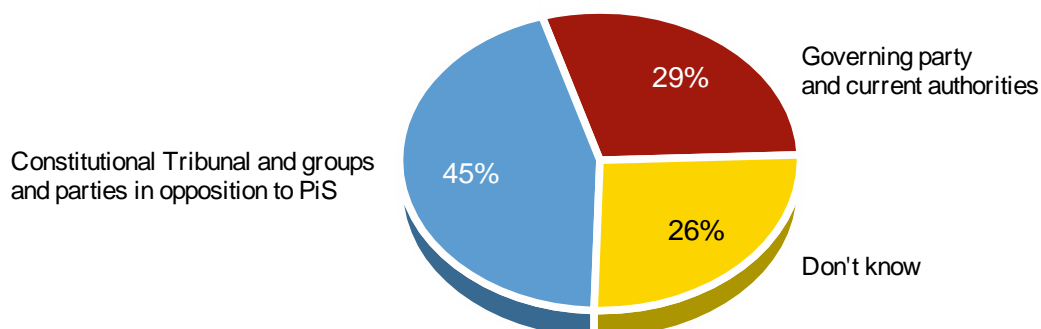


Public opinion about the Constitutional Tribunal crisis

In recent weeks the conflict around the Constitutional Tribunal has aggravated. On 9 March the Tribunal judged the December amendment to the Constitutional Tribunal Act to be unconstitutional. It ruled that the legislative process in the course of which the amendment Act was enacted was defective. Moreover, it ruled that the amendment made it impossible for the Constitutional Tribunal to carry out its activity diligently and efficiently and infringed the principles of a state ruled by law. The government of Beata Szydło does not accept the judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal and refuses to publish it. The publication of this judgement was recommended by the Venice Commission and the European Parliament in a recent resolution. The amendment to the Constitutional Tribunal Act was one of the reasons for the start of procedure monitoring the rule of law in Poland.

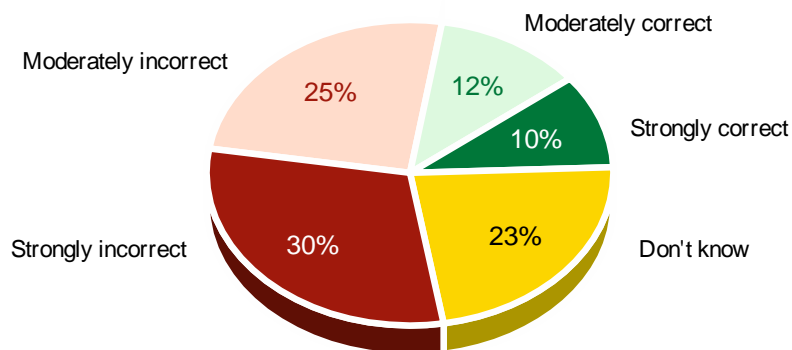
Almost half of respondents (45%) believe that the Tribunal and the oppositional parties and groups are right in this conflict, while more than a quarter (29%) support Law and Justice (PiS) and current authorities.

Which side do you support in the conflict around the Constitutional Tribunal?



The majority of Polish public opinion (55%) share the view that the refusal to publish the judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal about the unconstitutionality of the amendment is wrong, while 22% of respondents think it is right.

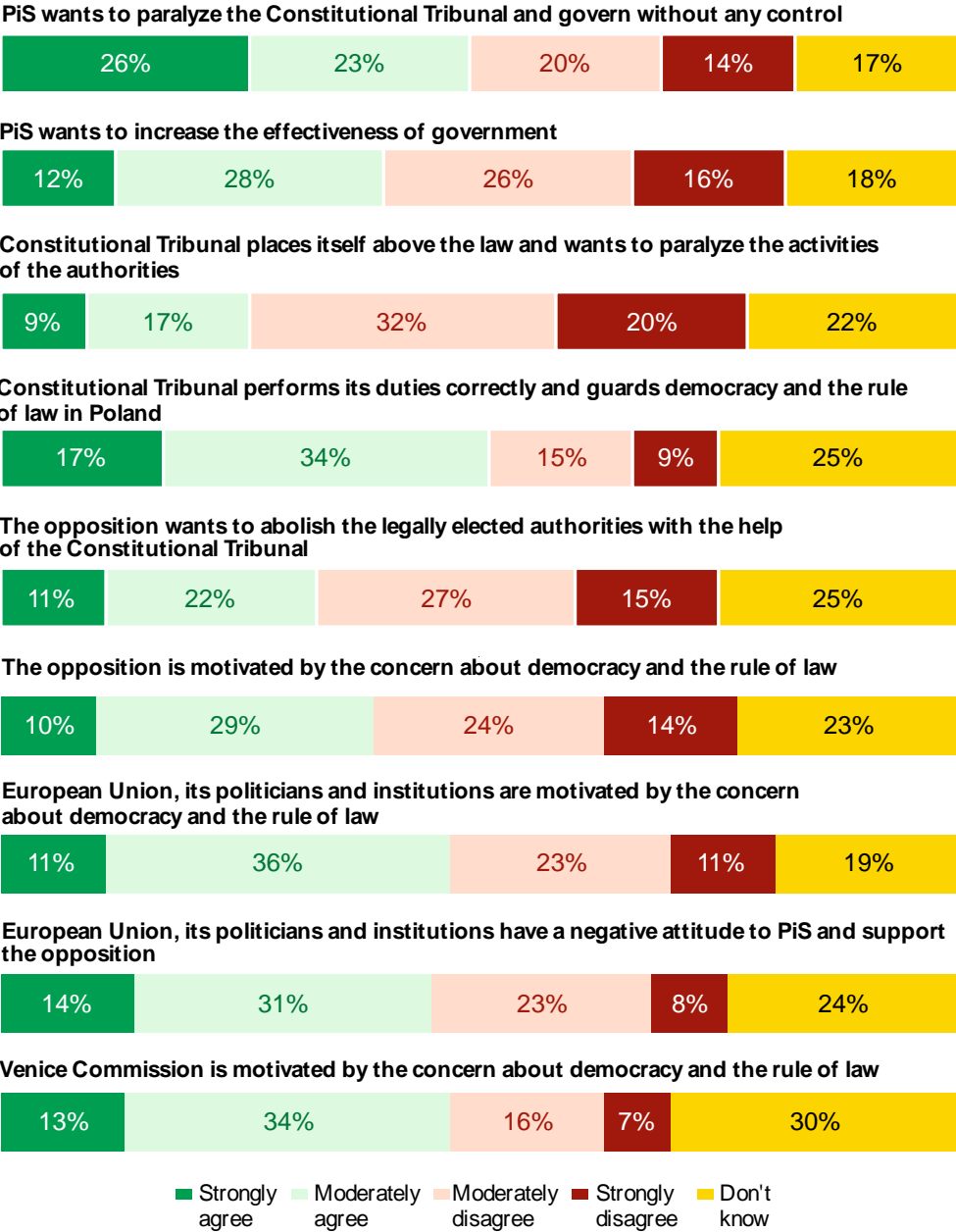
Did Beata Szydło, the Prime Minister, make the correct decision in refusing to publish the judgement of the Constitutional Tribunal judging the amendment to the Constitutional Tribunal Act to be unconstitutional?



Public opinion is far from unequivocal in evaluating the conflict around the Constitutional Tribunal. At the same time, some parties of that conflict are more reliable than others. The most reliable is the Constitutional Tribunal: over half of respondents (51%) think that it performs its duties well and guards democracy and the rule of law in Poland. At the same time, the majority (52%) reject the opinion that it places itself above the law and wants to paralyze the activities of the authorities. The latter view is shared by slightly more than a quarter (26%) of respondents. The actions of the Venice Commission and the European Union are evaluated in a less clear-cut manner. Almost half of respondents (47%) agree that the EU, its politicians and institutions care about the state of democracy and the rule of law in Poland. However, a similar group (45%) believe that the EU from the beginning had a negative attitude to PiS and supports the opposition. Almost half of respondents (47%) give good rating to the Venice Commission and believe it supports democracy and the rule of law in Poland. However, over two-fifths (43%) think that it does not have the full picture of Poland and does not understand what is happening here. The actions of the opposition are controversial. The proportions of people agreeing with the idea that it is motivated by the concern about democracy and the rule of law (39%) and disagreeing with it (38%) are practically the same. However, the plurality of Poles (42%) reject the claim that the opposition wants to abolish the legally elected authorities. About a third (33%) accuse the opposition of undermining the results of the elections with the intention of delegitimizing

the authorities. The most critical (though not uniform) opinions are directed at the governing party. The proportions of people who think that PiS wants to increase the effectiveness of government (40%) and reject this claim (42%) are similar. Almost half of respondents (49%) think that PiS wants to paralyze the Constitutional Tribunal and govern without any control.

Do you agree with the following opinions about the conflict around the Constitutional Tribunal?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Public Opinion on the Dispute over the Constitutional Tribunal", April 2016. Fieldwork for national sample: April 2016, N=1104. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.