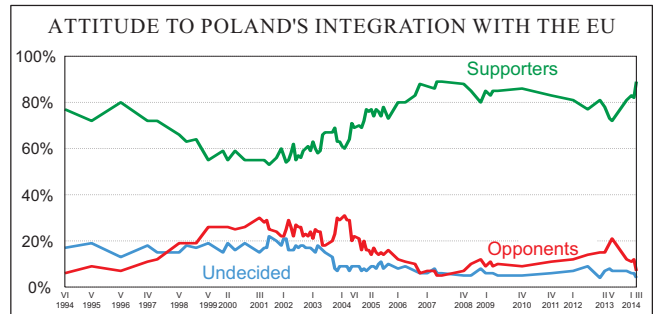


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- 10 YEARS OF POLAND'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
- OPINIONS ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY
- MATERIAL LIVING STANDARD OF FAMILIES

## 10 YEARS OF POLAND'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The acceptance of Poland's membership in the European Union is nearly universal. Although a decline in support for membership in the Community was noted in mid-2013, it rose in late 2013, reaching the present very high level of 89%. At the same time, the proportion of opponents of EU membership dropped to 7%. It appears that the strengthening pro-European attitude is a consequence of the events in Ukraine, which demonstrated to Poles the significance of accession. While the support for EU was never as unequivocally positive, the majority of respondents supported it since surveys started on this topic.

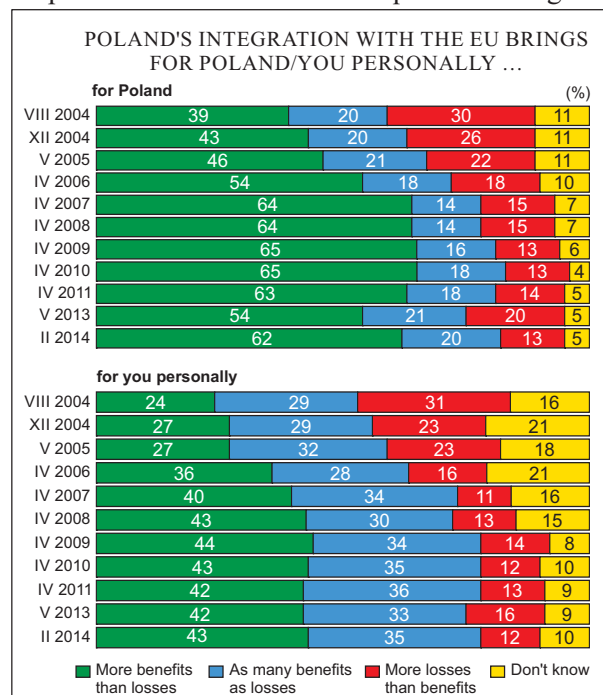


In the initial years of membership, the proportion of people convinced about positive effects of integration increased. Crisis in the Eurozone, which triggered economic slowdown in Poland, resulted in weakening of the conviction that Poland benefits from the integration. In 2014, the evaluation of the results of accession improved. Most people (62%) share the view that presence in the EU brings more benefits than losses, while 13% think the balance is negative. One-fifth (20%) believe costs and benefits to be roughly equal.

Since the beginning of CBOS surveys on perceived effects of EU membership, respondents evaluated the consequence of integration for Poland better than for themselves.

This holds true today, too. Over two-fifths (43%) think that the balance of costs and benefits is positive from individual perspective, while 12% experience negative effects and more than one-third (35%) are ambivalent.

Accession to the EU stimulated economic growth in Poland. It was highest in 2006-2007, when it exceeded 6% a year, and unemployment steadily decreased (decline from 18% in Jan. 2006 to 8.8% in Oct. 2008). Economic benefits from EU membership were associated with foreign investment, increase in foreign trade and utilization of EU funds. In spite of the economic slowdown, Poland avoided recession which affected other EU member states. Poles have been aware of the economic benefits of integration from the beginning.



According to surveys, the gains were especially visible in the years 2007 and 2008. Financial and economic crisis deteriorated the perceived economic consequences of EU

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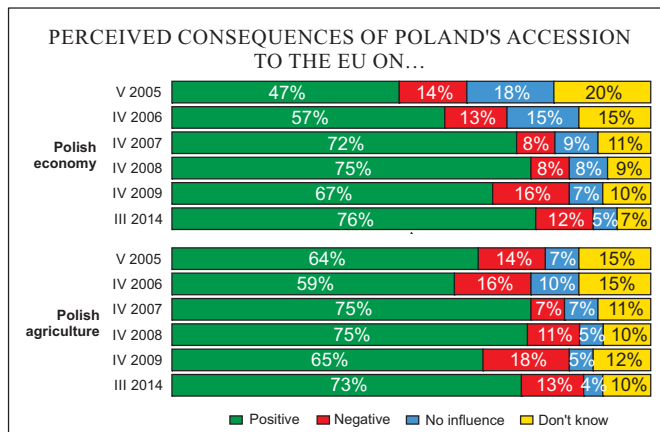
Translated by  
Michał Wenzel

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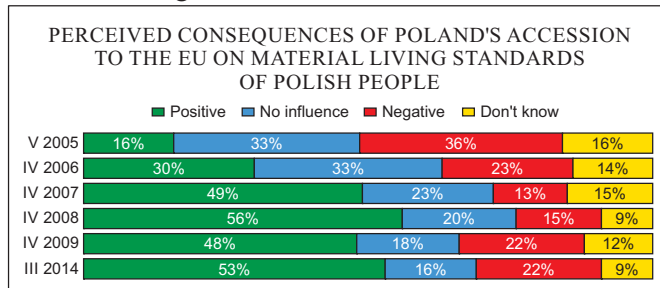
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membership, but, nevertheless, positive opinions remained prevalent. At present, in spite of relatively weak economic growth in 2012 and 2013 (below 2% yearly) and high level of unemployment (14% in January 2014), the perceived economic consequences of membership are better than in early 2009, at the beginning of the crisis. Positive opinions are expressed by 76% of respondents, while 12% are critical.

The balance of integration for agriculture is quite clear. Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) think that EU membership improved the conditions for farming, while 13% express the opposite view. Positive views prevail over negative among farmers as well (76% v. 17%).



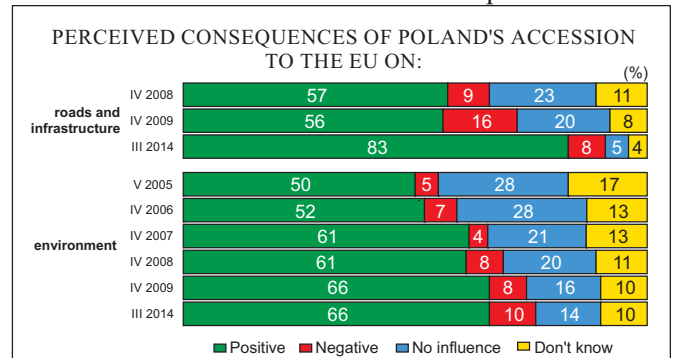
One of the most commonly noted results of accession is economic migration: 92% of respondents share the opinion that, after entering EU, more Poles started working abroad.



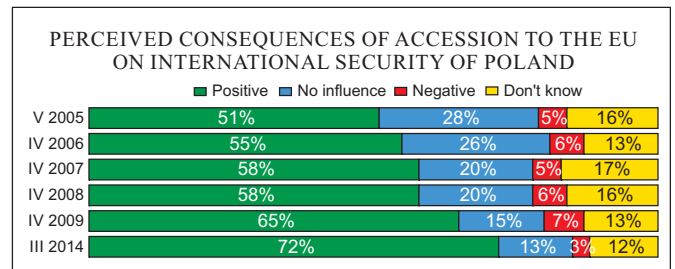
The improvement of the economy, noted already a year after the moment of accession, resulted in the improvement of material standard of living. In April 2008, over half of Poles noted the positive influence of integration on material living conditions. After the breakout of the financial crisis this opinion became less common. Today, from the perspective of 10 years of EU membership, positive consequences of integration on living standards are appreciated by 53% of respondents, while 22% are convinced the results were negative.

Among the most commonly noted positive consequences of membership is the improvement of roads and infrastructure. In the last 5 years, the proportion of people noting progress in this area increased by 27 percentage points (from 56% to 83%). As in the survey

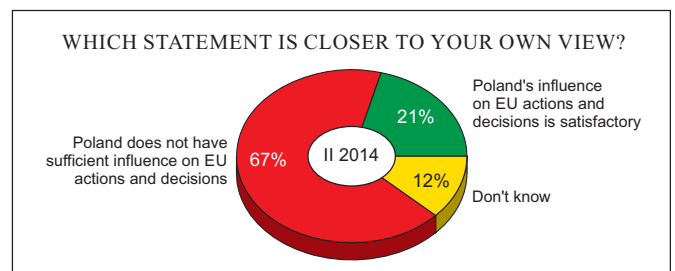
fielded 5 years ago, 66% of respondents consider the influence of EU on the environment to be positive.



In public opinion, EU accession had positive consequences for Poland's international position. Today, more frequently than in previous years, Poles tend to note and appreciate the improved security after EU accession. Almost three-quarters think that, as a member of the EU, Poland is more secure than before.

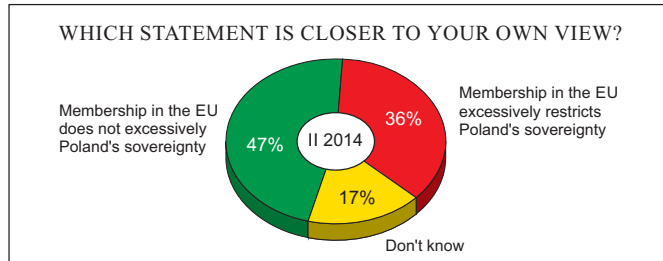


In spite of the widespread conviction that EU membership increased the importance of Poland in Europe (74% agree with this), the current position of Poland in the EU is not on the par with expectations. According to two-thirds of respondents (67%), this country does not have sufficient influence on actions and decisions of the Union. Only about one-fifth (21%) see the influence as sufficient.



Although Poland's influence on EU activities is perceived as insufficient, the plurality of respondents (47%) think that membership in this organization does not excessively restrict Poland's sovereignty. However, a sizeable group (36%) thinks otherwise. It appears, therefore, that while Poles note restrictions on sovereignty resulting from EU membership (especially as Poland's influence is seen as insufficient), the fears are not very strong. It is probably the result of the positive evaluations of the balance of membership in the EU, and from the conviction that benefits of membership far

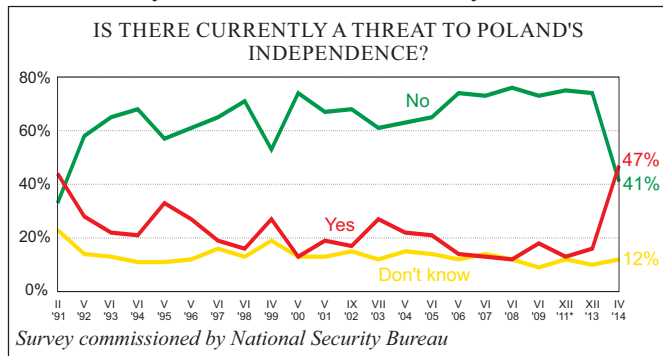
outweigh in importance the limitations associated with being a part of the EU.



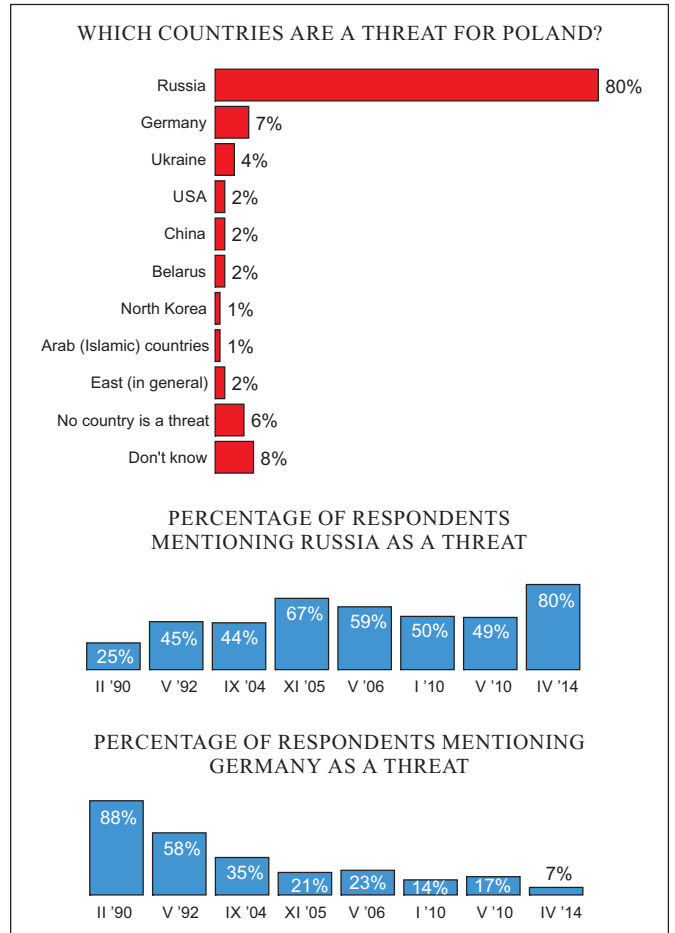
More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "10 years of Poland's EU membership", April 2014. Fieldwork for national sample: Feb. 2014 (N=1020) and March 2014 (N=1098). The random address samples are representative for adult population of Poland.

## OPINIONS ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY

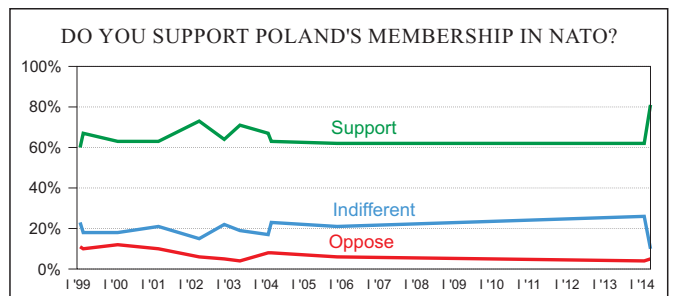
The events in Ukraine contributed to the heightened concern about international security of Poland. At present, it is on the highest level since 1991. Almost half of respondents (47%) think that there currently exists a threat to Poland's independence. Similar level of concern (44%) was recorded in 1991, when there were persistent fears about the acceptance of Poland's systemic transformation by the USSR, which then still existed. In the last 20 years such fears were far lower, and as late as December 2013 only less than one-fifth expressed them. Even the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia, while slightly increasing such fears, had relatively minor influence on security concerns.



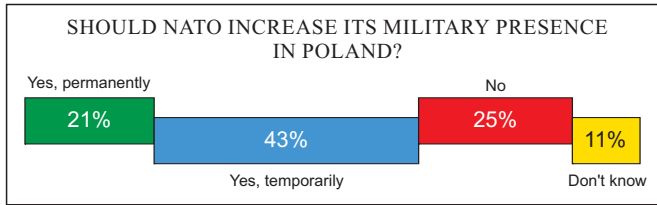
A vast majority of respondents (80%) names Russia among countries causing security concerns. Small proportions mention Germany (7%) and Ukraine (4%). Some respondents named USA, China, Belarus or the East in general (2% each), and North Korea or Arab countries (1% each). Compared with previous surveys, there is significant increase in the percentage of people convinced that Russia is a threat for this country. At the same time, since early 1990s there is systematic decrease in the perception of Germany as a threat (from 88% in 1990 to 7% now).



On 12 March there was 15th anniversary of Poland's accession to NATO. Membership in this alliance is one of the pillars of national security. From the very beginning its support has been high. Moreover, recent events convinced Poles even more about the benefits of membership. At present, four-fifths of respondents (81%, a 19-point increase from February) support Poland's membership in NATO, while 5% oppose it.



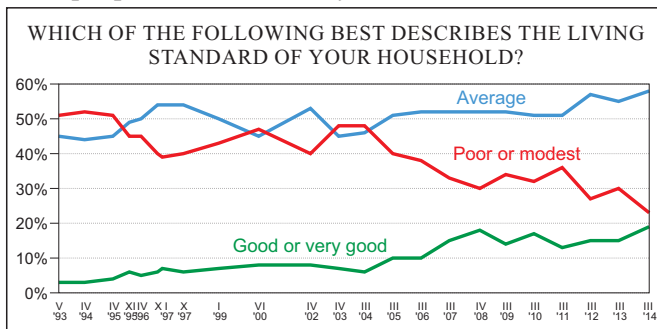
Poles have significant expectations from membership in the Alliance. The majority (64%) would like to see tangible evidence of allied support in the form of increased military presence in Poland. Over two-fifths (43%) think that military presence should be temporary, while one-fifth (21%) support permanent stationing of NATO forces in Poland. A quarter (25%) oppose military presence of NATO forces in Poland.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Opinions about national security and NATO"*, April 2014. Fieldwork for national sample: April 2014, N=1028. The random address samples are representative for adult population of Poland.

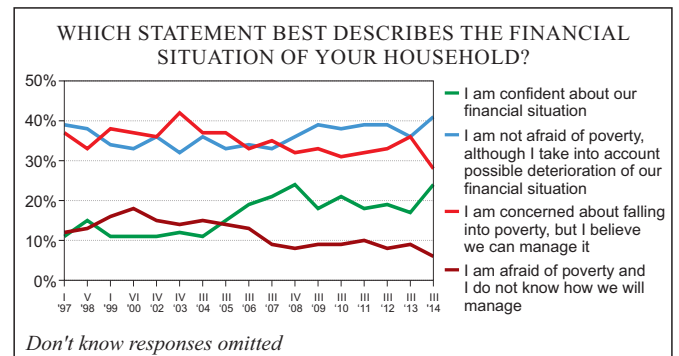
## MATERIAL LIVING STANDARD OF FAMILIES

The majority of respondents (58%) describe the material living standard of their families as average, i.e. they can afford everyday expenses, but have to save for larger purchases. Less than a quarter (23%) think their standard is below average; however, only 3% admit they live in poverty and cannot afford even essential goods. Almost one-fifth (19%) describe living conditions as above average, while 2% describe them as very good: these people can afford luxury.



In the last decade, there has been a strong decrease in the proportion of respondents describing their living standards as below average (it dropped by half since 2004) and a three-fold increase in the proportion of people who feel they live on above-average level. As earlier, about half describe the standard as average.

This year, the subjective perception of poverty is lowest recorded in the last decade. A quarter of respondents (24%, 13-point increase relative to 2004) are confident about the financial future of their families. Over two-fifths (41%, 5-point increase) are not afraid of poverty, but take into account the possibility that household living conditions may deteriorate. More than a quarter (28%, 9-point drop relative to 2004) are afraid of poverty, but are convinced that their families would manage. One-sixteenth (6%, 9-point drop relative to 2004) are very pessimistic about the financial situation of their families: they are afraid of poverty and do not know how to deal with this situation.



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *"Material living standard of families"*, April 2014. Fieldwork for national sample: March 2014, N=1098. The random address samples are representative for adult population of Poland.

### In addition to the reports referred to above, the following have been published recently (in Polish):

- ◆ Poles About their Debts and Savings
- ◆ Opinions About Democracy
- ◆ Opinions About Job Market and Threat of Unemployment
- ◆ Party Preferences in April
- ◆ Opinions About Public Institutions
- ◆ Lent and Easter Customs
- ◆ Attitude to Government
- ◆ Social Moods in April
- ◆ In Anticipation of John Paul II'
- ◆ Trust in Politicians in April
- ◆ Situation in Ukraine before Separatists' Actions in the East
- ◆ Improvements in Voting Accessibility - Knowledge, Opinions and Expectations
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