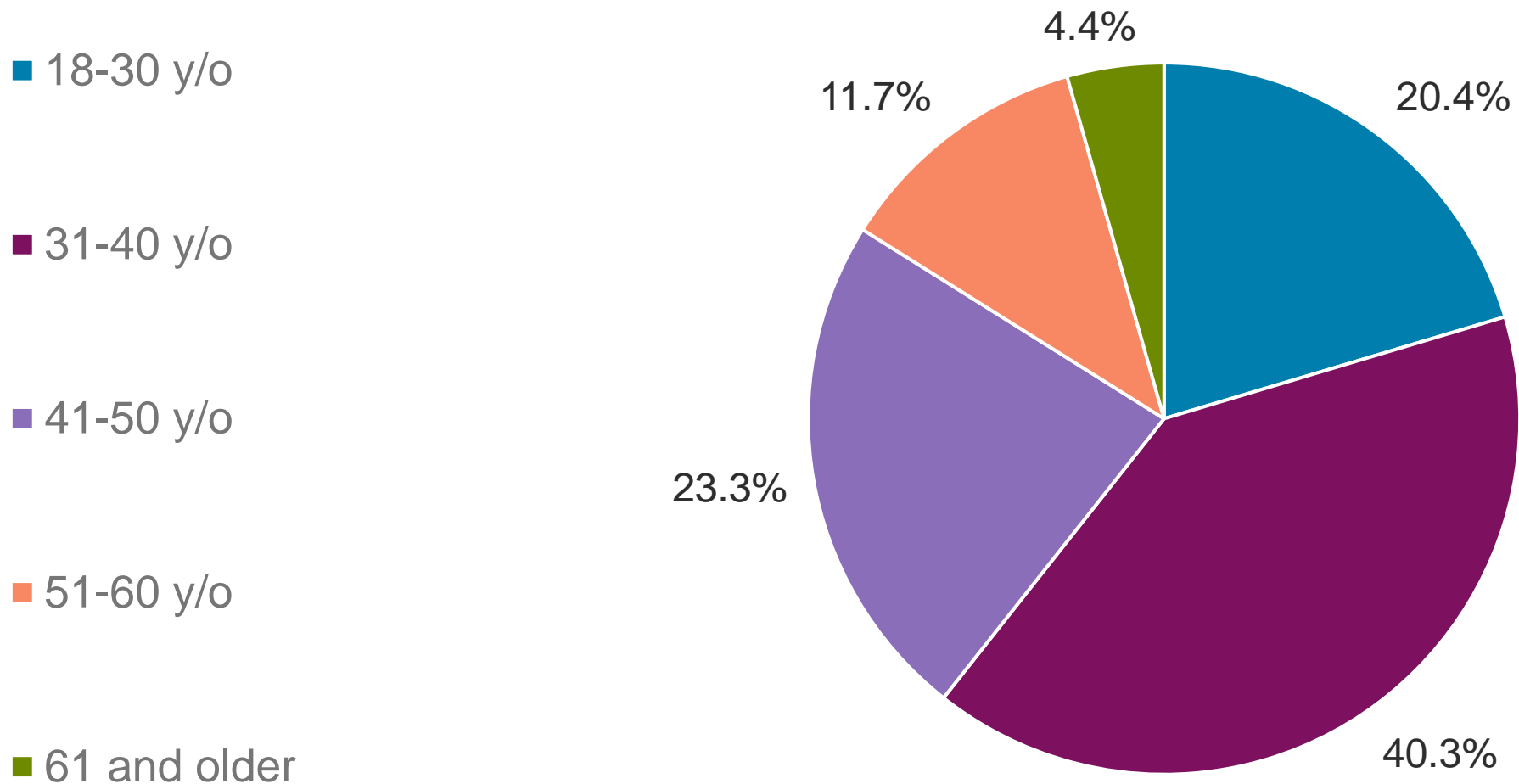
- Most respondents think that the EU and Russia will fail to reach any agreement to resolve the crisis in Belarus.
- Most regard potential splits within the ruling regime as a major source of its breakdown.
- Between around 44% and around 49% think that the EU has strong influence over the events in Belarus. The respective figure for Russia is between around 75% and around 80%.
- Between around 85% and up to around 90% believe that the EU has been sufficiently active in relation to the situation in Belarus. The respective figure for Russia ranges from 40 to 50%.
- More than 80% positively evaluate EU actions in relation to the Belarusian crisis. Meanwhile, more than 90% negatively evaluate Russia's actions in relation to the crisis.

# Respondents' general characteristics

# Gender

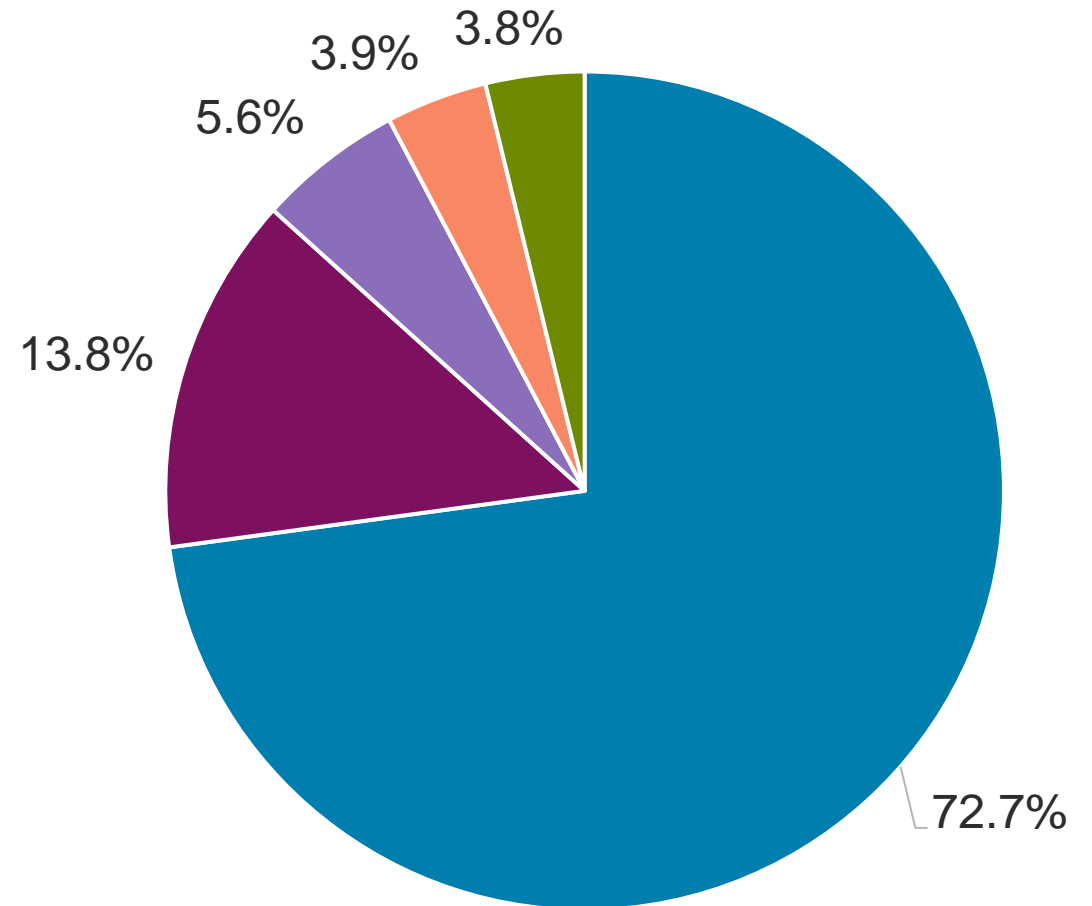


# Age



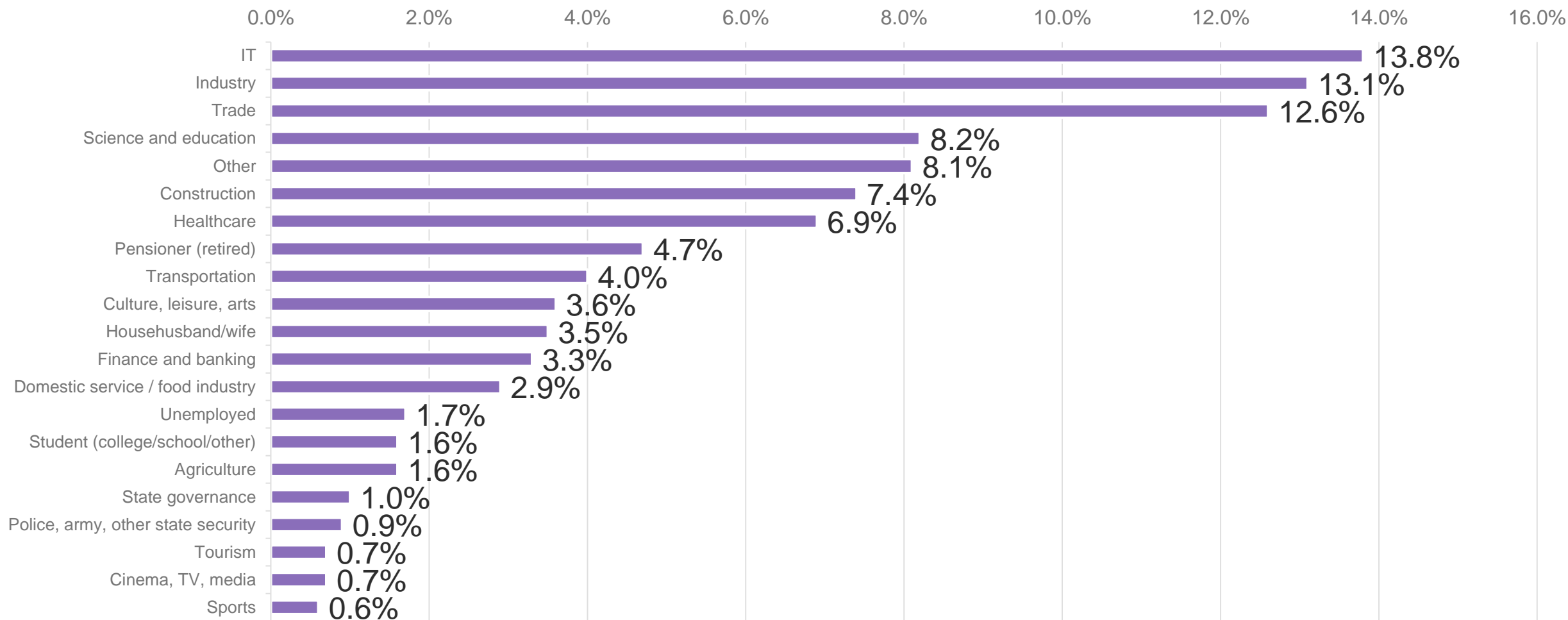
# Education

- Bachelor's or specialist degree
- Specialized post-school training (roughly equivalent to community college)
- Graduate degree
- Vocational training
- Basic general education (9 years) / secondary school (11 years)

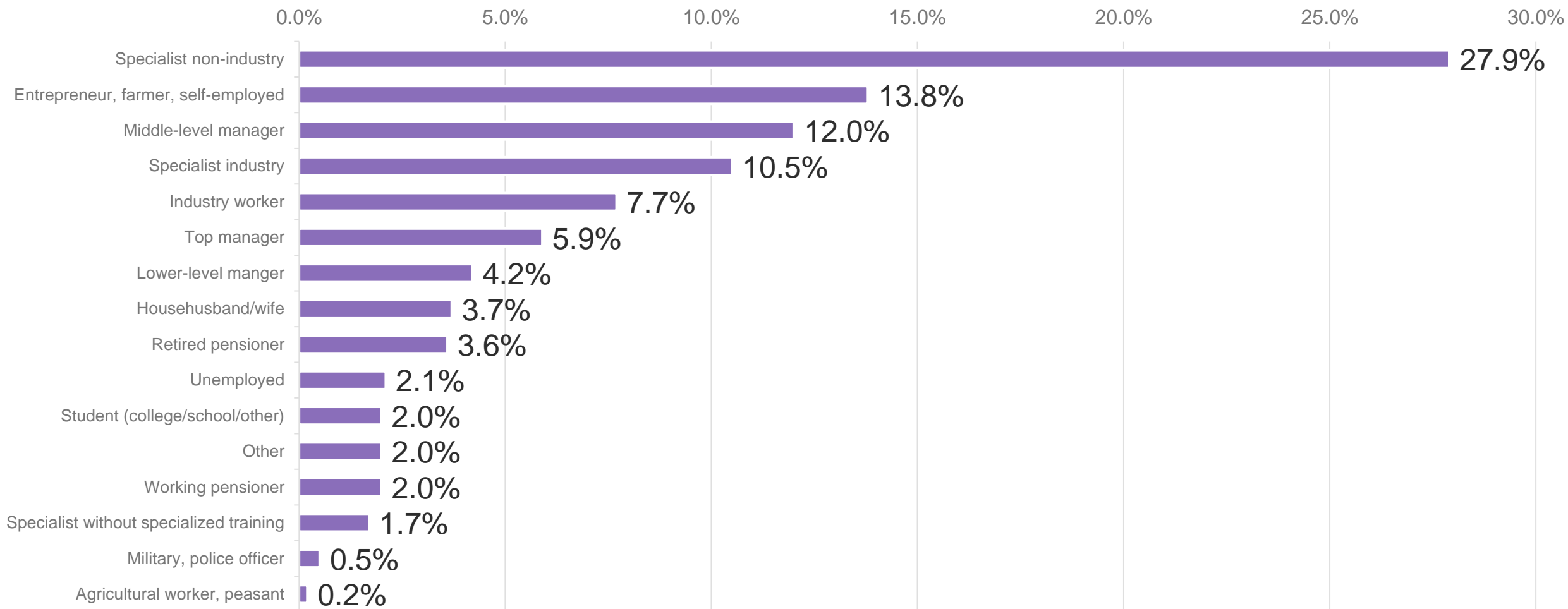




## Employment by economic sector

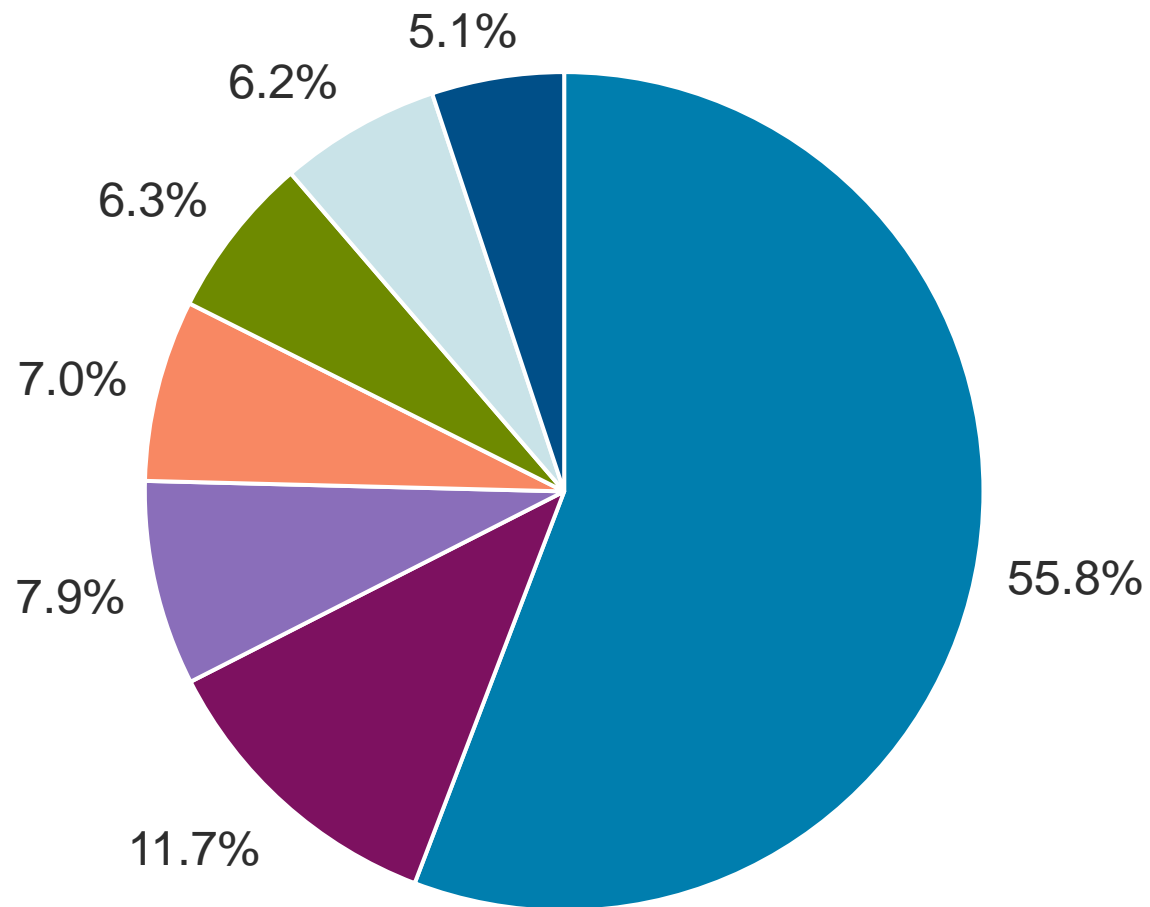


# Social status



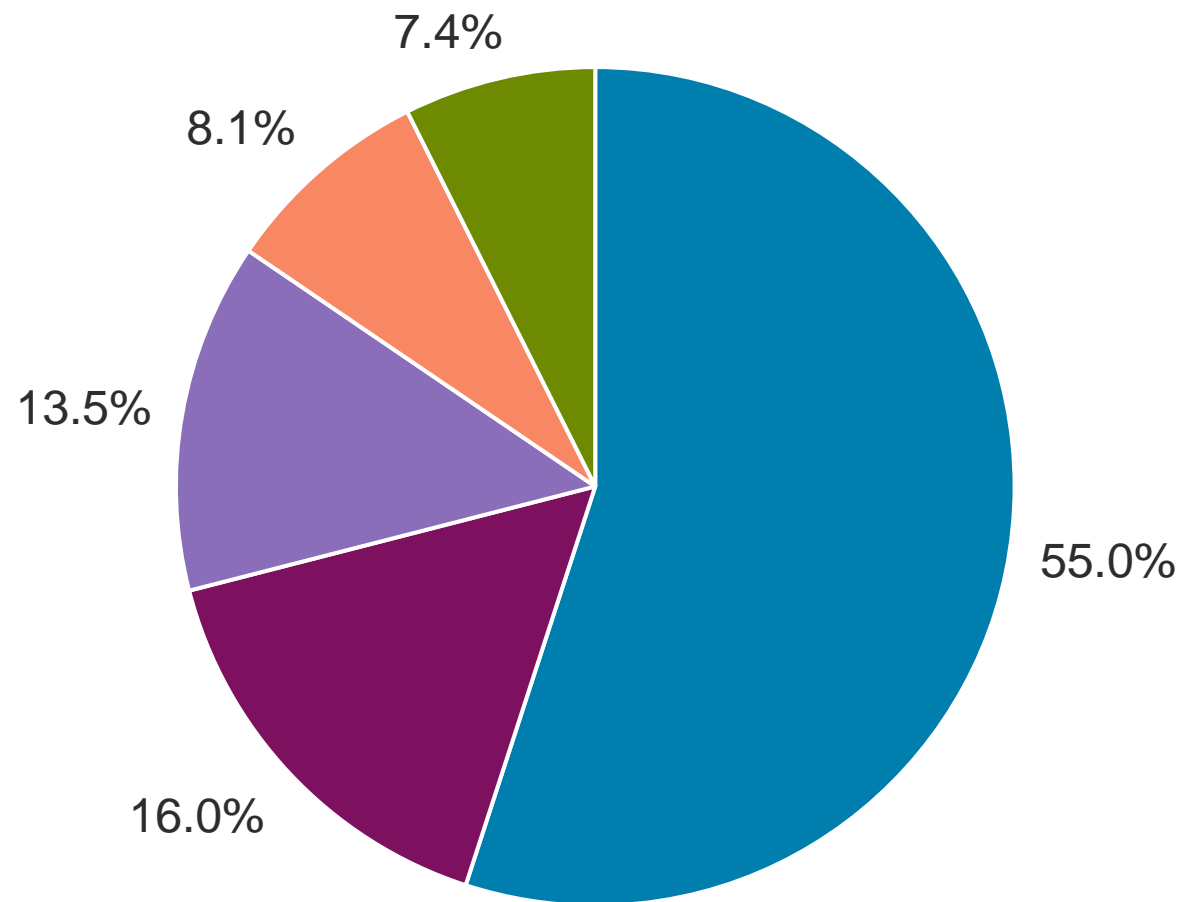
# Region

- Minsk city
- Minsk region
- Brest region
- Homel region
- Vitsebsk region
- Hrodna region
- Mahilyow region

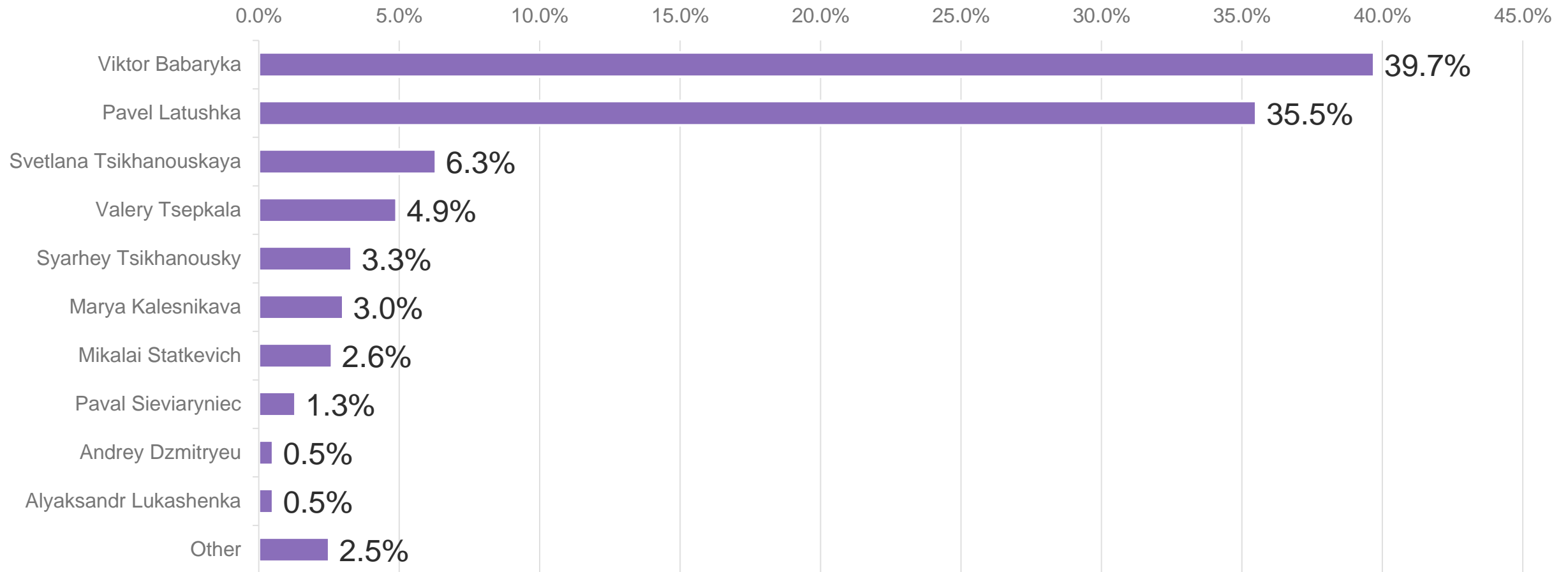


# Settlement type

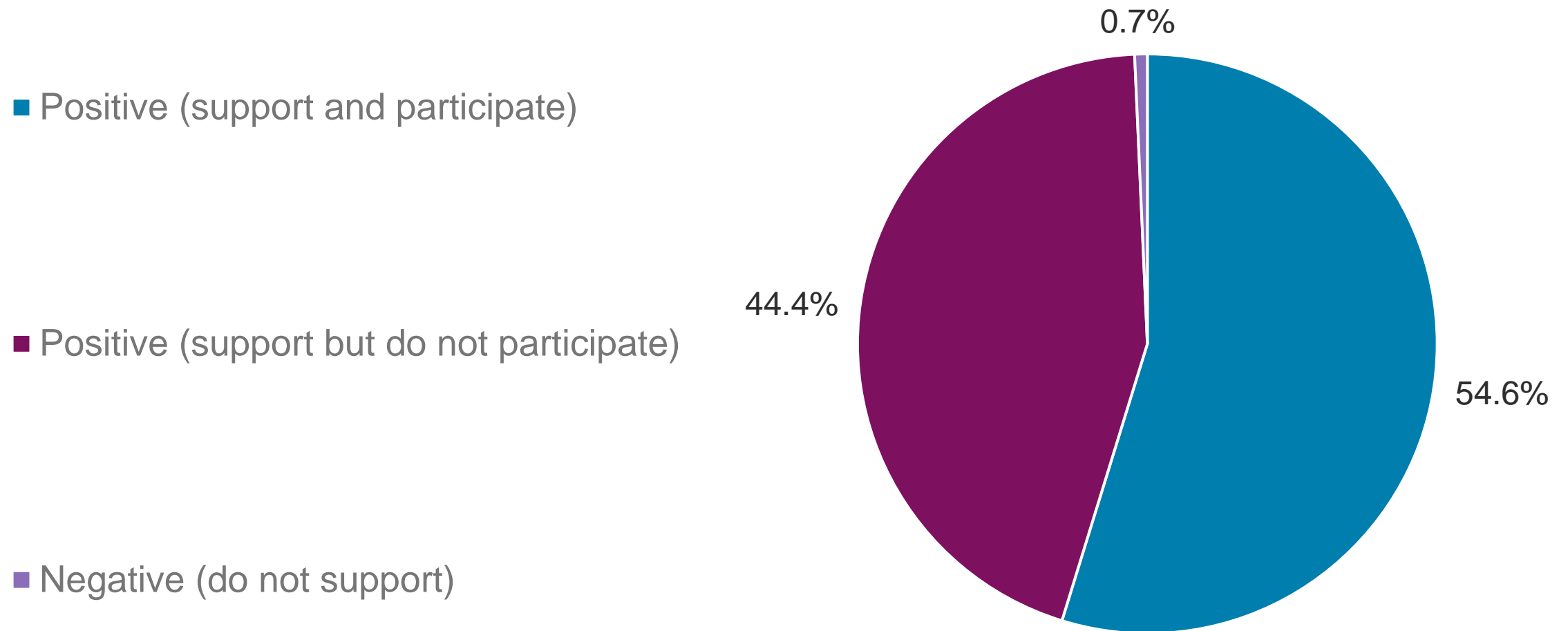
- Capital city
- Regional center
- District center
- Town, township
- Village



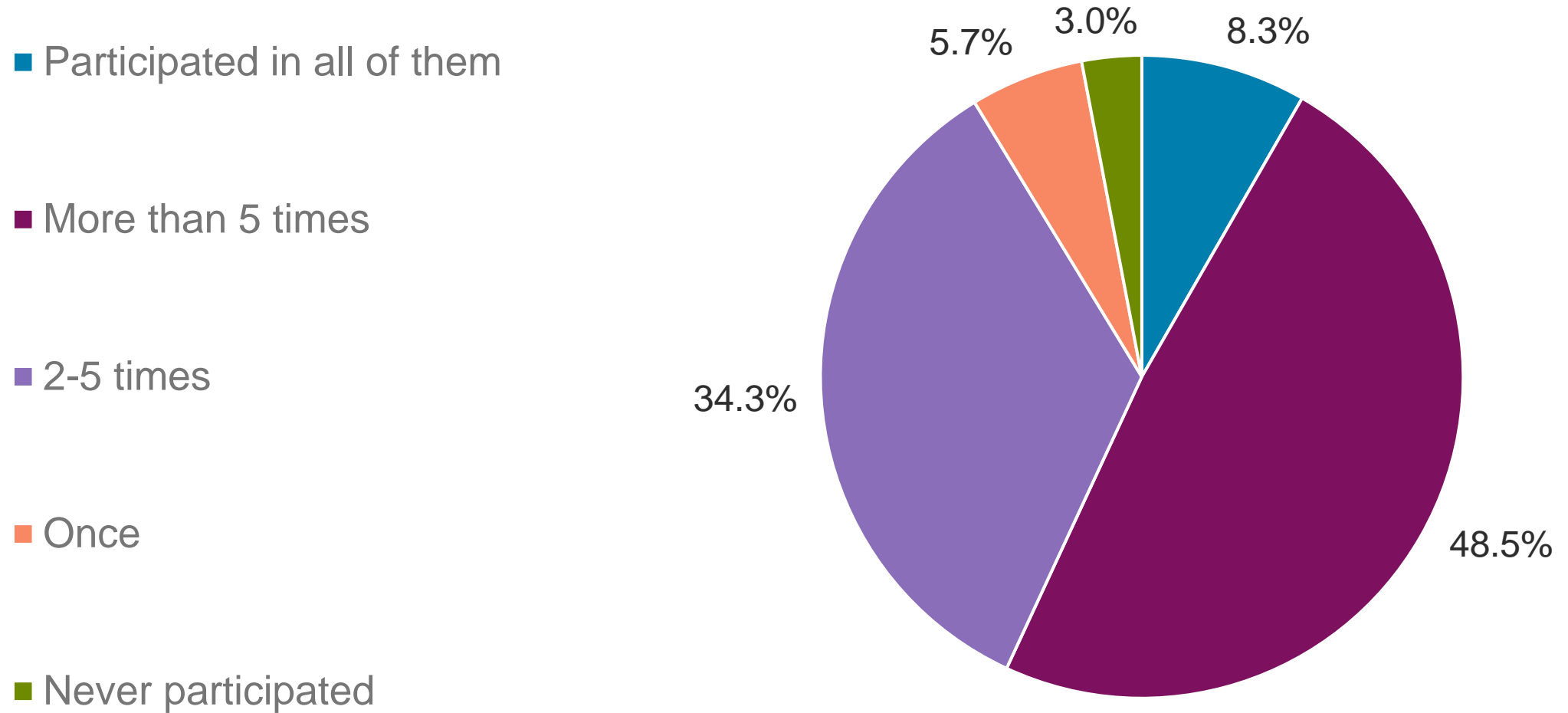
# If a new free and fair election were held in Belarus in the near future, whom would you vote for?



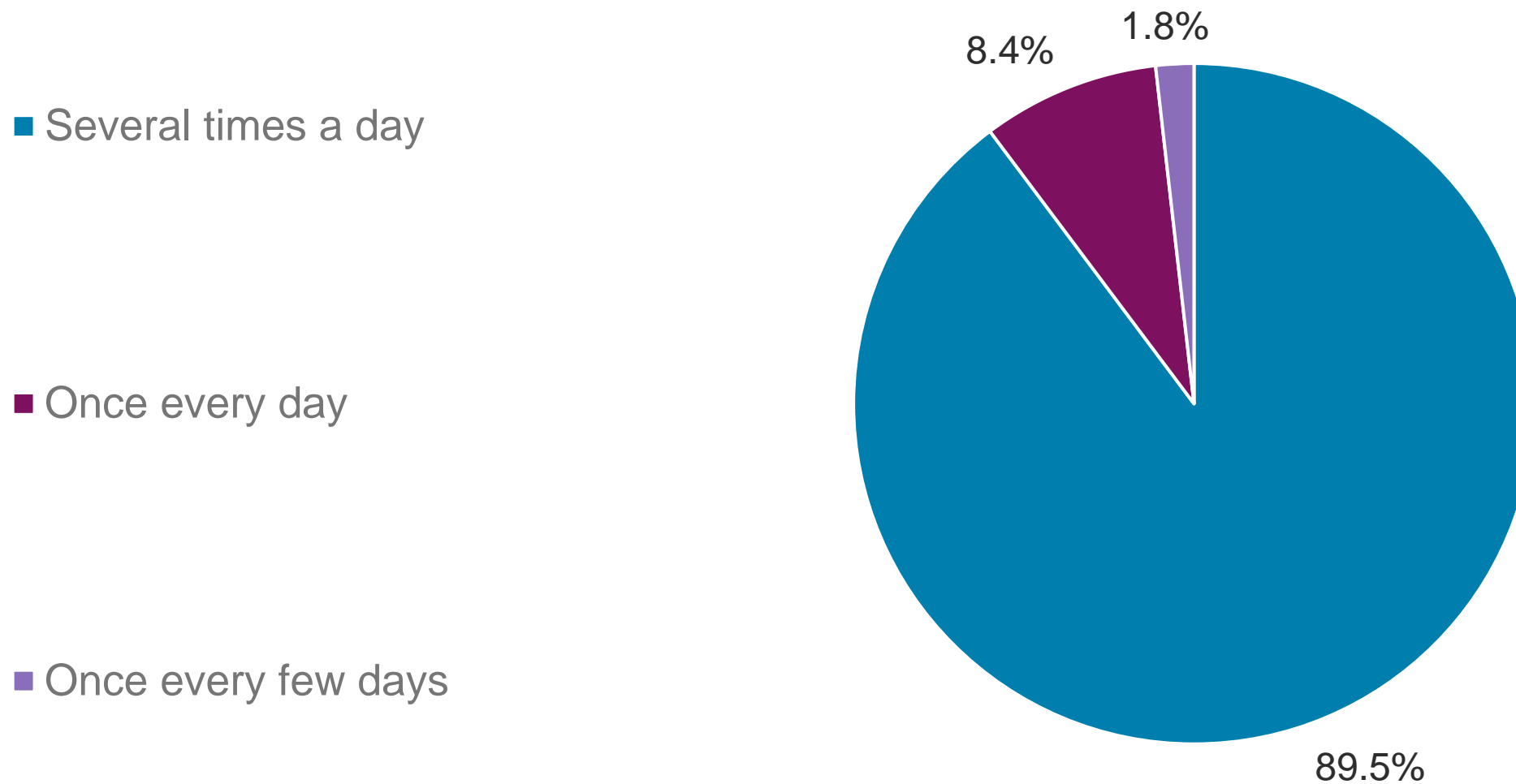
# What is your opinion of the post-election protests in Belarus?



# How many times have you participated in Sunday protest marches?



## How often do you check news about the protests in Belarus?





# Scenarios

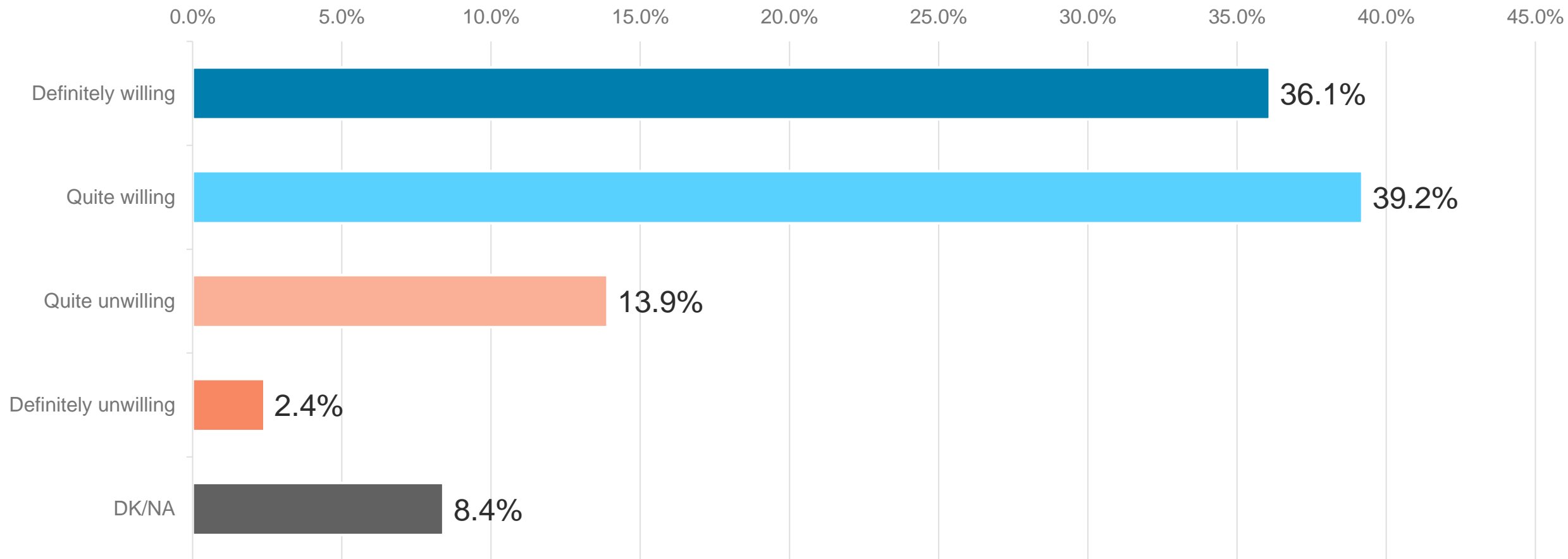
A Google form was used to conduct the survey; it contained questions that were shown to every respondent and 9 different scenario blocks, so that each respondent received only one scenario for evaluation. The “base case” scenario, where no hypothetical actions of foreign actors were described, was used only for comparison purposes. In the other eight scenarios, respondents were asked to think of hypothetical actions by Russia and/or the European Union. After that, they were asked to evaluate how protests in Belarus and the general situation in the country may develop in response to those scenarios and to answer about their own willingness to take to the streets. The responses from all nine groups were then compared to find out whether they are statistically different from each other.

## “Base case” scenario

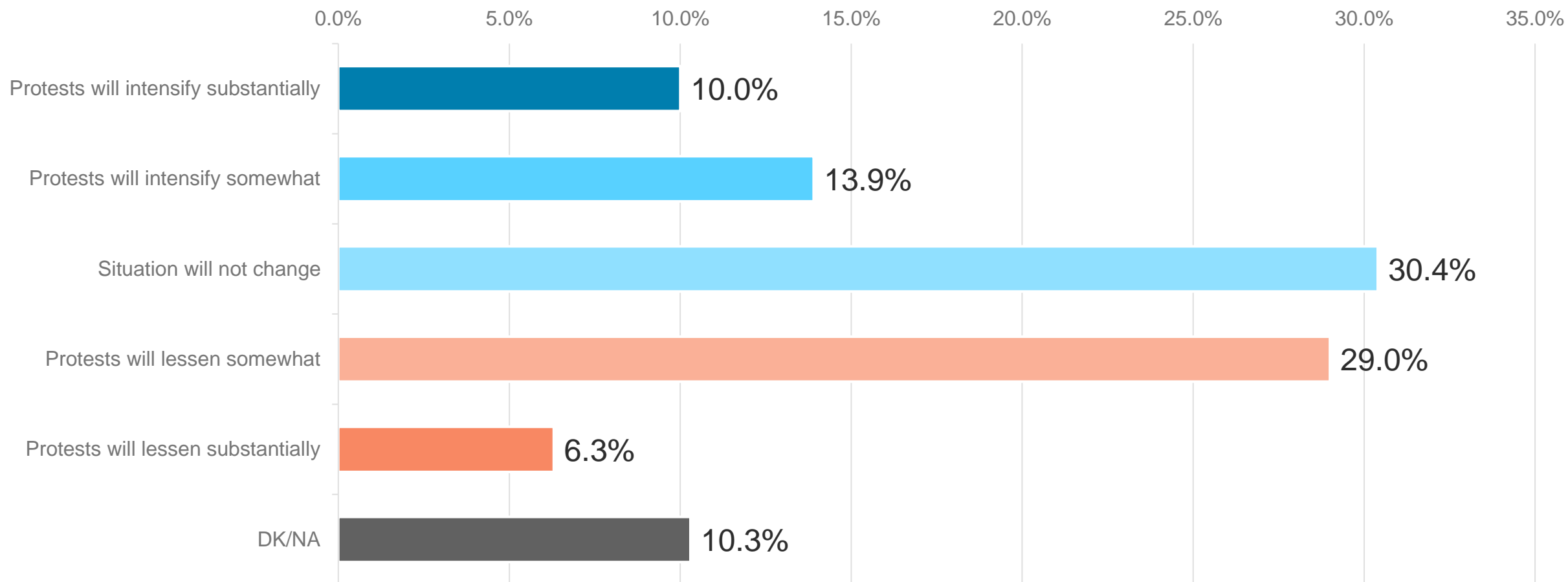
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, they are actively discussed around the world.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, их активно обсуждают в мире.]

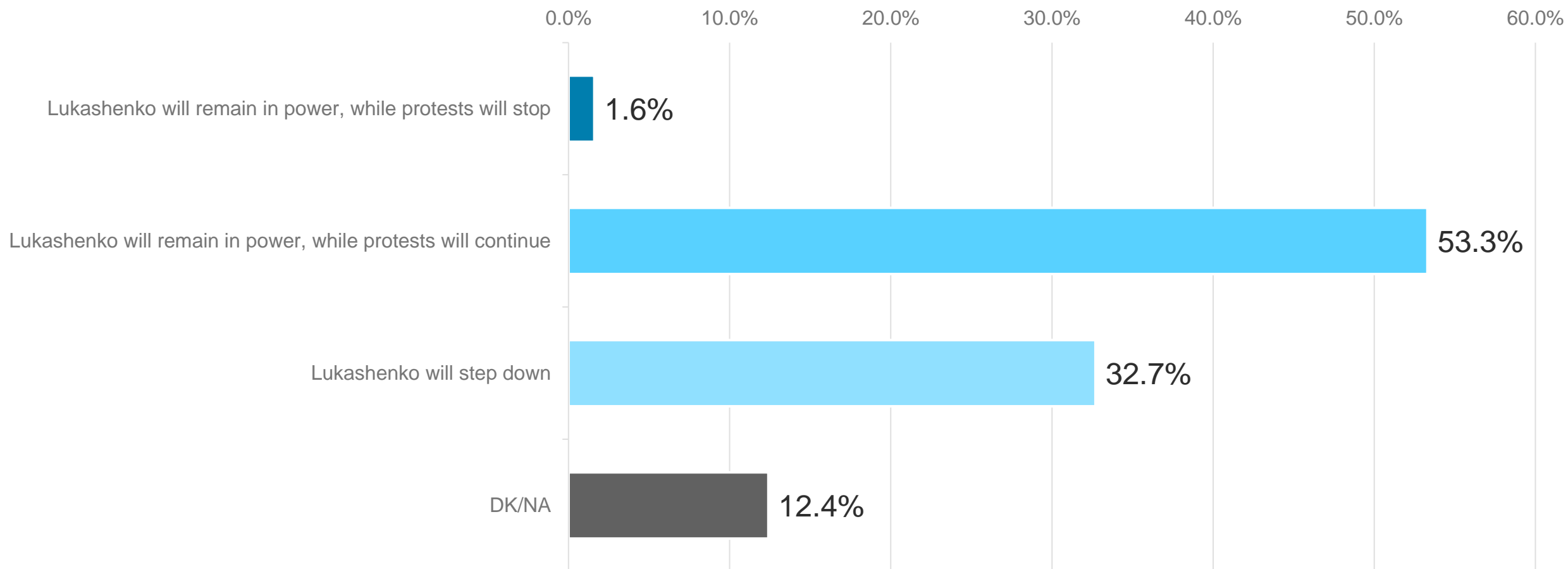
# To what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?

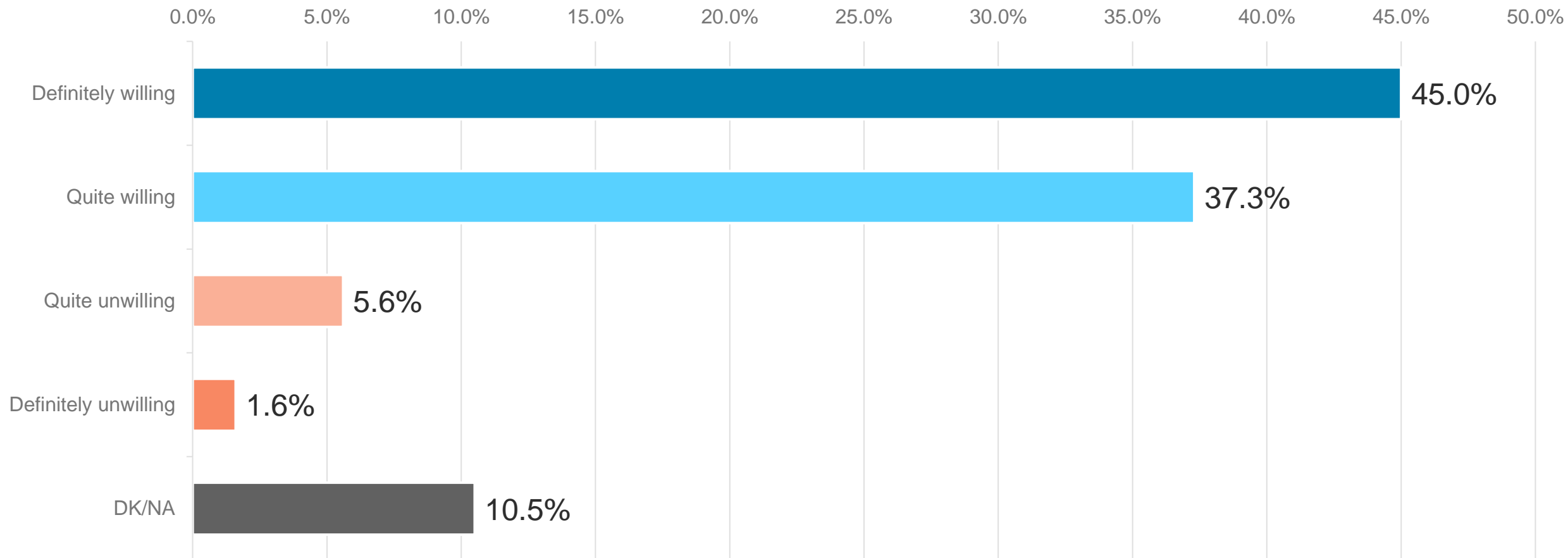


## Scenario “EU sanctions against Belarusian authorities”

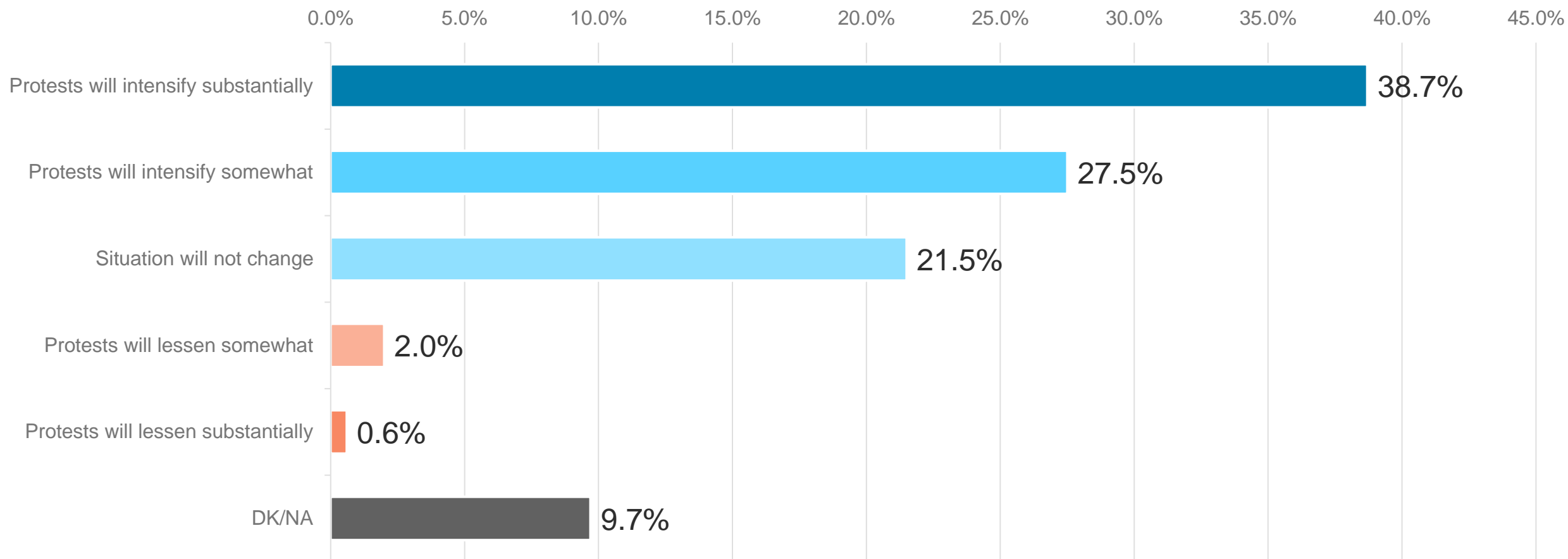
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including the European Union. Imagine that in the near future the European Union will announce that it is going to introduce harsh sanctions against Belarusian authorities, which include arrests of bank accounts of several officials. An international tribunal will be created to investigate the brutal suppression of the protests.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и в Европейский союз. Представьте, что в скором времени Европейский союз заявит о введении жестких санкций против белорусских властей, включая арест счетов чиновников. Будет создан международный трибунал для расследования жестокого подавления протестов.]

# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?

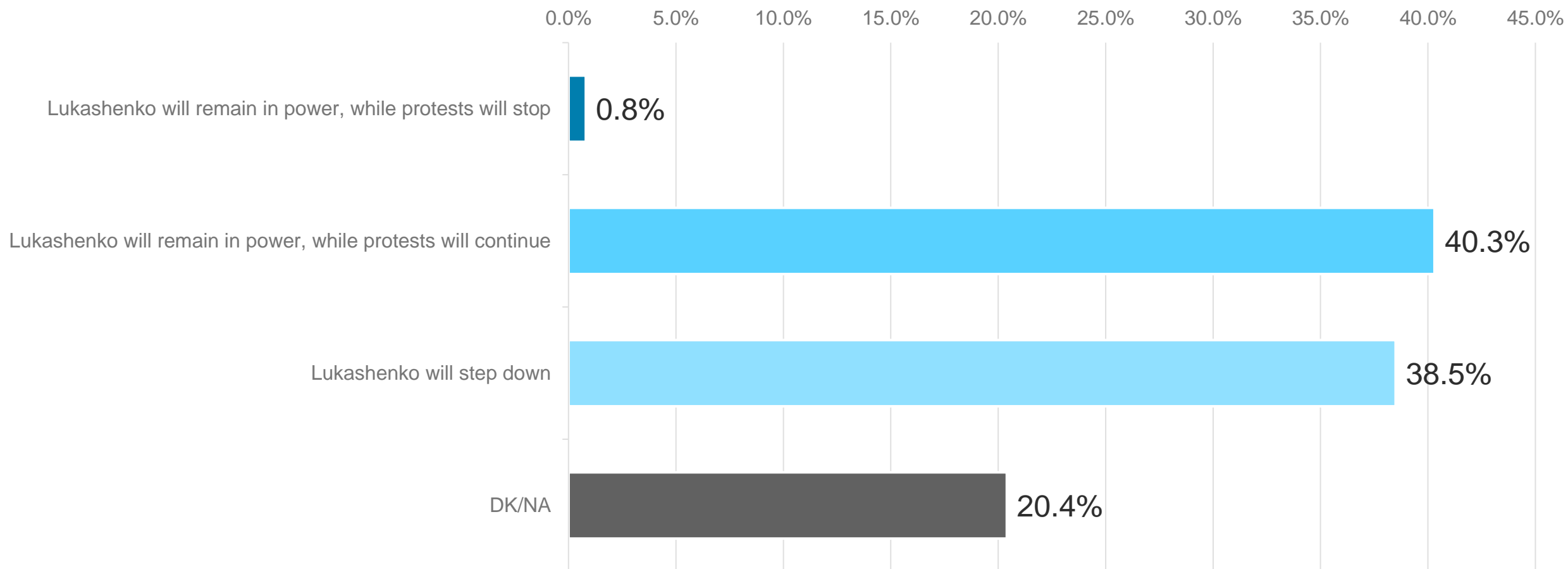


# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?

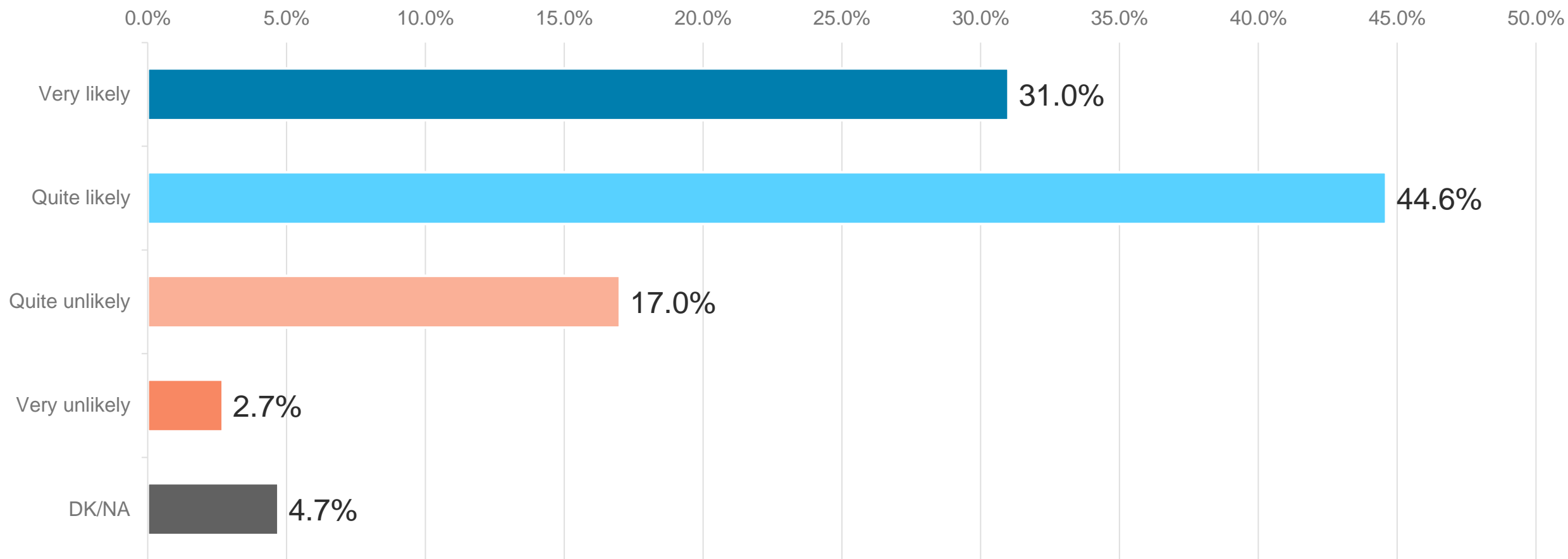




# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?

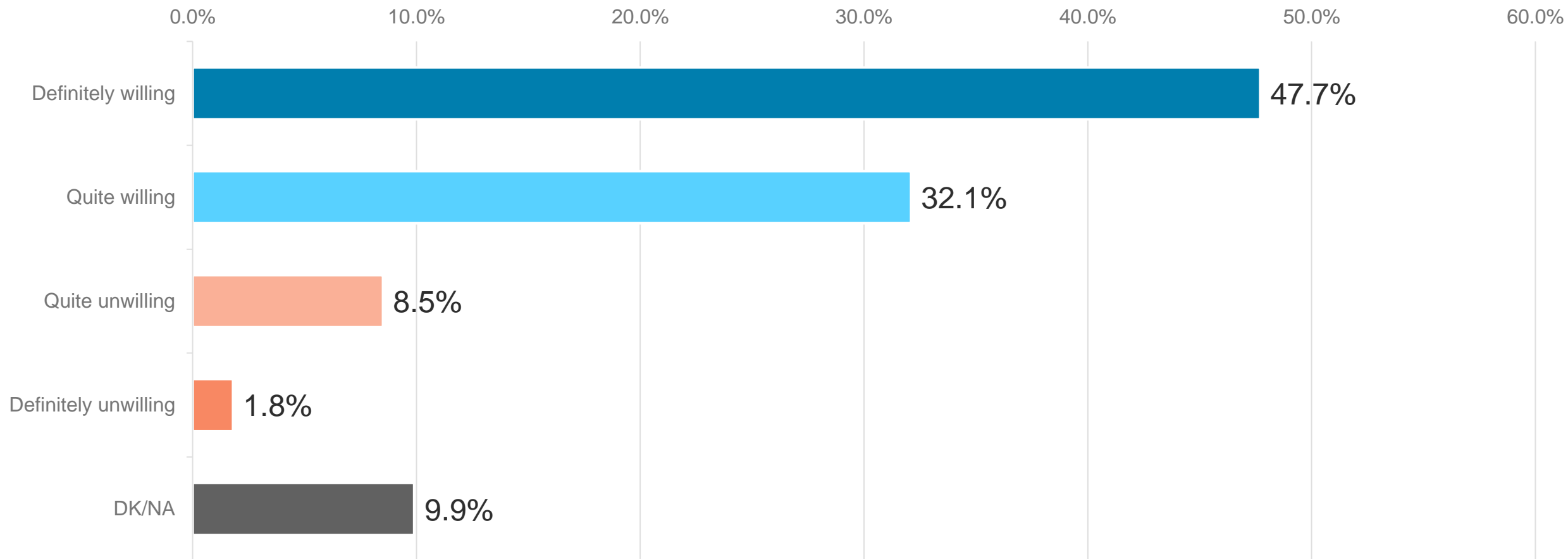


## Scenario “EU sanctions against Belarusian authorities and enterprises (factories)”

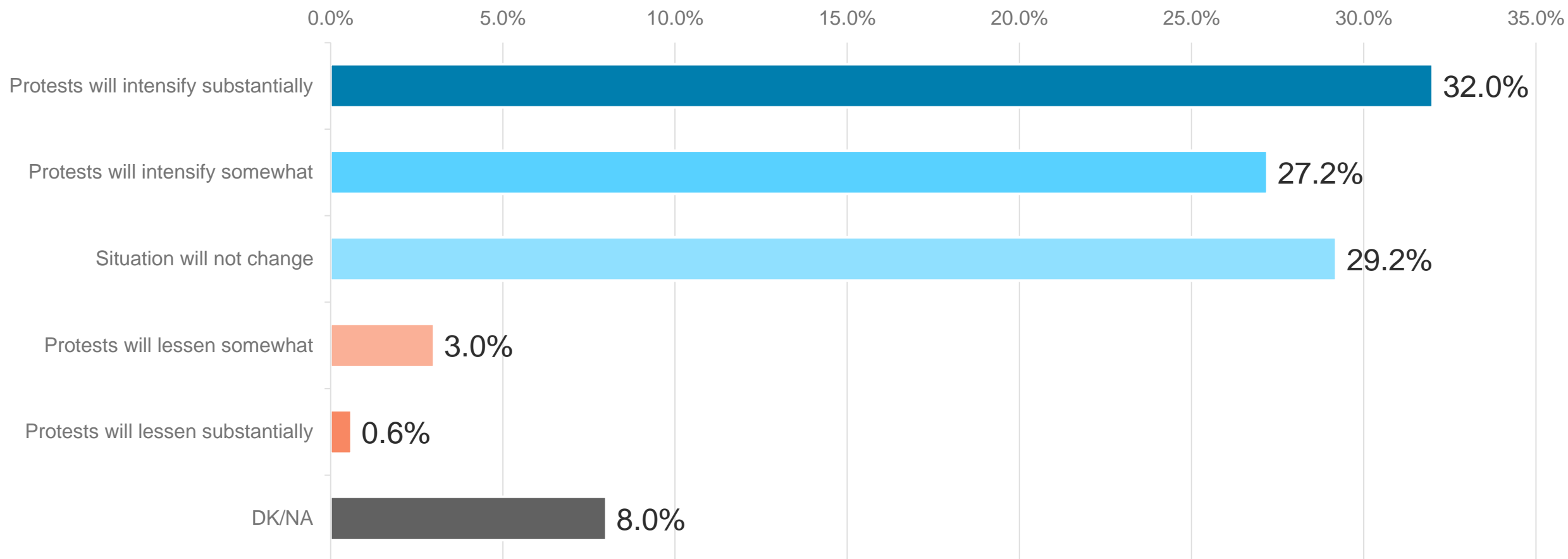
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including the European Union. Imagine that in the near future the European Union will announce that it is going to introduce harsh sanctions against Belarusian authorities and biggest enterprises controlled by the state.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и в Европейский союз. Представьте, что в скором времени Европейский союз заявит о введении жестких санкций против белорусских властей и крупнейших предприятий, подконтрольных государству.]

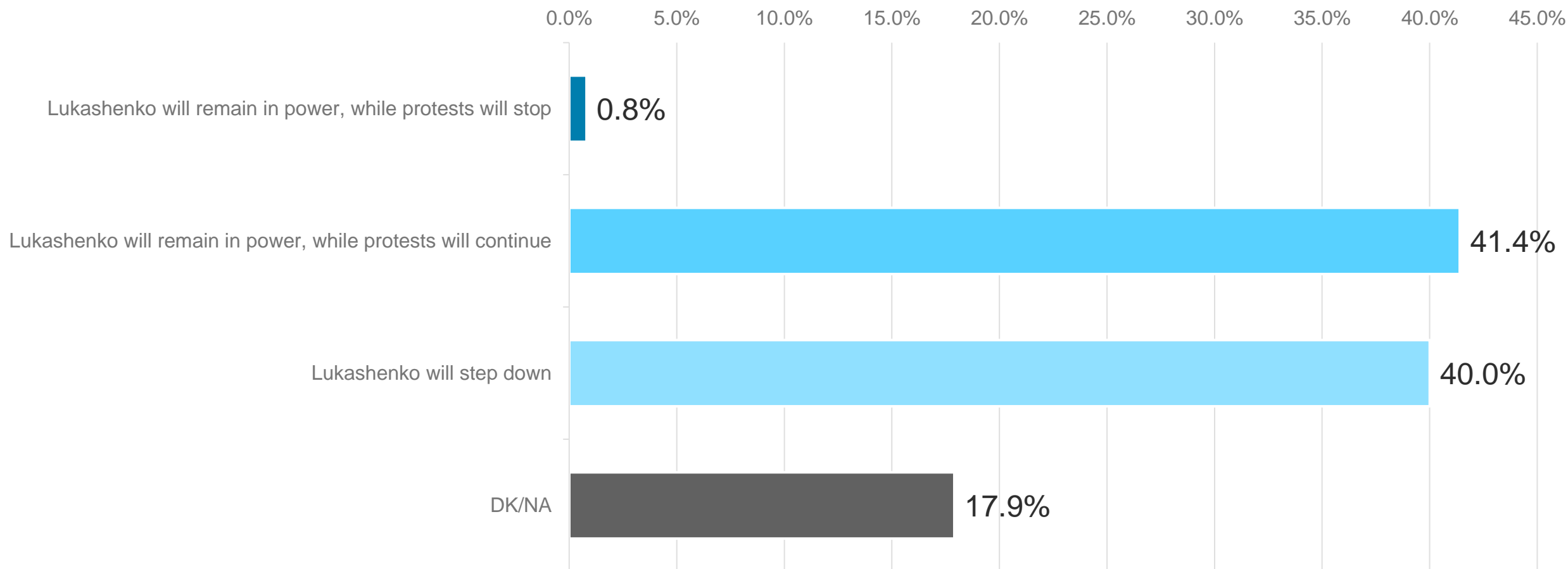
# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



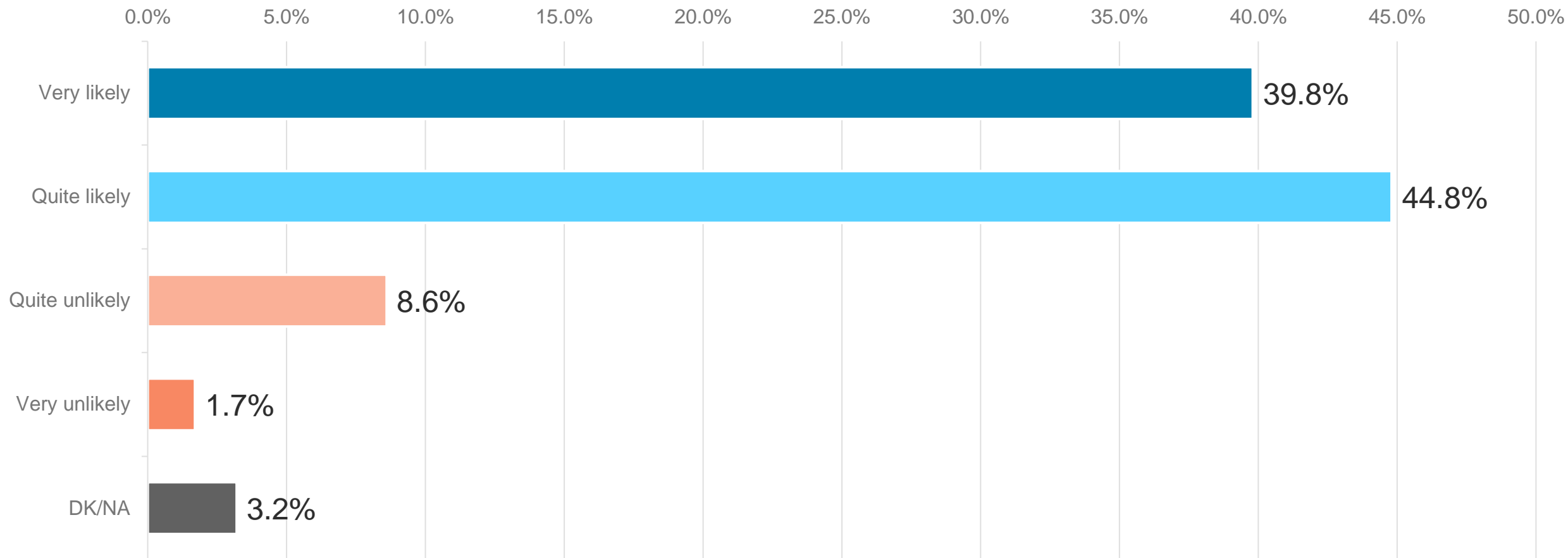
# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?



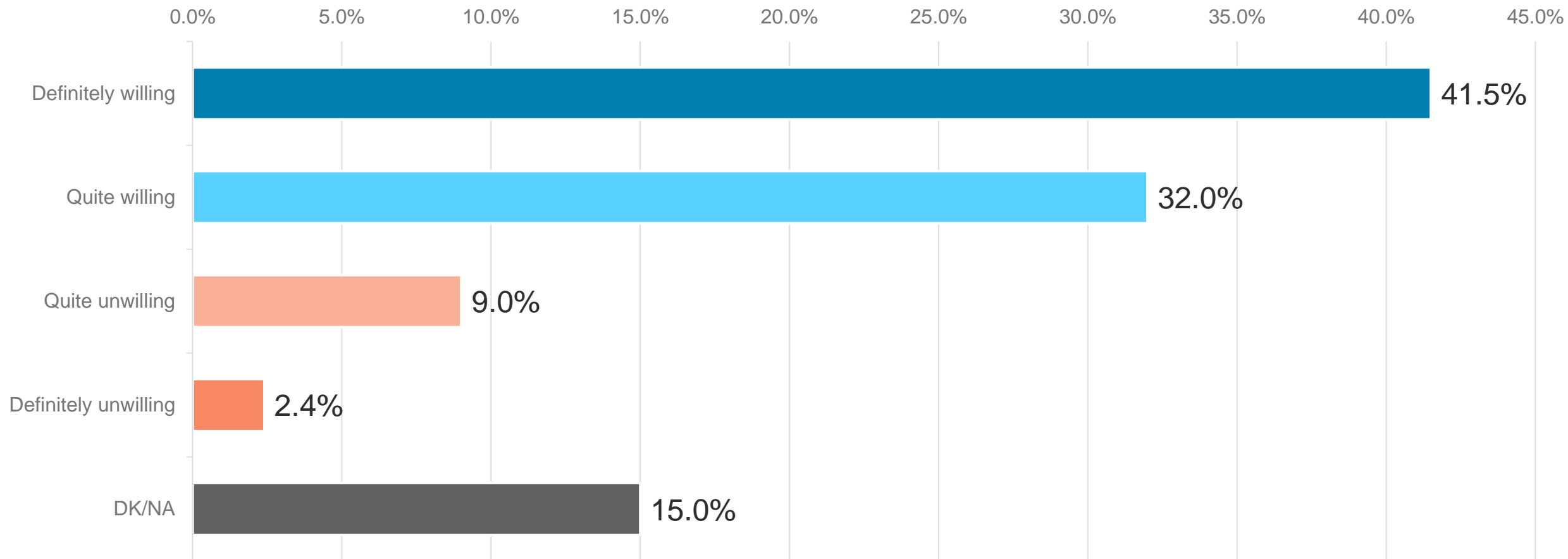
## Scenario “EU’s economic support”

Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including the European Union. Imagine that in the near future the European Union will announce that it is going to provide several billion euros to Belarus, provided that democratic changes happen in the country.

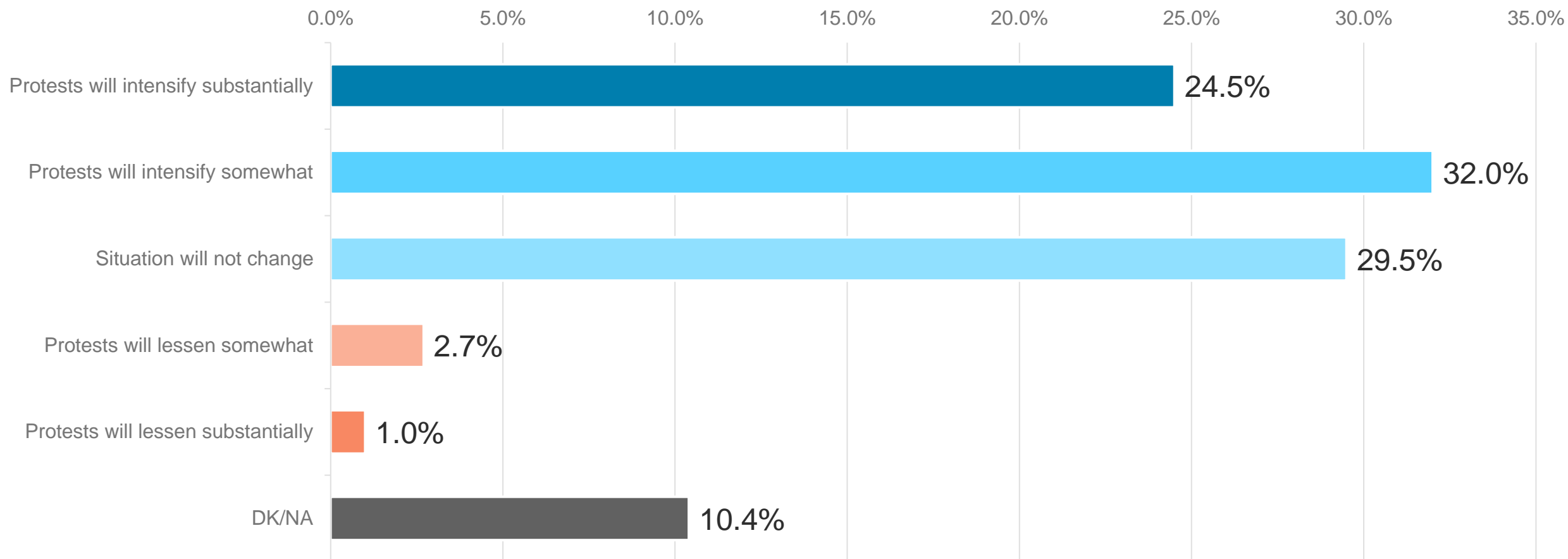
[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и в Европейский союз. Представьте, что в скором времени Европейский союз заявит о выделении Беларуси нескольких миллиардов евро, если в стране произойдут демократические изменения.]



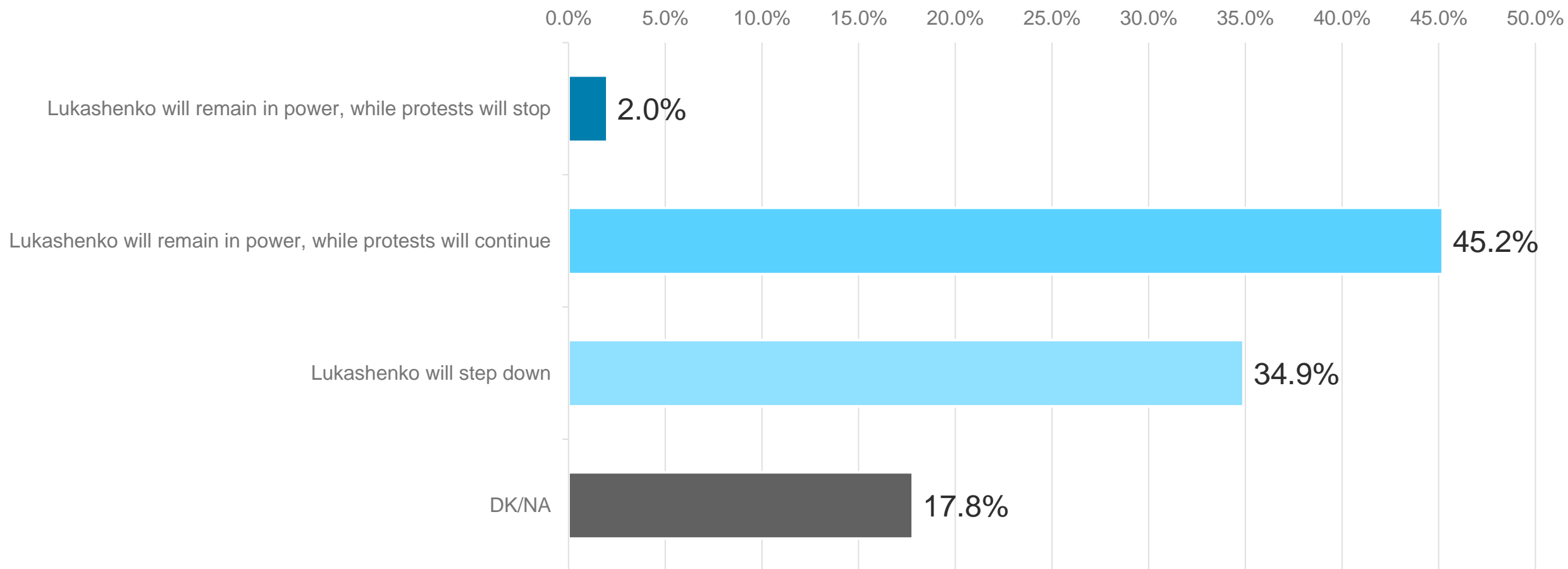
# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



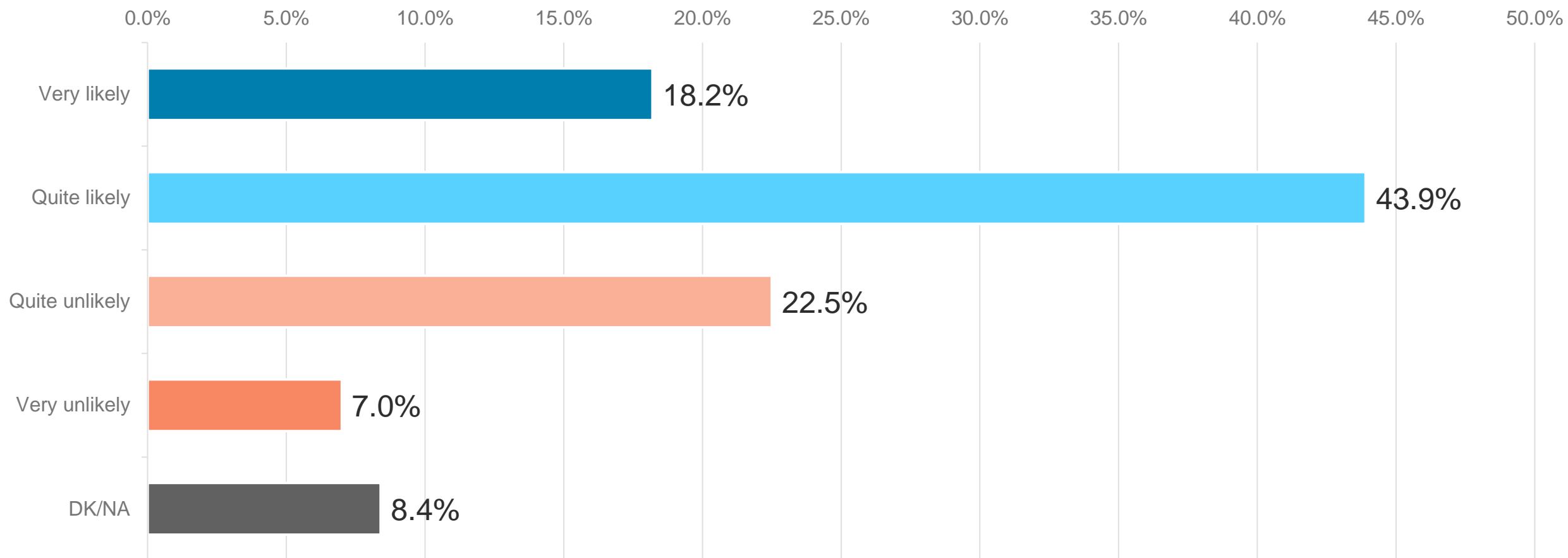
# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?

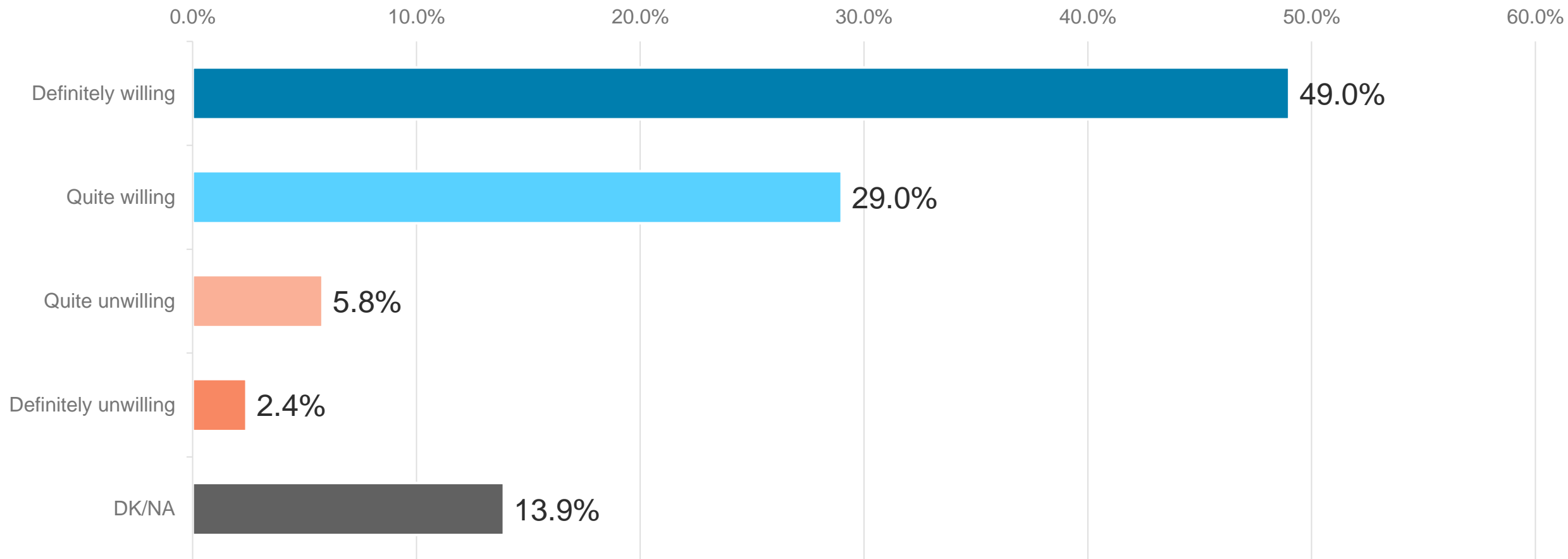


## Scenario “Russia supports the protest”

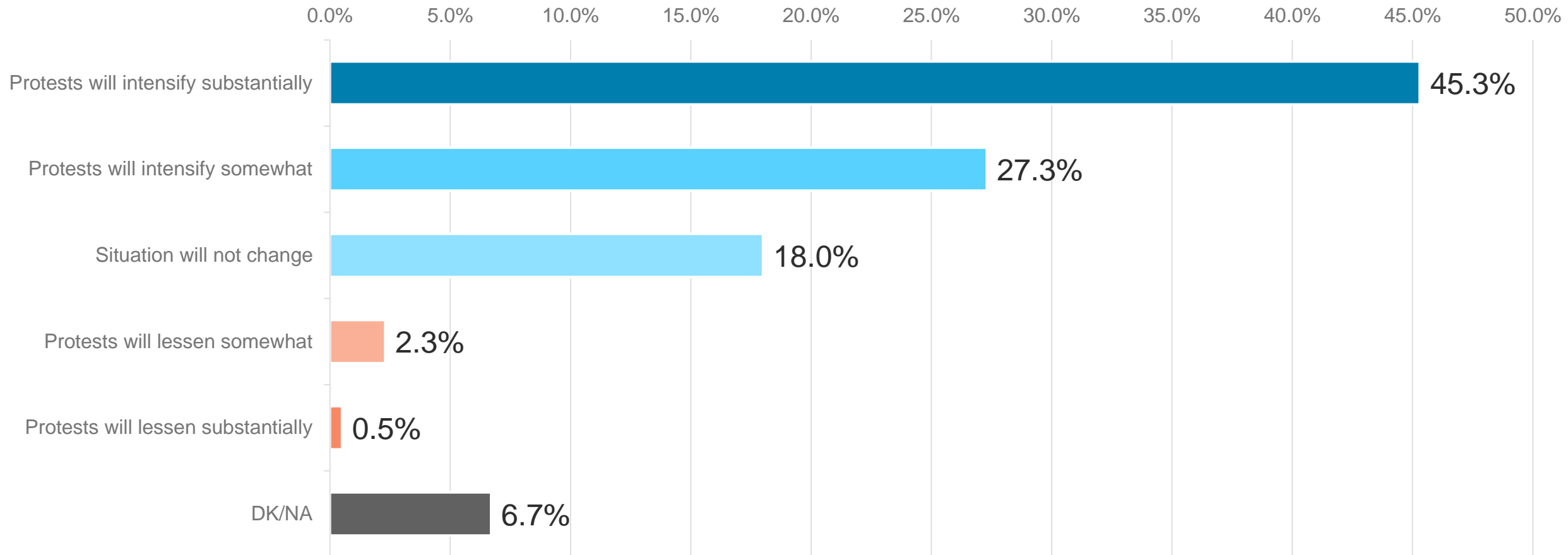
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including Russia. Imagine that in the near future Russia will start to actively criticize the suppression of the protests.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и Россия. Представьте, что в скором времени Россия станет активно критиковать подавление протестов.]

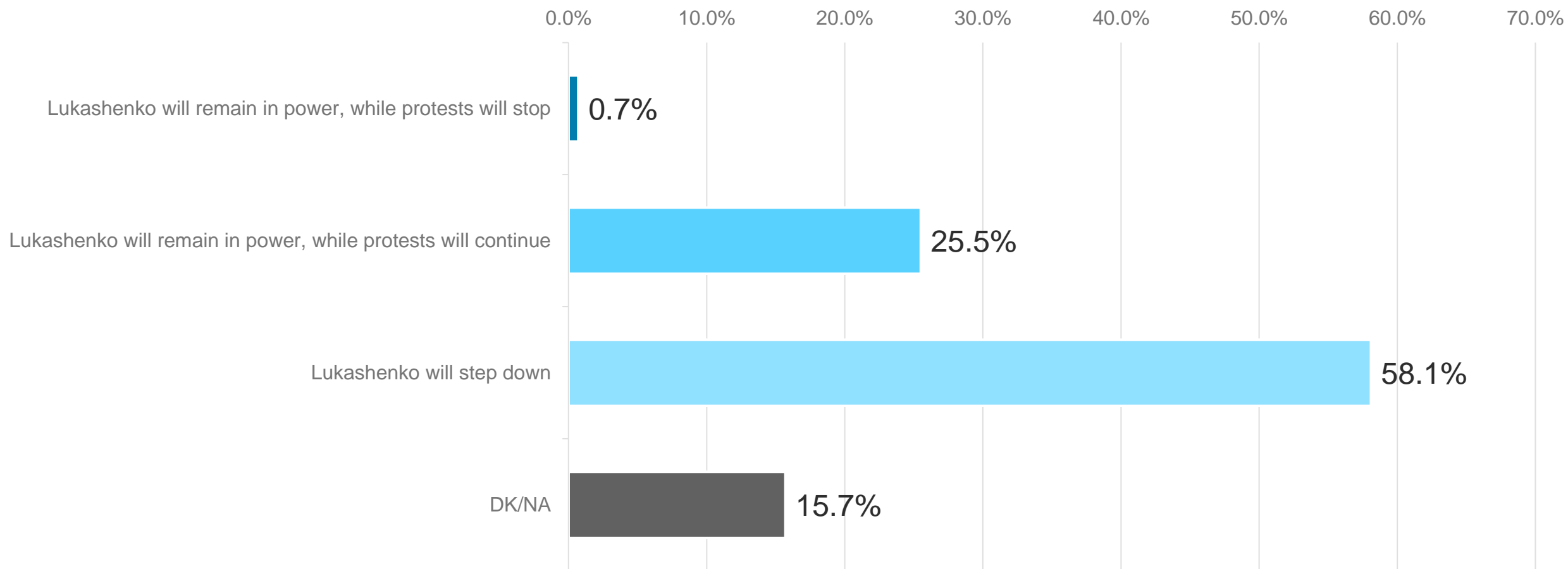
# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?

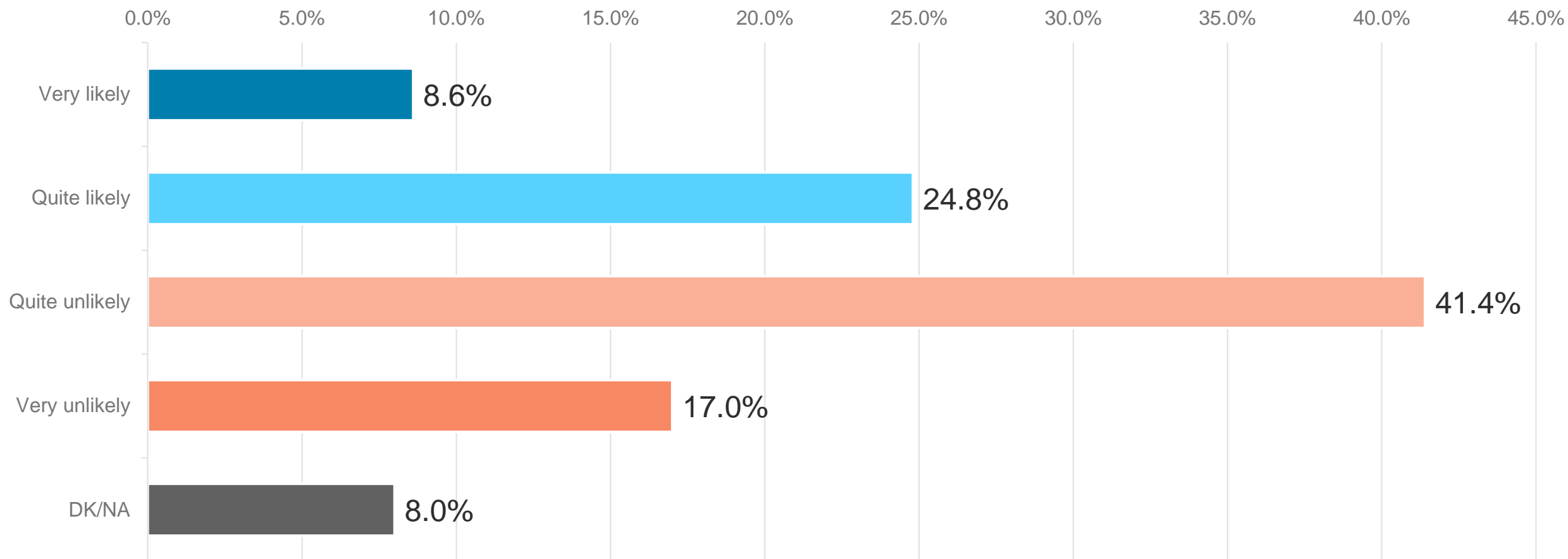


# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?





# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?

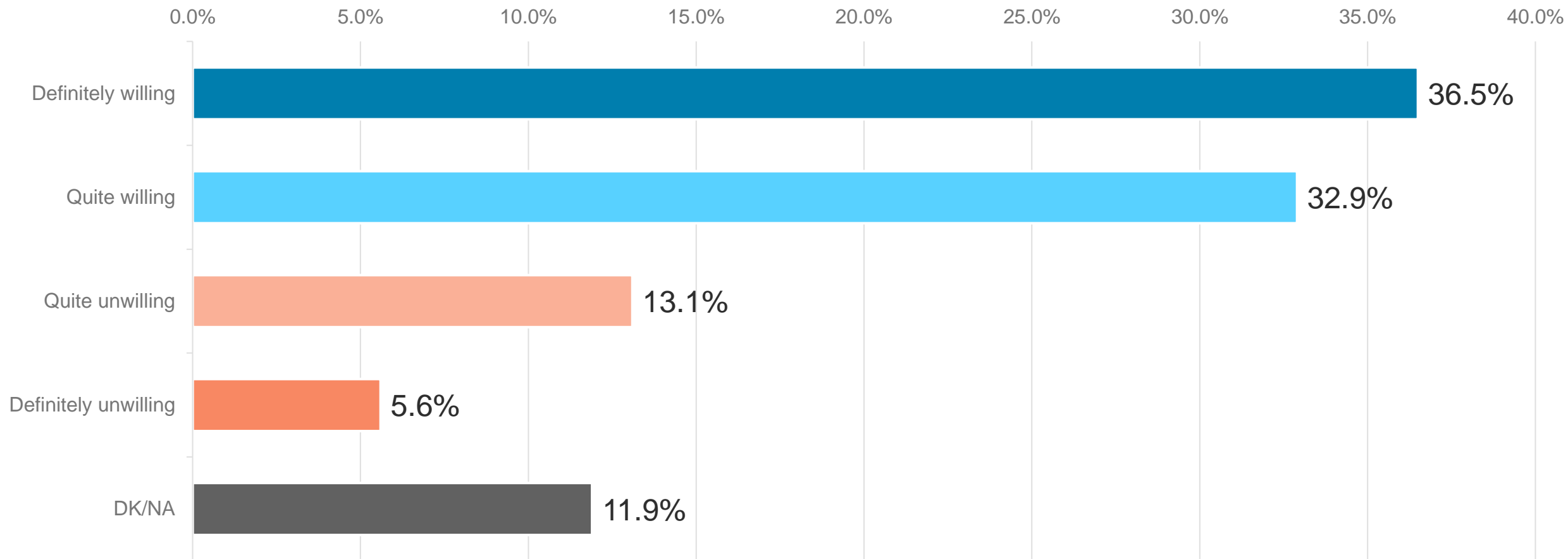


## Scenario “Russia provides military support for the Belarusian regime”

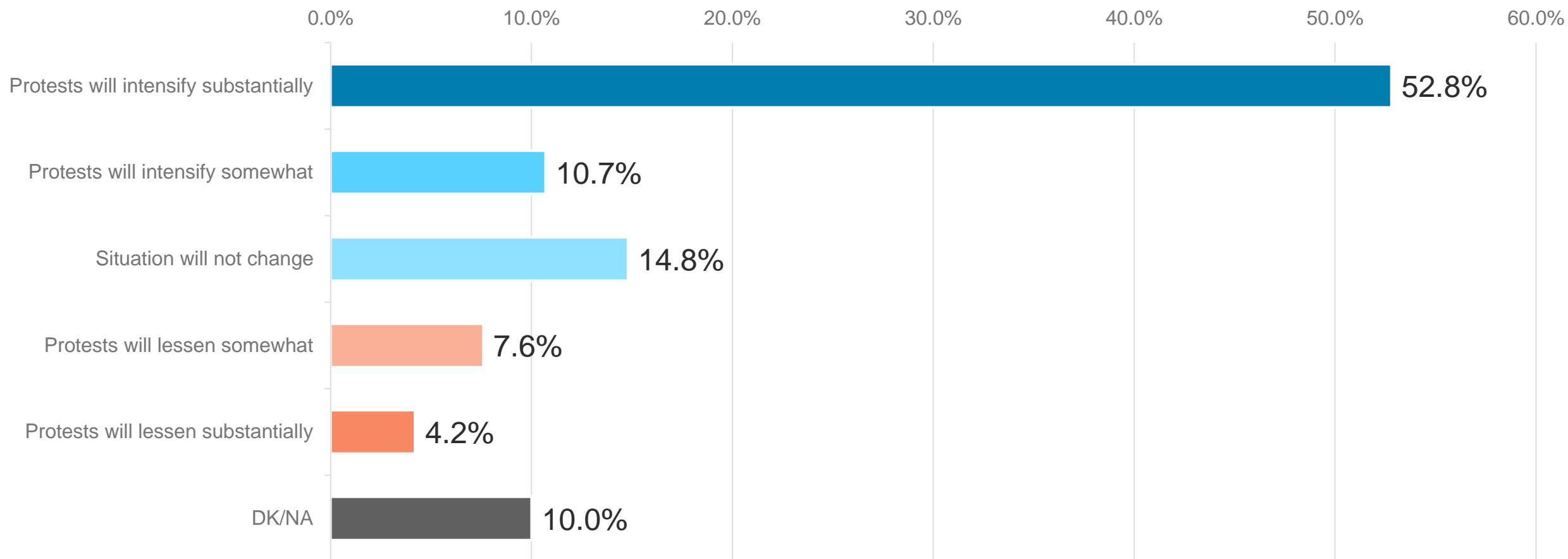
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including Russia. Imagine that in the near future Russia will dispatch several police and riot police units to help Belarusian security forces.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и Россия. Представьте, что в скором времени Россия отправит несколько подразделений полиции и ОМОНа для помощи беларуским силовикам.]

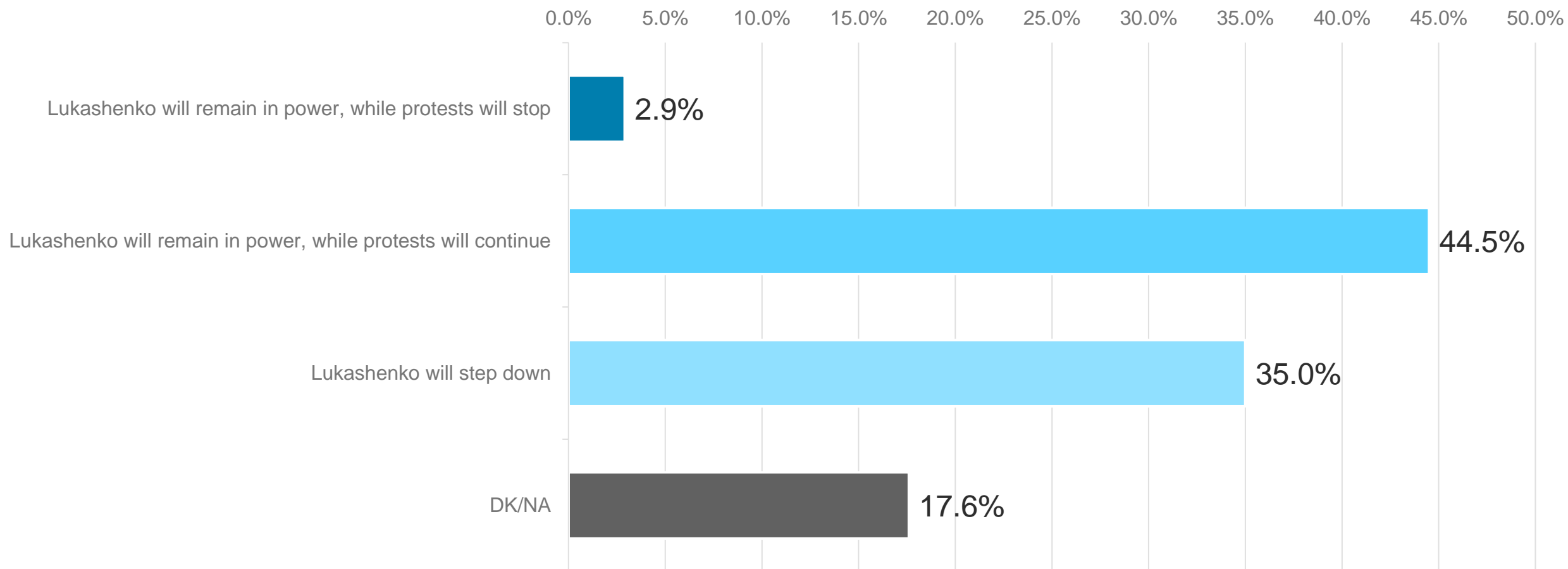
# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



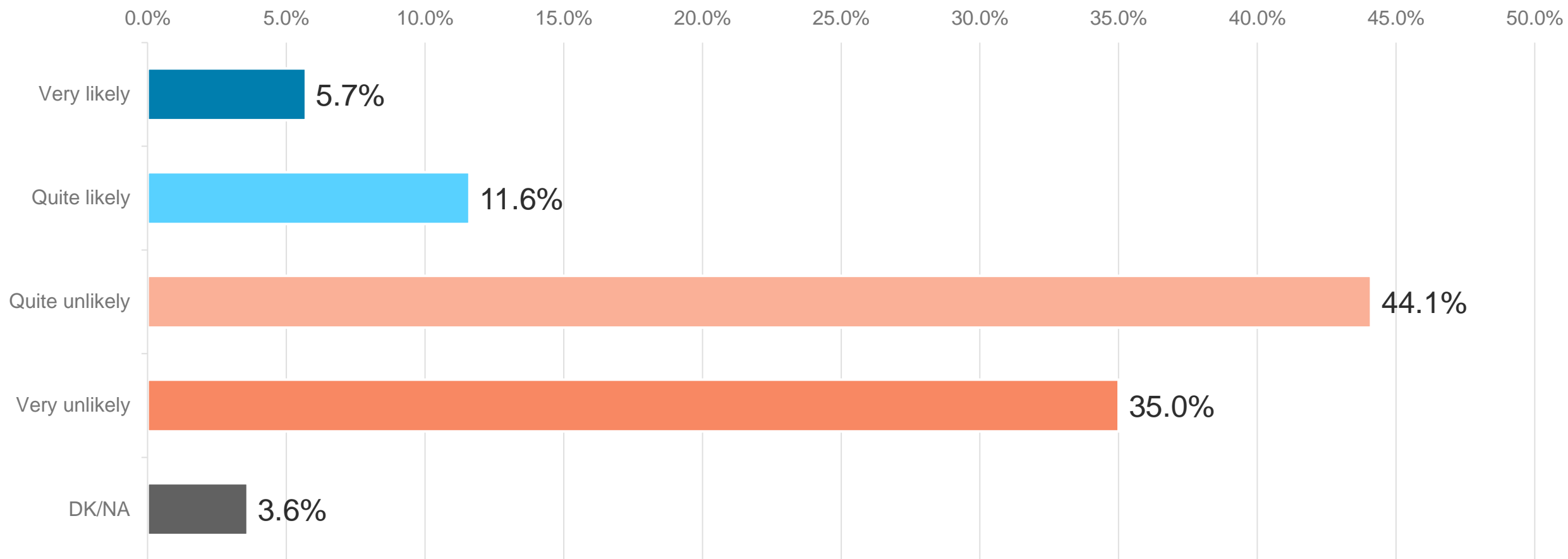
# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?

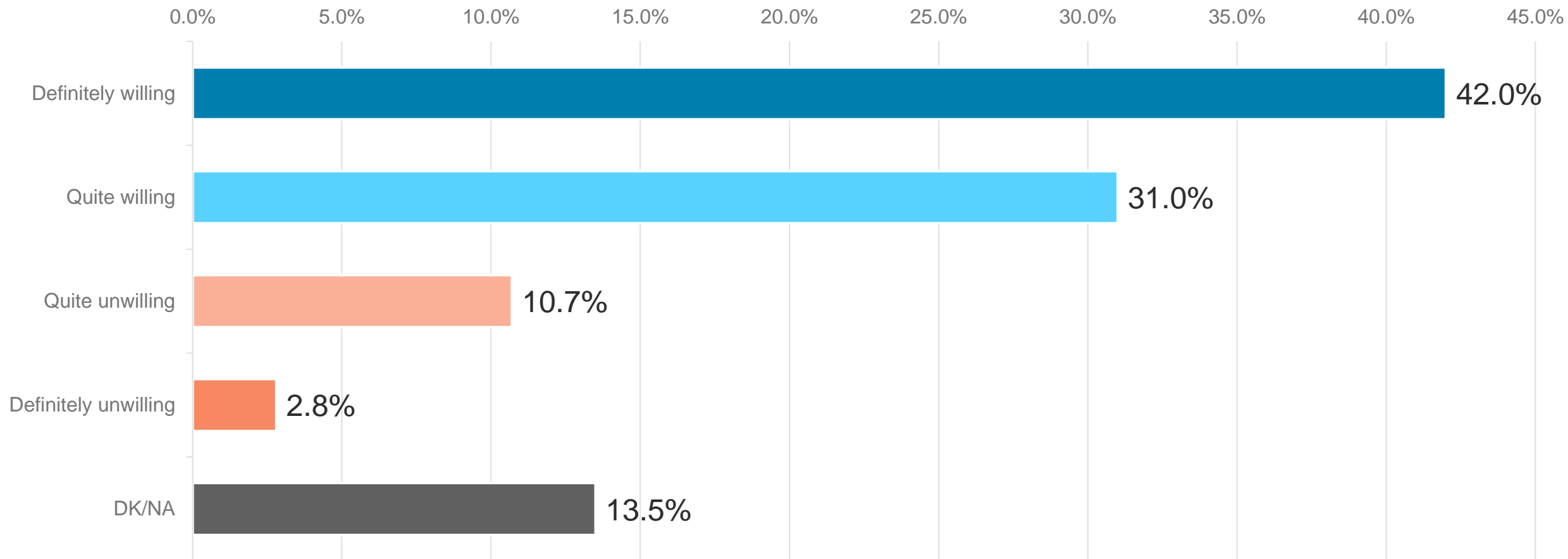


## Scenario “Russia provides military support for the Belarusian regime but countered by EU sanctions”

Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including Russia. Imagine that in the near future Russia will dispatch several police and riot police units to help Belarusian security forces. In response, the European Union will announce that it is going to introduce harsh sanctions against Russia, including against its gas and oil sectors.

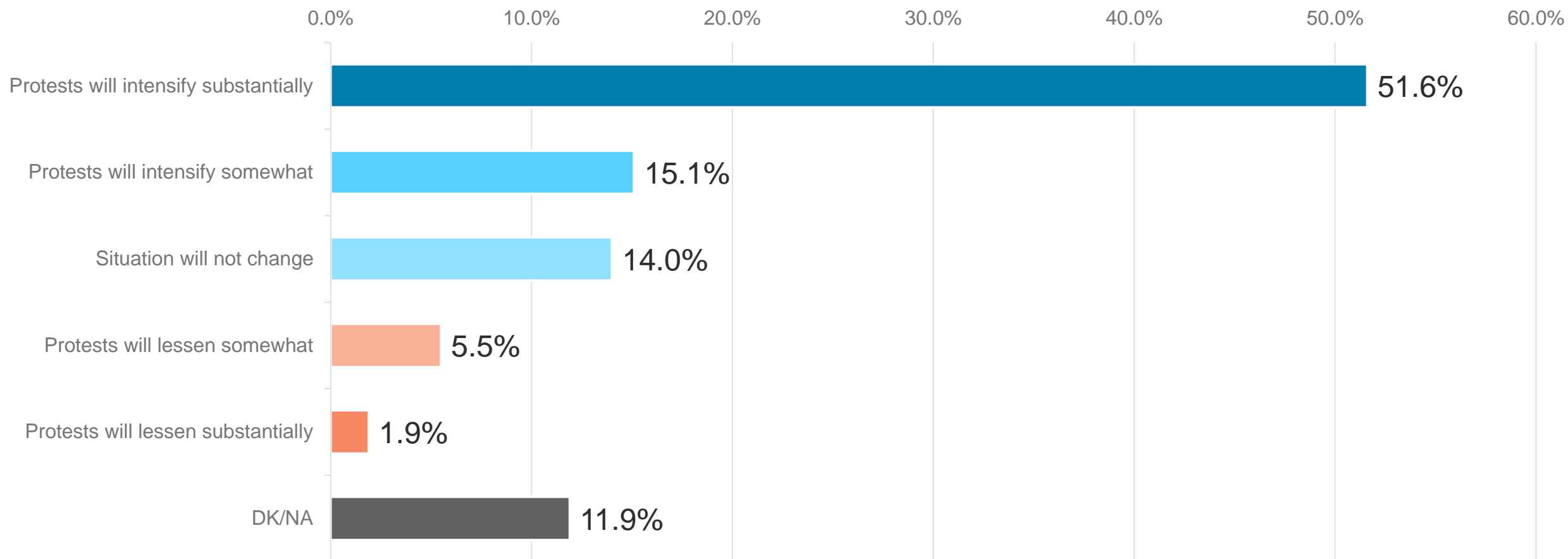
[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и Россия. Представьте, что в скором времени Россия отправит несколько подразделений полиции и ОМОНа для помощи беларуским силовикам. В ответ Европейский союз заявит о введении жестких санкций против России, в том числе против газового и нефтяного секторов экономики.]

# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?

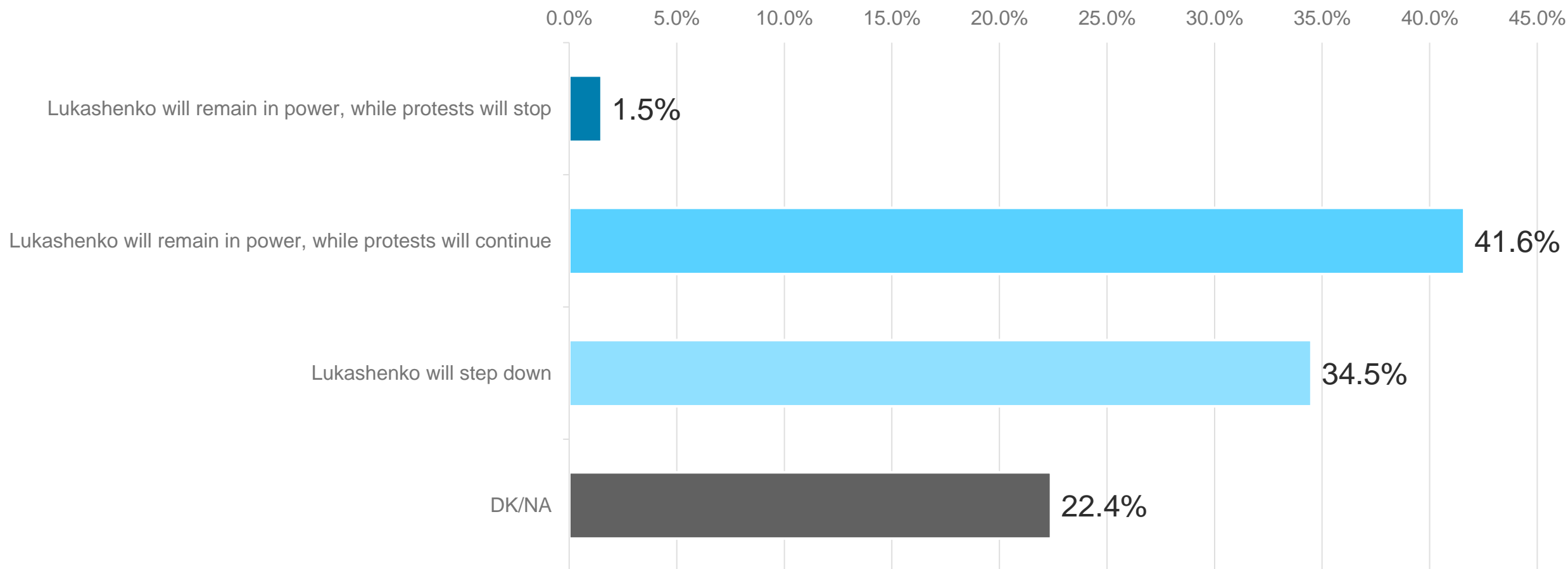




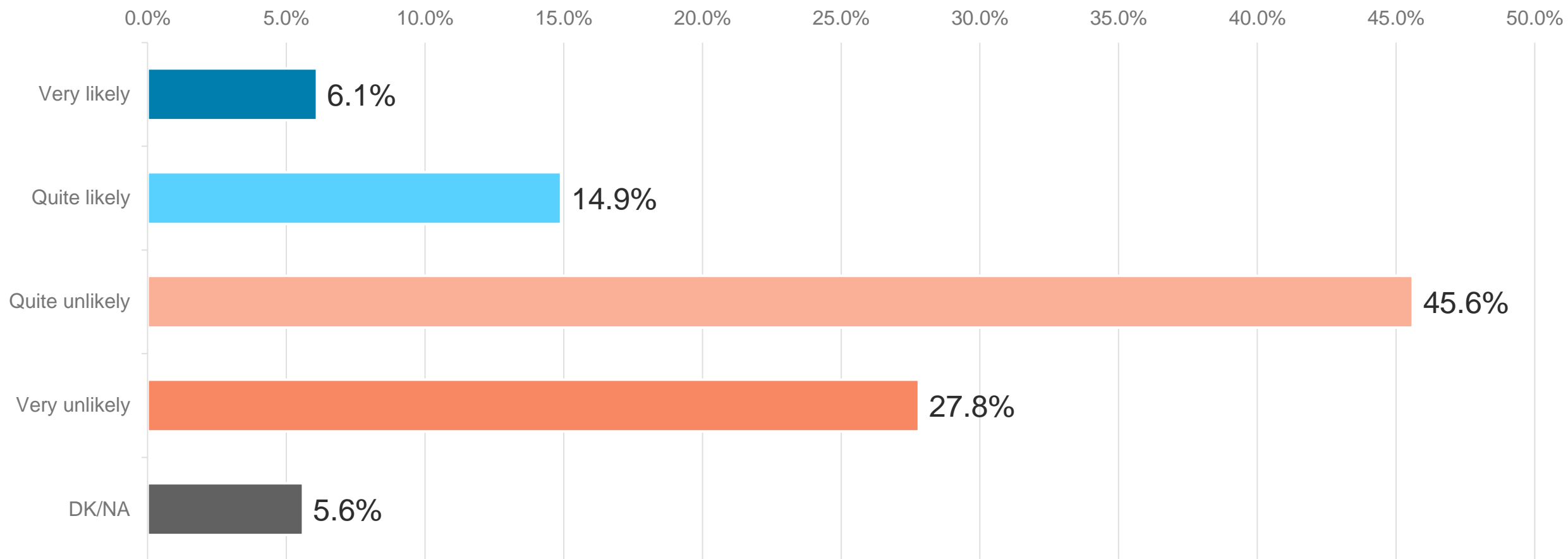
# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?

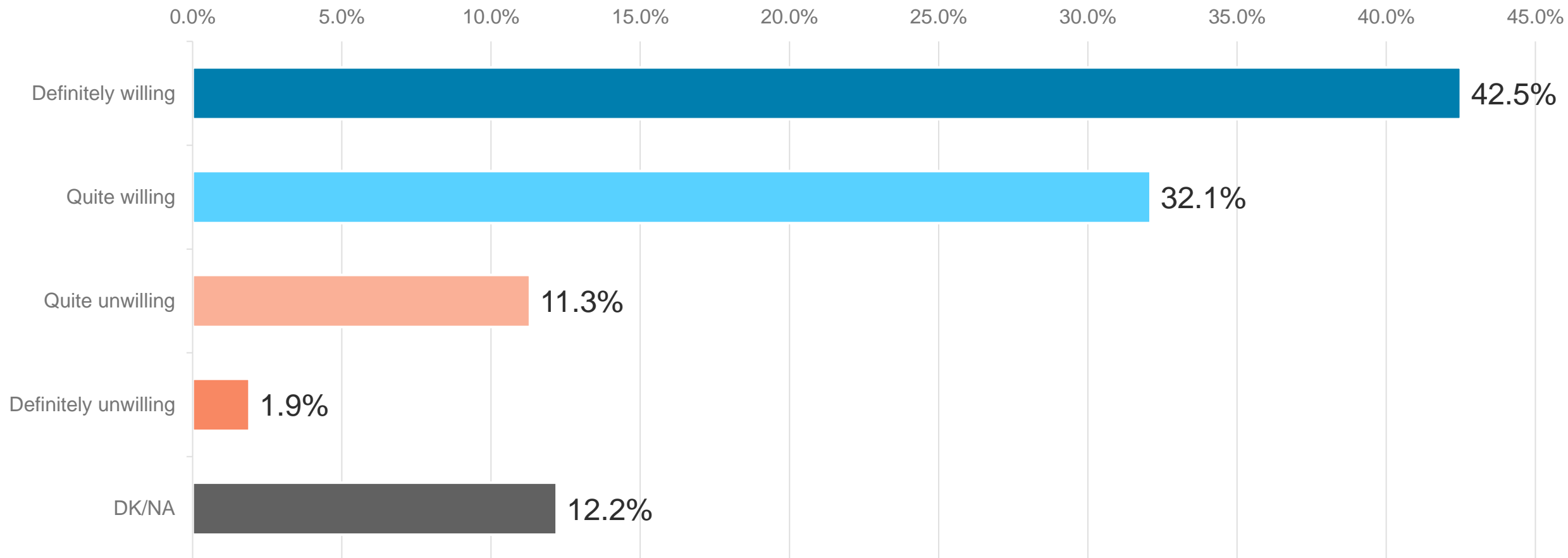


## Scenario “Russia provides economic for the Belarusian regime

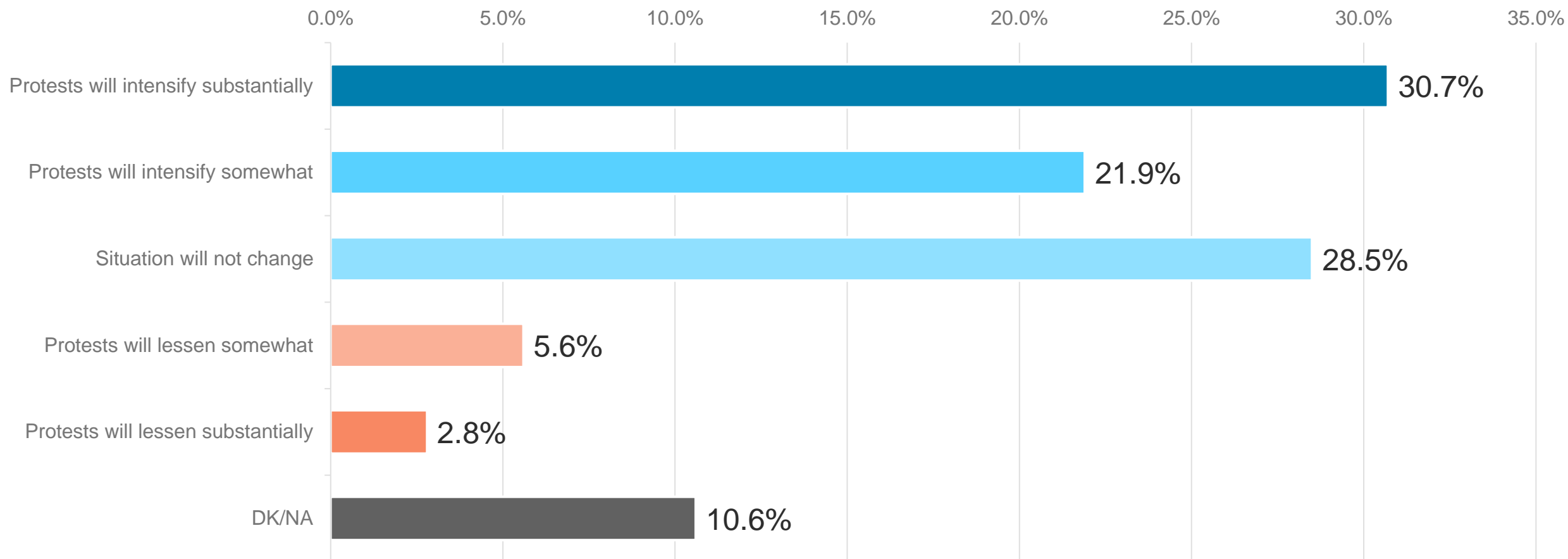
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including Russia. Imagine that in the near future Russia will provide several billion dollars to the Belarusian regime, in addition the already provided assistance.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и Россия. Представьте, что в скором времени Россия выделит несколько миллиардов долларов беларуским властям в дополнение к уже оказанной помощи.]

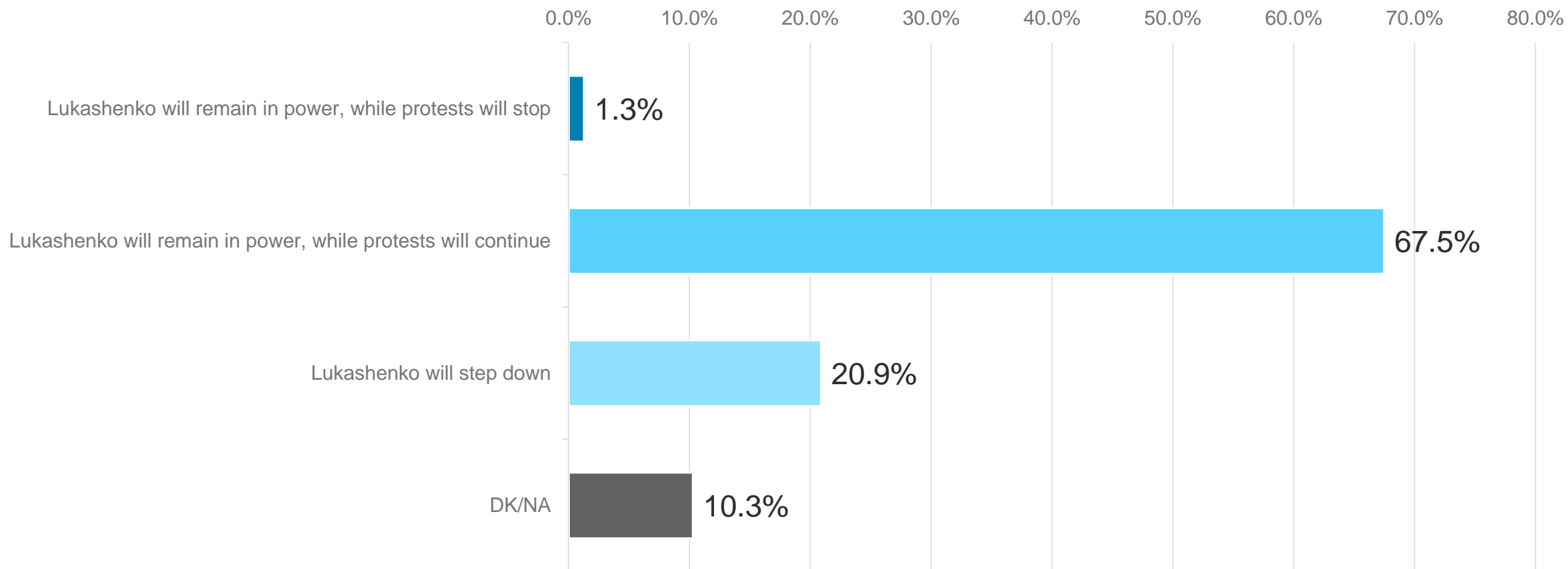
# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



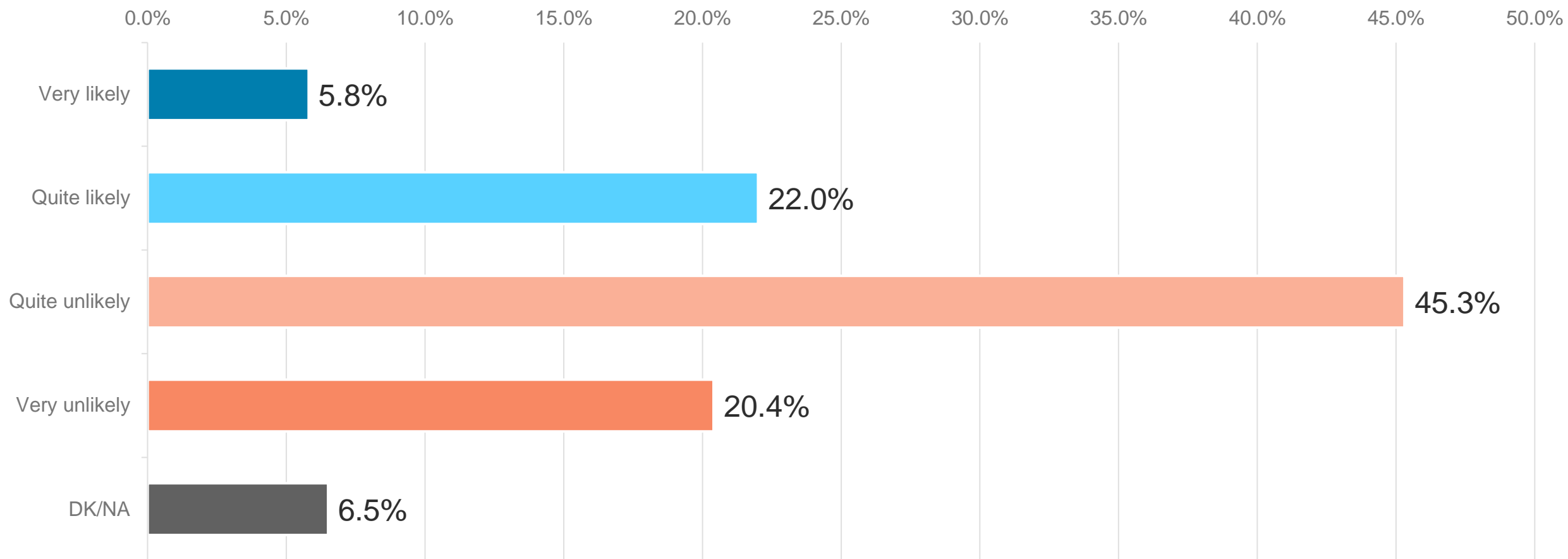
# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen??



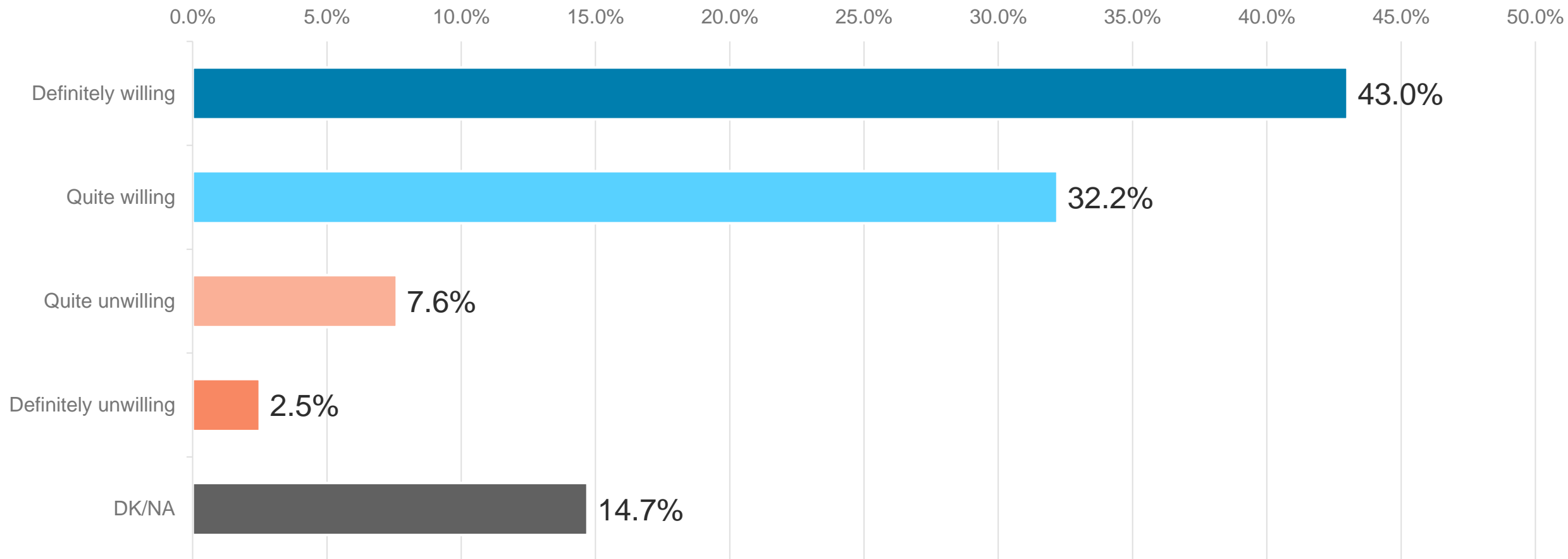


## Scenario “Russia provides economic for the Belarusian regime but countered by the EU’s economic reaction”

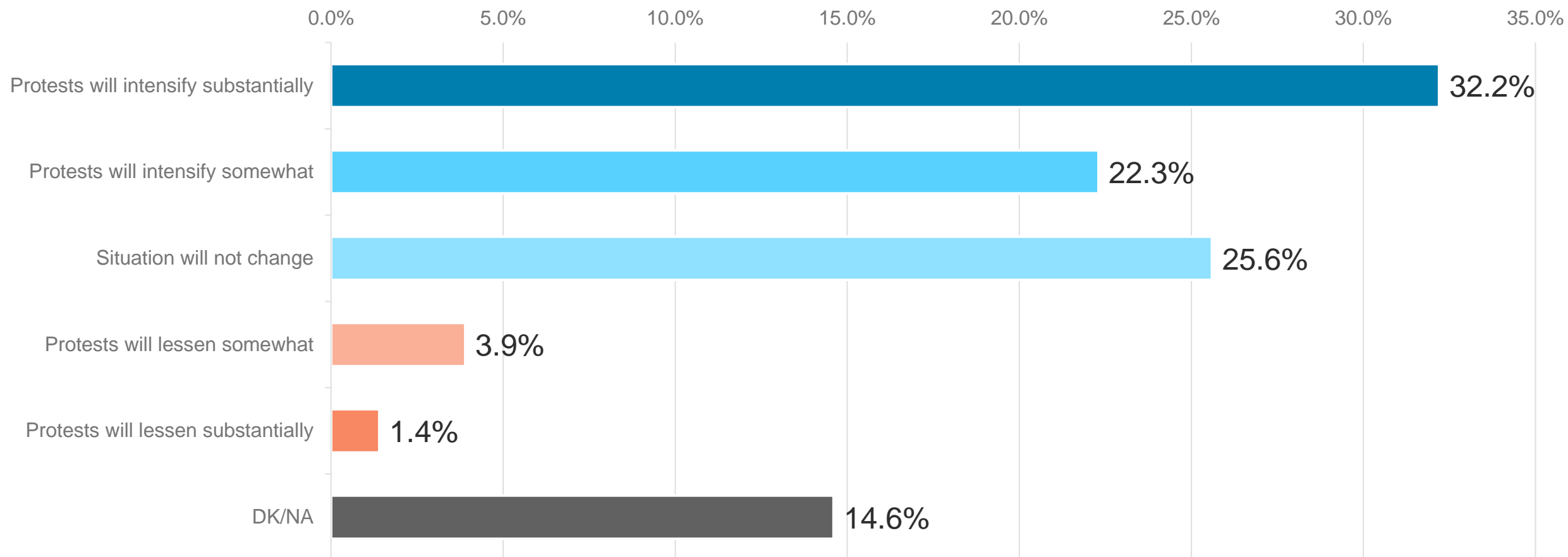
Since August, protests have been happening in Belarus. Many states have voiced their opinion of these events, including Russia. Imagine that in the near future Russia will provide several billion dollars to the Belarusian regime, in addition the already provided assistance. In response, the European Union will announce that it is going to provide even a bigger sum of money to Belarus, provided that democratic changes happen in the country.

[Original text in Russian: С августа в Беларуси проходят протесты. Многие страны высказывают свое отношение к этим событиям, в том числе и Россия. Представьте, что в скором времени Россия выделит несколько миллиардов долларов беларуским властям в дополнение к уже оказанной помощи. В ответ Европейский союз заявит о выделении Беларуси еще большей суммы, если в стране произойдут демократические изменения.]

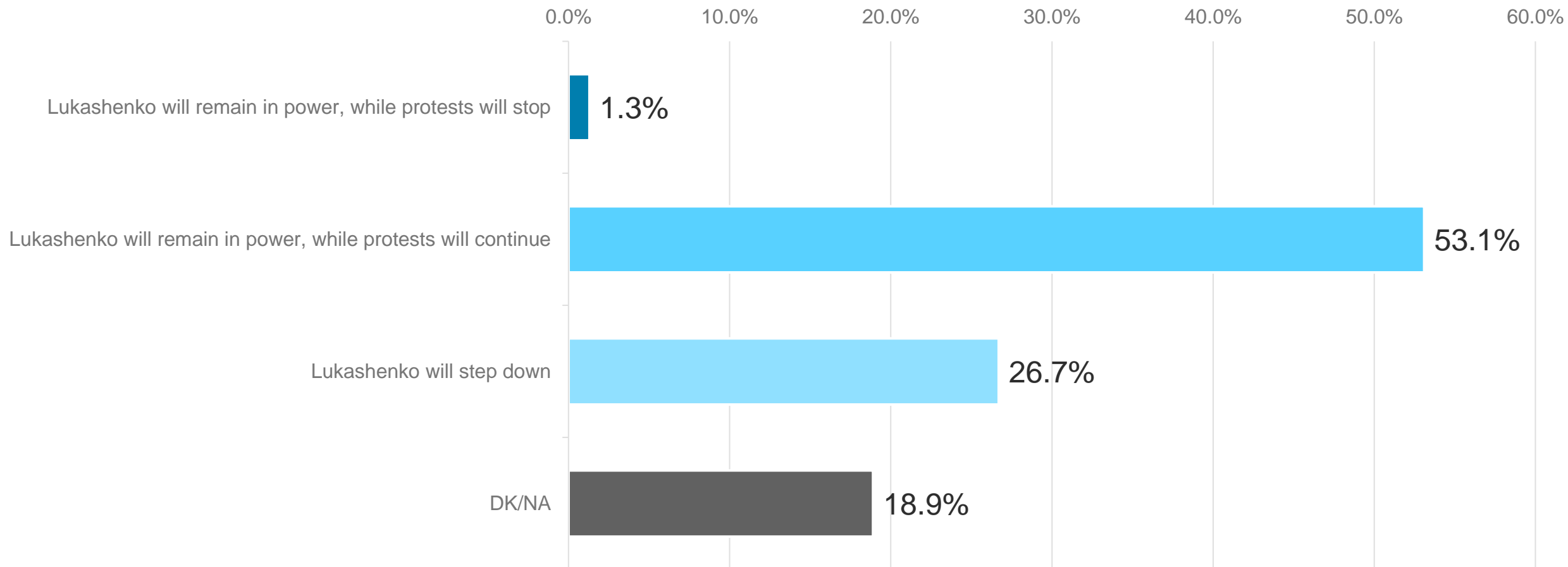
# In this scenario, to what extent are you willing to participate in new protests?



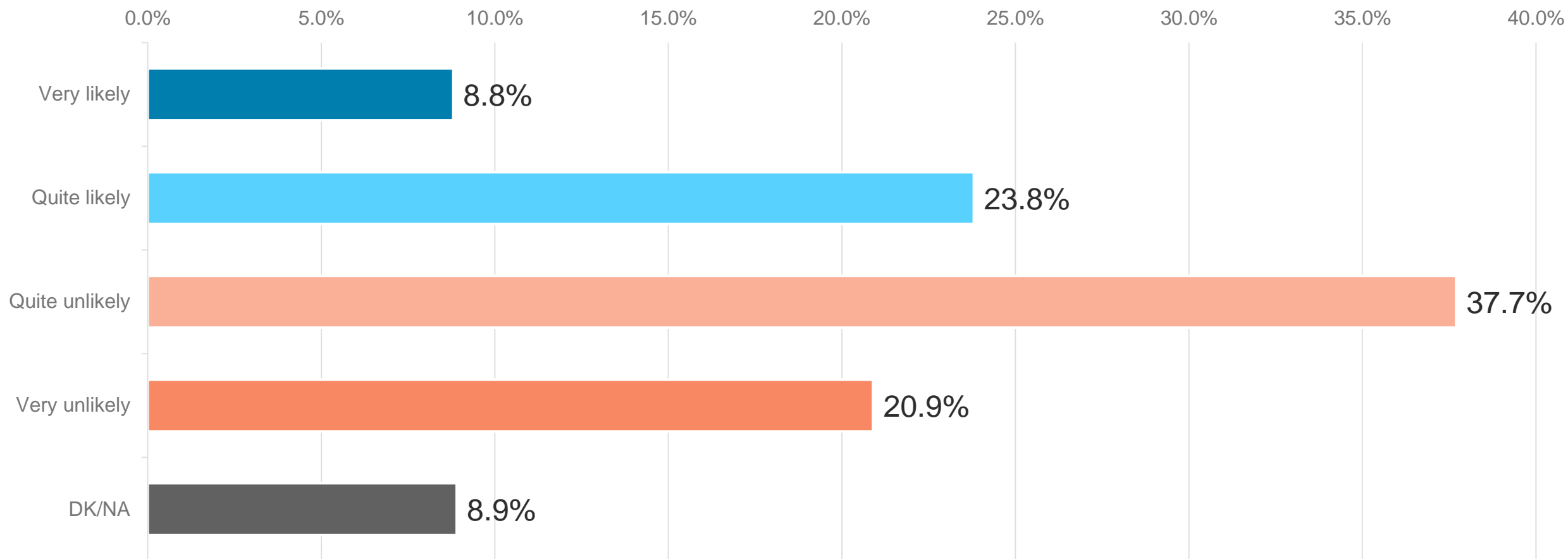
# In your opinion, how will the protest situation develop in the near future?



# In your opinion, how will the [political] situation change in the near future?



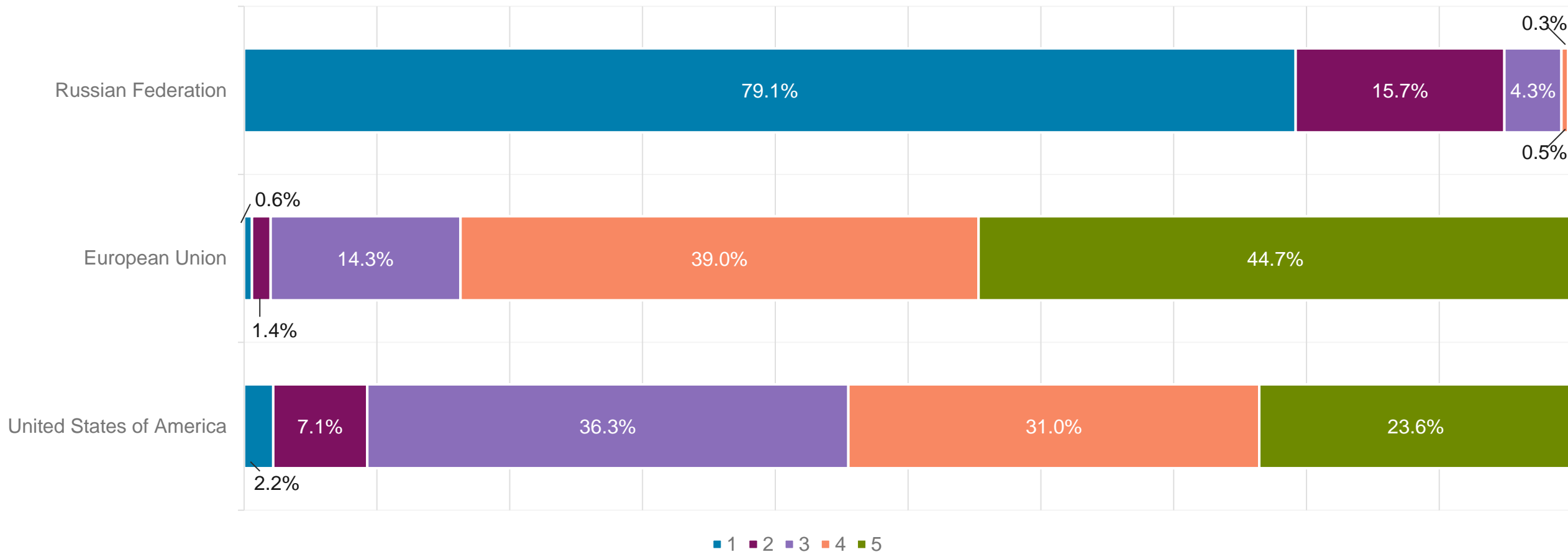
# In your opinion, how likely is this scenario to happen?



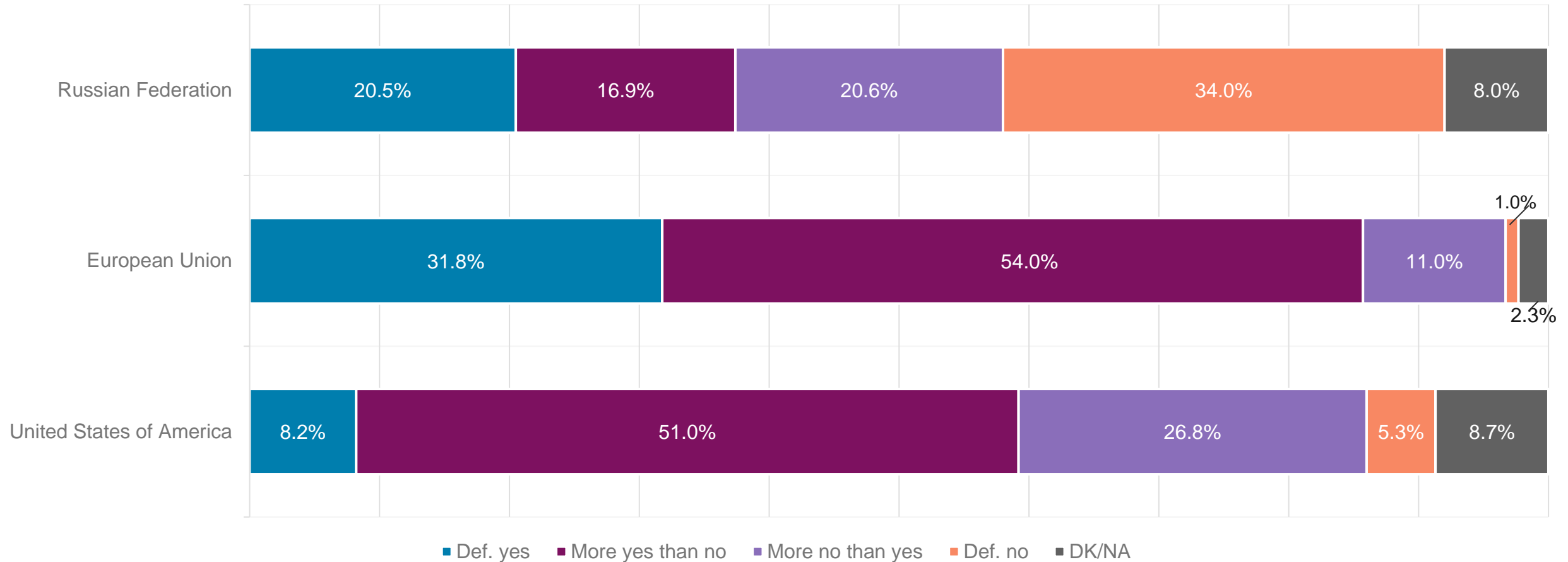
# Post-scenario block questions

Only the results for the “base case” group will be presented in the following five slides.  
The results for the other eight groups are presented in the Tables section after the aforementioned slides.

# In general, how do you evaluate the following states' actions in relation to the situation in Belarus? (1 – negative, 5 – positive)?

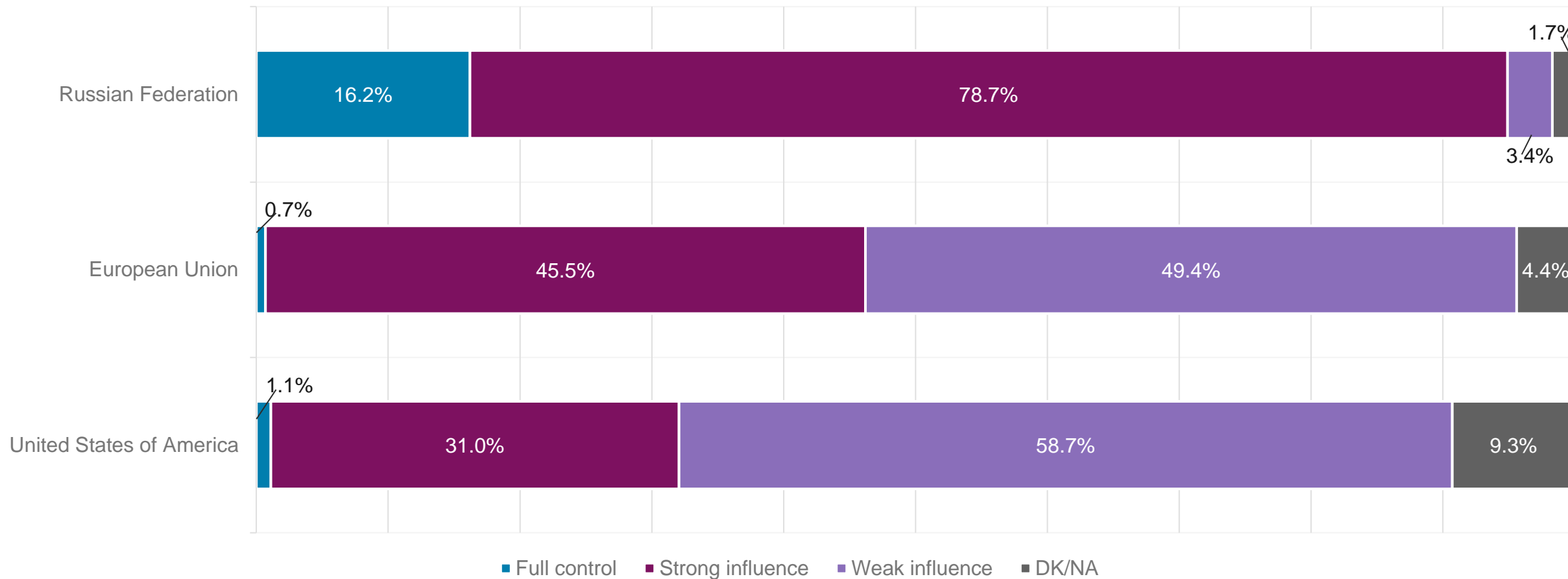


# Do you consider the following states' actions in relation to the situation in Belarus to be active enough?



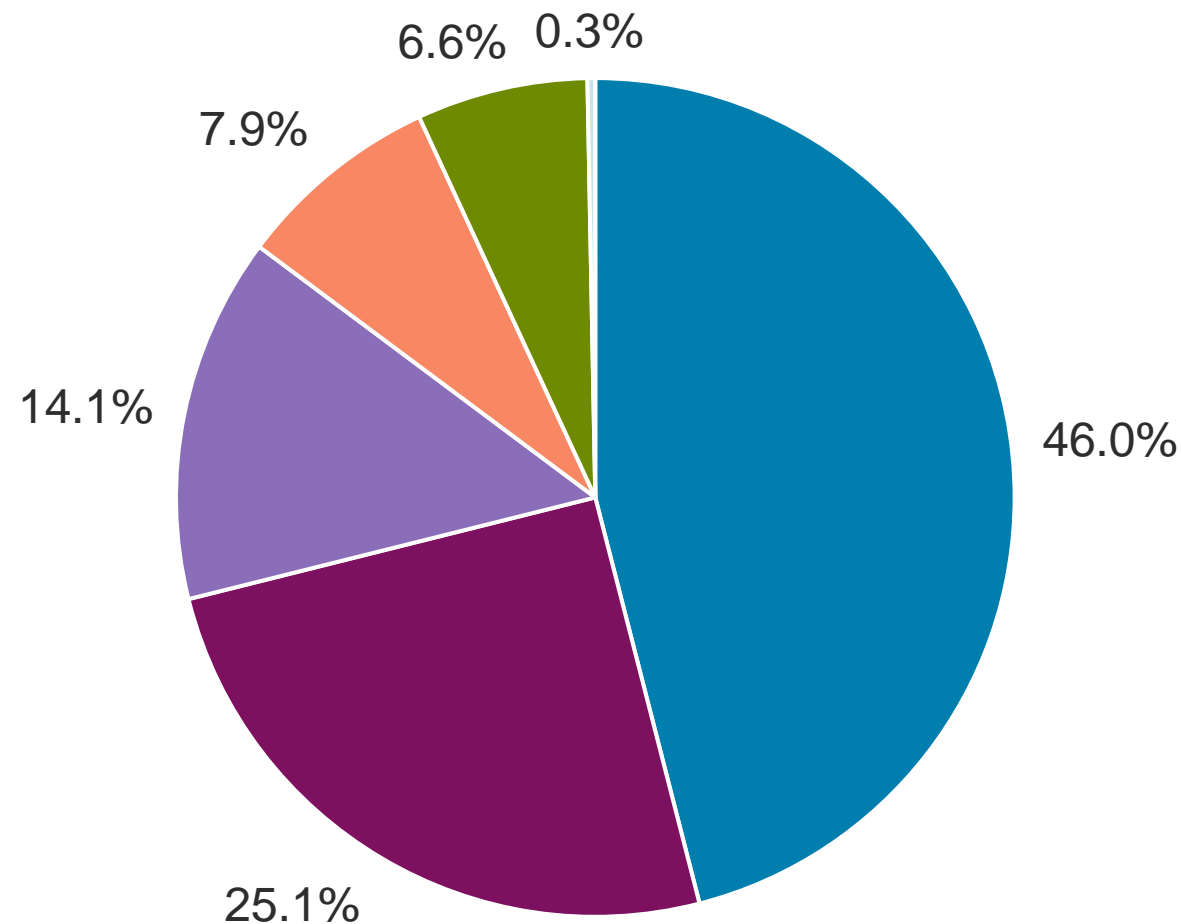


# To what extent the following states could influence the situation in Belarus?



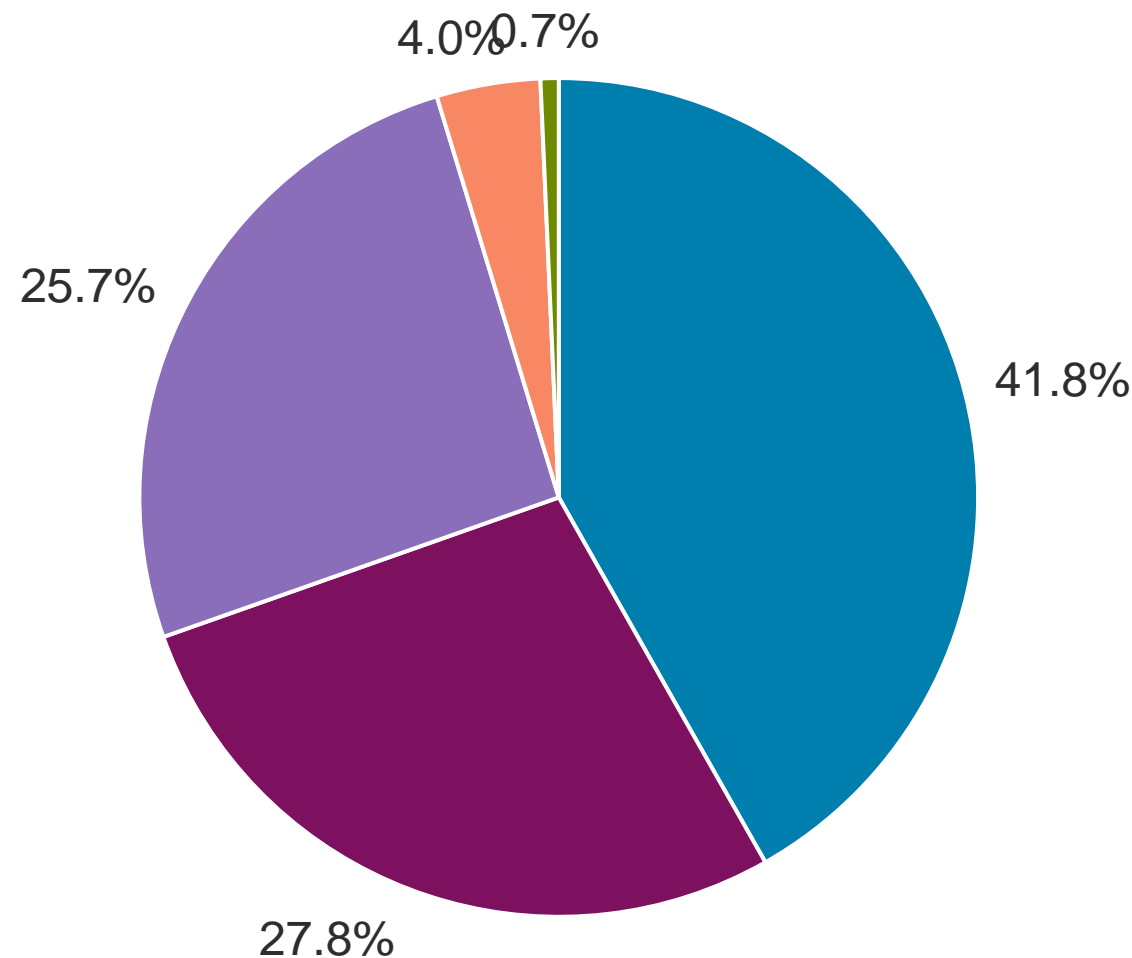
# On whom (what) do you count as a source to solve the current conflict?

- Elite splits, current regime's breakdown
- Myself and ordinary citizens
- EU and USA
- Protest leaders (S. Tsikhanouskaya, Coordination Council, and others)
- Russia
- Hope the current regime will take the situation under control



## In your opinion, what agreement over Belarus could the EU and Russia reach?

- They won't be able to reach an agreement
- Lukashenka resigns immediately and new elections are held
- Democratic elections are held, Lukashenka resigns afterwards
- Democratic elections are held to limit Lukashenka's [current] power
- Other



# Tables

# In general, how do you evaluate the following states' actions in relation to the situation in Belarus? (1 – negative, 5 – positive)?

Scenarios		Russia					EU					USA				
Russia	EU	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Base case	Base case	79,14	15,72	4,32	0,51	0,31	0,62	1,44	14,27	39,01	44,66	2,16	7,11	36,25	30,90	23,58
--	Sanctions against authorities	79,43	15,67	3,04	0,69	1,18	1,08	1,86	16,26	41,63	39,18	2,45	8,03	40,45	26,35	22,72
--	Sanctions against enterprises	81,20	14,26	3,41	0,72	0,41	0,83	1,34	16,22	41,43	40,19	1,65	6,92	39,77	29,13	22,52
--	Economic support for democratization	80,98	14,51	2,79	0,67	1,06	0,87	0,96	16,83	41,54	39,81	1,64	6,74	39,56	31,38	20,69
Support for the protest	--	78,10	16,40	3,80	0,70	1,00	0,90	0,90	12,55	39,64	46,02	1,90	5,80	32,50	30,60	29,20
Military support	--	76,18	17,81	5,02	0,69	0,30	0,79	1,57	15,51	38,47	43,67	2,76	5,22	36,22	28,44	27,36
Military support	Sanctions against Russia	78,11	15,89	4,63	0,53	0,84	0,74	1,79	15,30	38,40	43,78	1,69	6,23	38,12	27,24	26,72
Economic support	--	77,86	16,83	3,91	0,70	0,70	1,10	1,80	13,11	35,24	48,75	2,91	6,13	31,16	31,06	28,74
Economic support	Economic support for democratization	80,07	14,41	4,77	0,33	0,43	0,87	0,87	15,28	39,54	43,45	2,07	6,53	37,54	26,99	26,88

# Do you consider the following states' actions in relation to the situation in Belarus to be active enough?

Scenarios		Russia					EU					USA				
Russia	EU	Def. yes	More yes than no	More no than yes	Def. no	DK/NA	Def. yes	More yes than no	More no than yes	Def. no	DK/NA	Def. yes	More yes than no	More no than yes	Def. no	DK/NA
Base case	Base case	20,49	16,91	20,59	34,02	7,99	31,79	53,95	10,97	1,03	2,26	8,19	50,97	26,82	5,32	8,70
--	Sanctions against authorities	21,67	17,45	19,12	36,47	5,29	30,10	55,29	10,78	1,96	1,86	7,93	49,56	29,58	5,09	7,84
--	Sanctions against enterprises	24,38	16,53	18,29	35,12	5,68	31,89	54,18	11,76	0,83	1,34	10,42	48,50	30,34	4,64	6,09
--	Economic support for democratization	23,90	18,43	17,18	35,12	5,37	29,49	58,69	9,99	0,77	1,06	7,59	51,78	30,55	3,75	6,34
Support for the protest	--	15,19	15,39	24,73	37,64	7,05	35,55	53,03	8,64	1,49	1,29	12,23	54,87	23,46	3,28	6,16
Military support	--	22,43	19,98	21,06	31,83	4,70	31,47	53,33	12,16	1,27	1,76	9,91	49,17	29,44	4,42	7,07
Military support	Sanctions against Russia	21,72	24,34	22,46	24,66	6,82	29,13	54,47	13,25	1,37	1,79	9,87	47,37	30,25	4,31	8,19
Economic support	--	22,24	21,54	20,74	28,66	6,81	30,33	53,95	11,31	1,90	2,50	9,03	50,75	27,58	6,02	6,62
Economic support	Economic support for democratization	23,81	27,38	20,24	21,75	6,82	29,16	54,10	13,71	1,19	1,84	7,68	48,00	31,89	5,51	6,92

# To what extent the following states could influence the situation in Belarus?

Scenarios		Russia				EU				USA			
Russia	EU	DK/NA	Full control	Strong influence	Weak influence	DK/NA	Full control	Strong influence	Weak influence	DK/NA	Full control	Strong influence	Weak influence
Base case	Base case	1,74	16,17	78,71	3,38	4,41	0,72	45,49	49,39	9,31	1,13	30,91	58,65
--	Sanctions against authorities	2,35	18,77	76,05	2,83	4,90	1,27	43,68	50,15	10,36	0,88	33,24	55,52
--	Sanctions against enterprises	2,17	16,65	76,63	4,55	3,92	0,83	47,68	47,57	7,33	1,14	33,64	57,89
--	Economic support for democratization	2,78	17,95	74,76	4,51	4,13	0,48	45,96	49,42	7,79	0,77	33,85	57,60
Support for the protest	--	3,47	14,78	78,27	3,47	4,98	1,19	48,76	45,07	8,94	1,19	35,55	54,32
Military support	--	3,42	15,75	76,32	4,50	4,80	0,59	45,00	49,61	10,68	0,39	33,30	55,63
Military support	Sanctions against Russia	1,79	13,97	80,04	4,20	4,73	0,42	44,16	50,68	8,42	0,84	31,37	59,37
Economic support	--	2,40	16,50	75,90	5,20	3,90	1,50	43,24	51,35	8,52	1,90	31,16	58,42
Economic support	Economic support for democratization	2,92	16,32	76,86	3,89	5,41	0,87	39,94	53,79	11,02	1,30	27,43	60,26

# On whom (what) do you count as a source to solve the current conflict?

Russia	EU	EU and USA	Russia	Protest leaders Protest leaders (S. Tsikhanouskaya, Coordination Council, and others)	Elite splits, current regime's breakdown	Myself and ordinary citizens	Hope the current regime will take the situation under control
Base case	Base case	14,05	6,56	7,90	46,05	25,13	0,31
--	Sanctions against authorities	13,17	8,20	8,98	46,44	22,54	0,68
--	Sanctions against enterprises	14,48	6,10	8,07	49,22	21,82	0,31
--	Economic support for democratization	13,57	6,26	7,80	48,99	22,81	0,58
Support for the protest	--	13,15	7,17	6,77	47,51	24,90	0,50
Military support	--	12,27	6,97	8,83	46,12	25,52	0,29
Military support	Sanctions against Russia	13,91	7,06	9,06	48,05	21,60	0,32
Economic support	--	13,90	6,50	8,90	47,30	23,20	0,20
Economic support	Economic support for democratization	14,90	5,40	8,96	48,16	22,25	0,32



# In your opinion, what agreement over Belarus could the EU and Russia reach?

Russia	EU	Lukashenka resigns immediately and new elections are held	Democratic elections are held to limit Lukashenka's [current] power	Democratic elections are held, Lukashenka resigns afterwards	They won't be able to reach an agreement	Other
Base case	Base case	27,84	4,02	25,67	41,75	0,72
--	Sanctions against authorities	24,93	5,28	28,35	40,76	0,68
--	Sanctions against enterprises	25,15	4,02	28,76	41,34	0,72
--	Economic support for democratization	27,99	5,79	27,70	37,26	1,25
Support for the protest	--	26,89	3,49	24,90	43,33	1,39
Military support	--	26,38	3,94	27,46	41,73	0,49
Military support	Sanctions against Russia	29,01	3,90	23,63	42,93	0,53
Economic support	--	28,44	5,03	23,82	41,41	1,31
Economic support	Economic support for democratization	25,27	4,99	28,96	40,24	0,54

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