

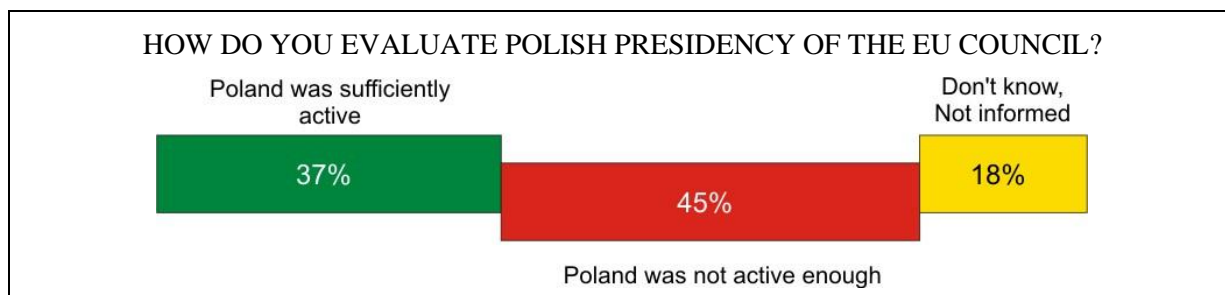
EVALUATION OF POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In Dec. 2011 the Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union ended. It lasted half a year. The political evaluations were mixed, as is usual in such cases. It seems clear, however, that Poland made no major mistakes and proved itself a proponent of developing European integration. According to the opinion of many commentators, the biggest success of the Polish presidency is the acceptance of the so-called six-pack, i.e. a set of regulations strengthening financial discipline in the eurozone.

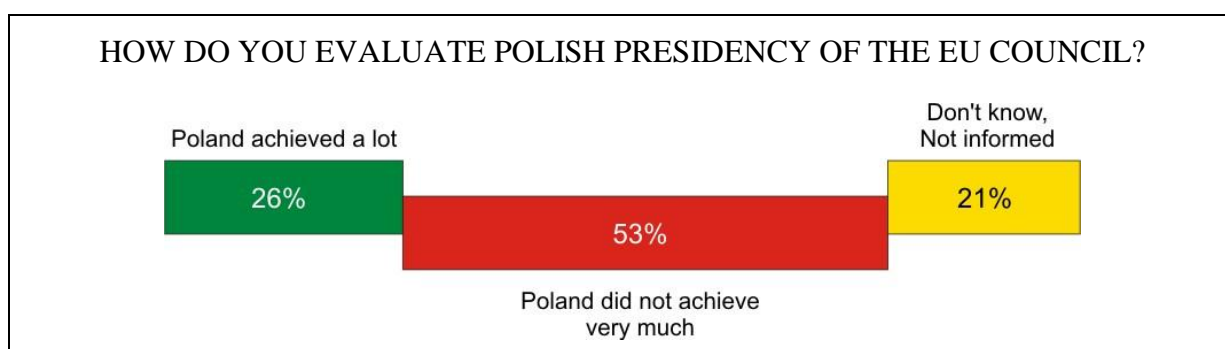
When the Polish presidency in the EU Council started half a year ago, the social expectations were high, but realistic. Respondents expressed hope that Poland will be an effective manager of the EU Council, and that it will use this opportunity to promote the country on the European stage. The society expected increased influence of our country on EU policy and improvement of its image in Europe and around the world. Few expected Poland to be among the leaders of the Union. This scepticism came from the conviction that, regardless of who chairs the EU Council, the biggest and most influential countries have the most influence on the EU policy.

The societal evaluations of the Polish presidency are somewhat ambivalent. It seems that, in respondents' opinion, the scale of challenges facing Poland during the presidency was difficult to overcome. This made the presidency a moderate success, in public opinion.

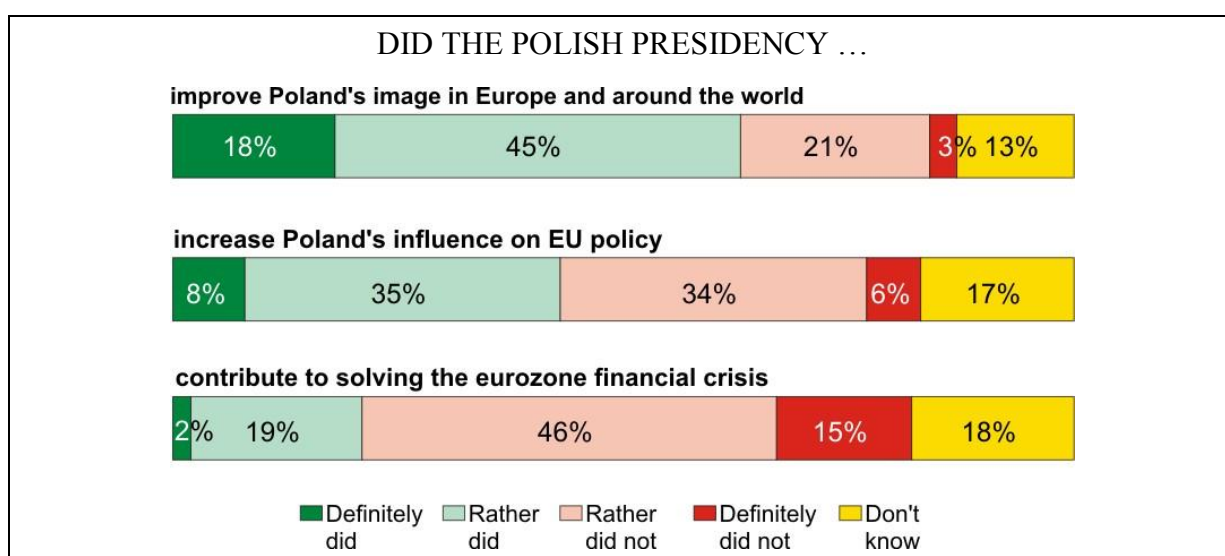
In the opinion of 45% of respondents, Poland was not sufficiently active during its presidency. On the other hand, the number of respondents considering Polish activity as sufficient is only slightly lower (37%).



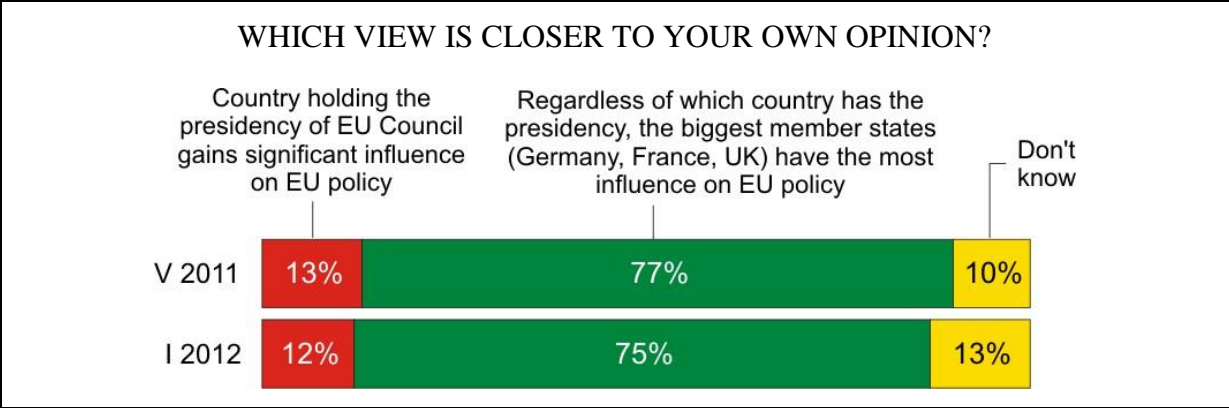
The effectiveness of Polish presidency is evaluated worse than the level of activity. The majority of respondents (55%) think that not much was achieved. About a quarter (26%) appreciate the effects of Polish presidency.



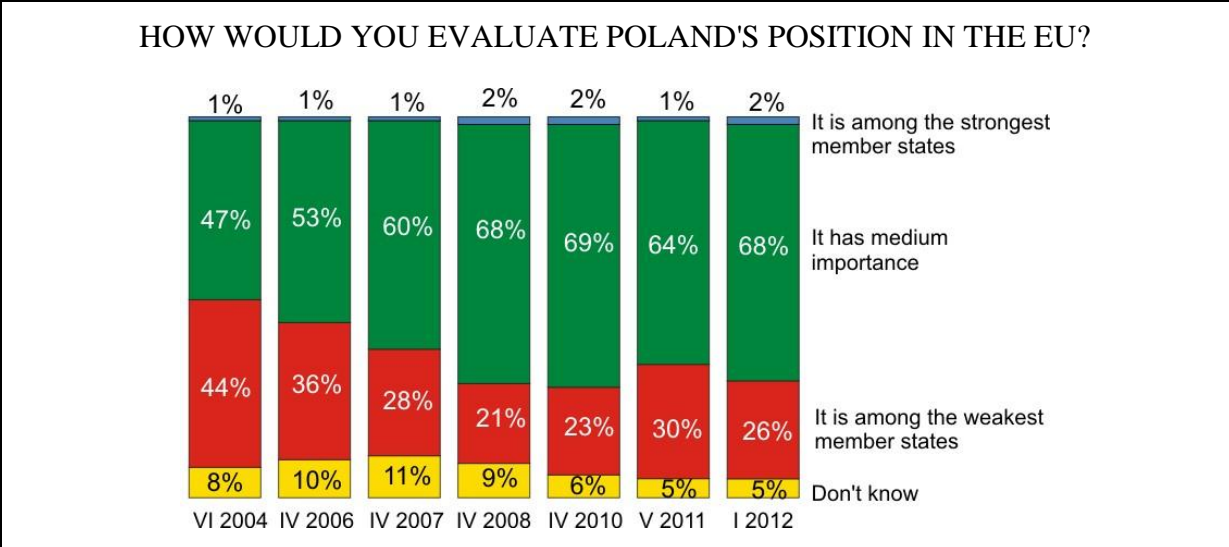
Some societal expectations related to the presidency have been fulfilled, especially those related to improving the image of Poland. According to almost two-thirds of respondents (63%), the image of Poland in Europe and around the world improved. The opinions about Poland's influence on EU policy are divided: 43% think Poland's influence increased, while 40% disagree. In spite of Poland's active role in solving the financial crisis in the eurozone (e.g. accepting the "six-pack"), the majority of respondents think that Polish presidency did not contribute to solving this problem.



Polish presidency did not change the conviction that, regardless of which country has the presidency, the biggest member states have the most influence on EU policy. Three-quarters (75%) share this view, while 12% think that the country holding the presidency gains significant influence on EU policy.



Poland is not considered to be among the most influential EU countries. The presidency did not change this assessment, but the position of our country in the EU is perceived somewhat better than in May 2011. The proportion of respondents thinking that Poland is insignificant decreased, while the percentage of those who consider it of medium importance increased. Presently, over two-thirds (68%) think Poland is of medium importance, while 26% think it is among the weakest EU members.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Evaluation of Polish presidency of the Council of the European Union", January 2012. Fieldwork for national sample: January 2012 (N=1058). The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.