

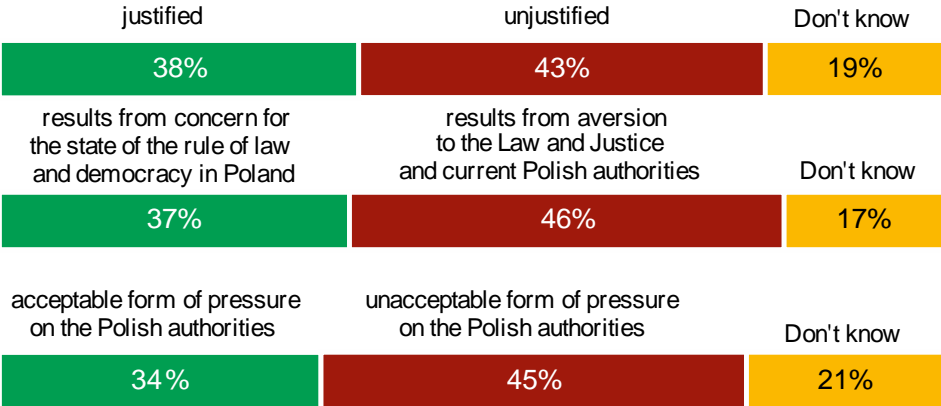
Reactions to triggering of Article 7 of TEU against Poland

On December 20, 2017, the European Commission decided to launch Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union against Poland and asked the Council of the EU to declare the existence of a clear risk of a serious violation of European values in Poland. At the same time, the Commission issued the fourth recommendation on the rule of law, in which it called on the Polish authorities to amend the laws reforming the judiciary and "restore the independence and legitimacy of the Constitutional Tribunal."

The activities of the EU institutions aimed at protecting the rule of law in Poland have aroused public controversy from the beginning. Triggering Article 7 of the TEU, like the previous actions of the European Commission and the European Parliament, is received ambiguously. The European Commission's request to declare the existence of a clear risk of a serious violation of European values in Poland is slightly more often perceived critically than approved. Over two-fifths of respondents (43%) believe that triggering Article 7 of the TEU is unjustified, while 38% are convinced of the legitimacy of this step. In the opinion of nearly half of Poles (46%) the decision of the European Commission results from aversion to the Law and Justice (PiS) and the current authorities of our country. Fewer respondents (37%) perceive it as an expression of concern for the state of the rule of law and democracy

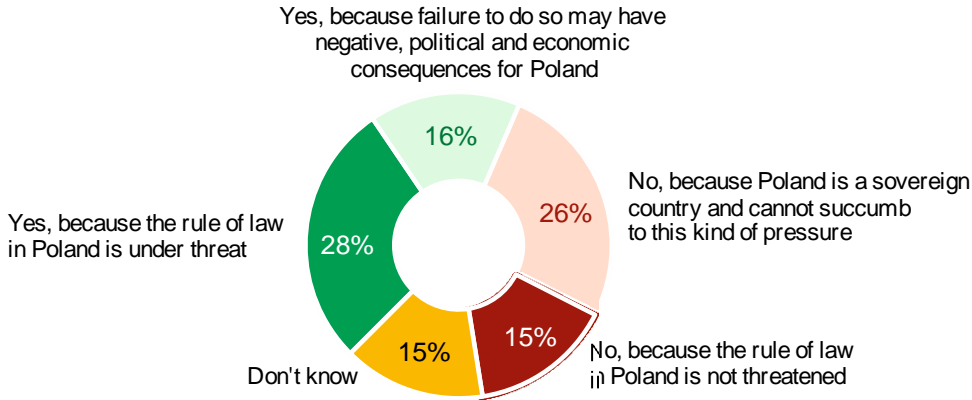
in Poland. In addition, in the public opinion, the EC's request to declare the existence of a clear risk of a serious violation of European values in Poland is more often considered as unacceptable (45%) than as acceptable (34%) form of pressure on the Polish authorities.

In your opinion, triggering of the Article 7 of the TEU by the EC towards Poland is:



Poles are divided in opinions on whether our country should take into account the recommendations of the European Commission regarding withdrawal of some changes in the judiciary and the functioning of the Constitutional Tribunal. In total, 44% of respondents think that Poland should meet the Commission's expectations. Fewer people (41%) are of the opposite opinion. Proponents and opponents of taking into account the recommendations of the European Commission approach the issue from different perspectives. People who favour the adoption of EU recommendations justify their position by the conviction that the rule of law in Poland is at stake, rather than expressing concerns that failure to take into account the expectations of the European Commission may have negative, political and economic consequences for Poland. Opponents of taking into account the Commission's recommendations more often refer to the sovereignty of Poland than to the lack of threat to the rule of law in our country.

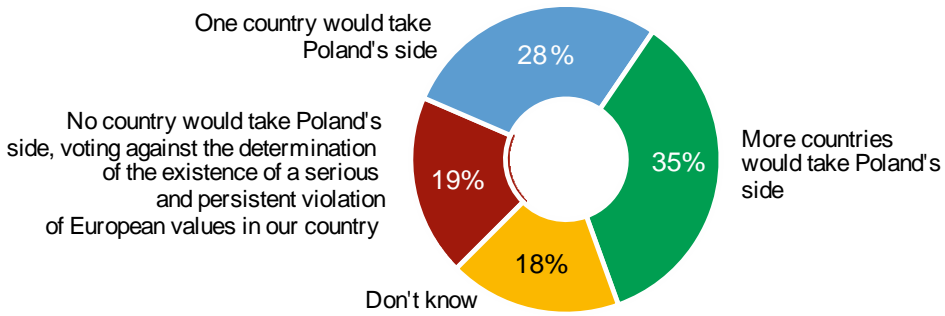
Should Poland take into account European Commission's recommendations regarding the withdrawal of some of the changes in the judiciary and the functioning of the Constitutional Tribunal?



Triggering legal mechanisms ensuring that member states adhere to EU values, including maintaining the rule of law, against Poland has not raised concerns about the introduction of sanctions against our country. At present, slightly more than half of respondents (51%) are concerned with the possibility of sanctions against Poland, whereas two fifths of respondents (40%) are not afraid of this.

If, as the next step of the procedure, there is a vote in the European Council on the determination of the existence of a serious and persistent violation of European values by Poland, which may result in the introduction of sanctions, in public opinion at least one country would take Poland's side. A total of 63% of respondents share this opinion, in which 35% believe that there would be more such countries.

If there is a vote in the European Council on the determination of the existence a serious and permanent violation by Poland of European values, which in the future may result in the introduction of sanctions against our country, how do you think EU member states would behave?



Respondents convinced that at least one member state would share Poland's position by voting against the determination of the existence of a serious and permanent violation of European values by our country, most often spontaneously mentioned Hungary in this context (77%). Relatively many people count on support from the Czech Republic (22%), Slovakia (16%) and Bulgaria (14%). Moreover, Lithuania (8%), Germany (7%) and Romania (5%) were mentioned. Generally, Poles expect solidarity above all from the countries of our region or, more broadly, post-communist countries.

More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Reactions on Triggering Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union against Poland", January 2018. Fieldwork for national sample: January 2018, N=951. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.