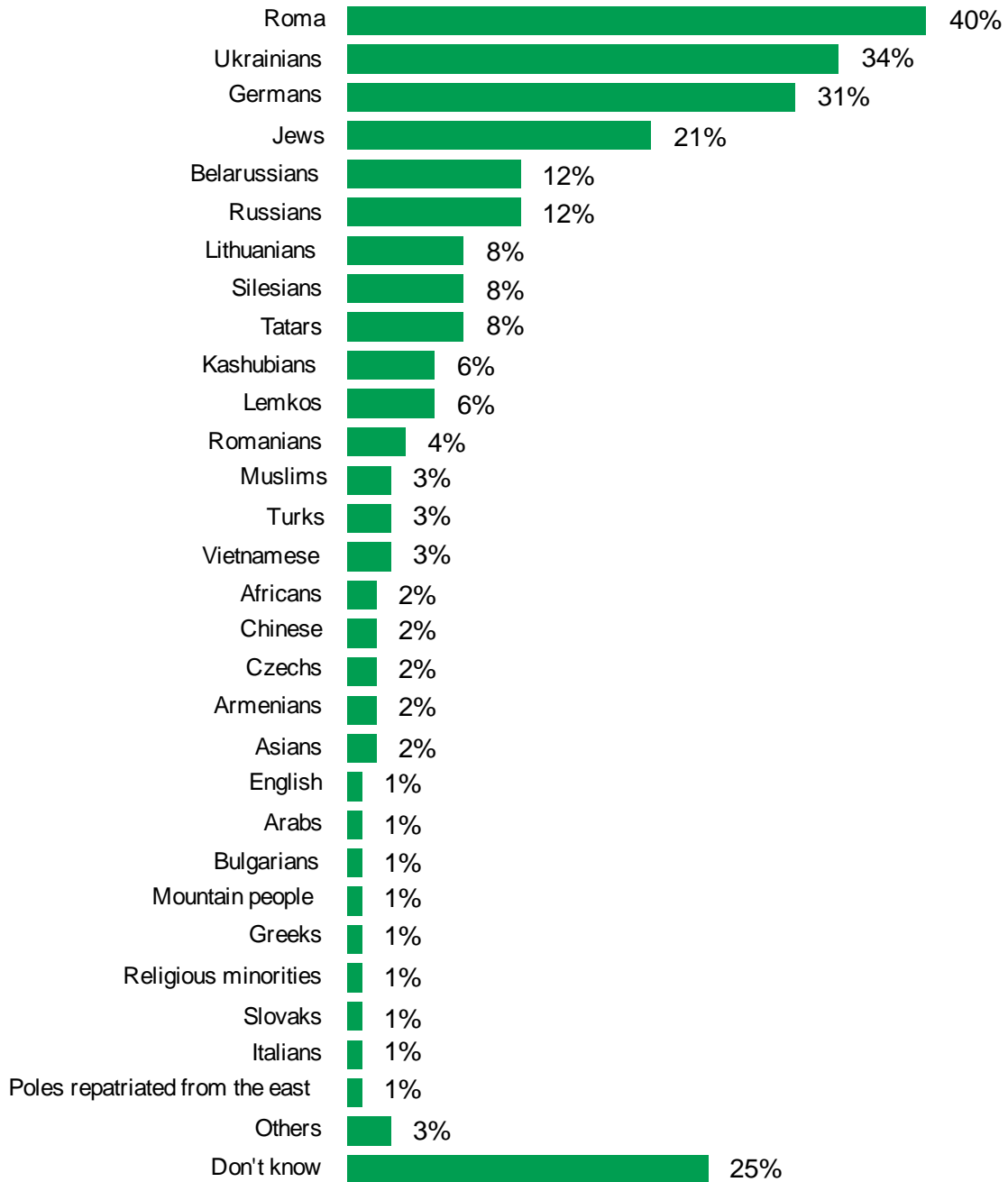


Perception of national and ethnic minorities

Poland has had a law on national and ethnic minorities for ten years. It gives them a number of rights, such as the right to spell their names according to the rules of minority language, freedom to use their language in public life and to study in this language. The law enumerates nine national minorities: Belarussian, Czech, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Jewish, and four ethnic minorities: Karaites, Lemkos, Roma and Tatars.

When respondents were asked to name all national and ethnic minorities they enumerated many more than listed in the law. The most commonly mentioned were Roma, followed by Ukrainians and Germans. A fifth of respondents mentioned Jews, and one-eighth spoke about Belarussians and Russians. Less than a tenth spoke about Lithuanians, Silesians, Tatars, Kashubians and Lemkos. A small proportions of respondents include Romanians, Turks and Vietnamese among national minorities living in Poland. Incidentally, religious minorities were mentioned in this context, most commonly Muslims. Comparing the survey with the national census shows that there is no clear correlation between the actual numbers of minority members and their perception.

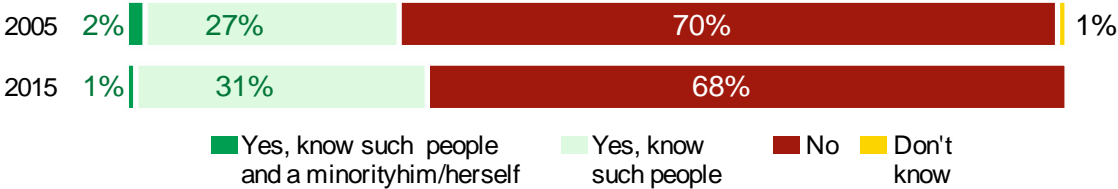
Please mention all national and ethnic minorities living in Poland



The presence of Roma in Poland is very strongly rooted in public consciousness, although, numbering ca. 17 thousand according to the census, they are less numerous than the German, Belarussian or Ukrainian minority. According to the census the German minority is the most numerous, but it only came third in frequency of mentioning. The Jewish minority is mentioned only slightly less frequently than the German, in spite of its small numbers, comparable with the size of the much less frequently mentioned Lithuanian minority (both number ca. 7 thousand people).

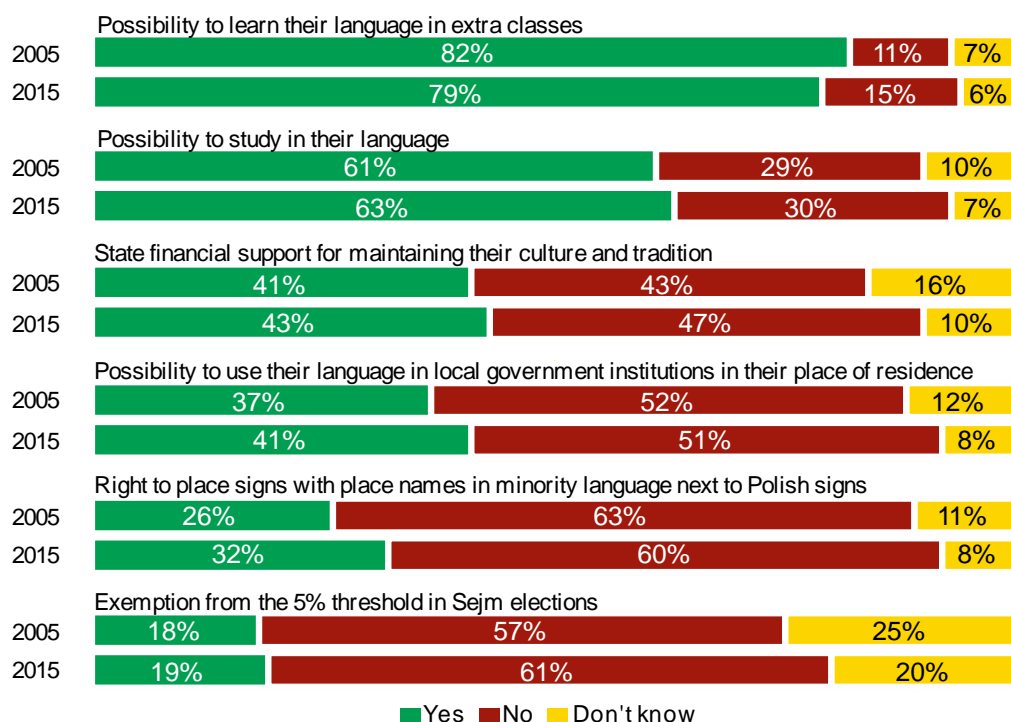
Almost a third of respondents (32%) declare acquaintance with a person belonging to national or ethnic minorities, while 1% consider themselves members of one of them. This number is consistent with census results.

Do you know a person belonging to a national or ethnic minority, or are you such a person yourself?



A vast majority of respondents think that members of national and ethnic minorities should be able to learn their language during extra classes. Almost two-thirds agree that they should have the opportunity to study in their language. Over two-fifths share the opinion that they should receive financial support from the state to maintain their culture and tradition, while a similar group of people agree that they should be able to communicate in their language with local authorities in their place of residence. One-third think that minorities should have the right to put signs with place names in their language, next to Polish signs in their place of residence. A fifth of respondents consider it right that representatives of minorities are exempt from crossing the 5% threshold in elections to the Sejm. In the last ten years, opinions about rights of ethnic and national minorities have changed little. It is worth pointing out that, since 2005, the support for the right to place double-language signs with place names has increased. Moreover, Poles more often believe that members of national and ethnic minorities should have the possibility to communicate in their language in local government institutions in their place of residence.

Do you agree that members of national and ethnic minorities should have the following rights and opportunities



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "National identity and perception of national and ethnic minority rights", July 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: June 2015, N=1011. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.