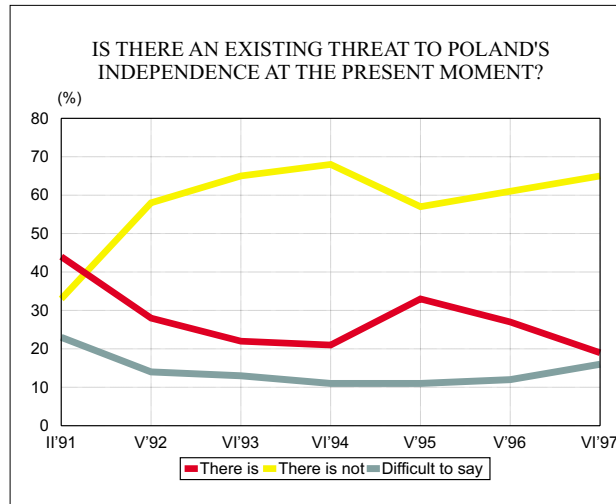


IN THIS ISSUE:

- POLAND'S SECURITY AND RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS
- DIRECTIONS OF POLAND'S FOREIGN COOPERATION
- THE FLOODS IN POLAND
- ATTITUDES TOWARDS ABORTION AFTER THE VERDICT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL TRIBUNAL

POLAND'S SECURITY AND RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS



Half way through the year, after years of effort and overcoming the resistance of Russia, Poland was officially invited to talks on NATO membership. What influence did this decision have on the country's feeling of security. What in this context is the perception of our relations with our three biggest neighbours - Russia, Germany and Ukraine?

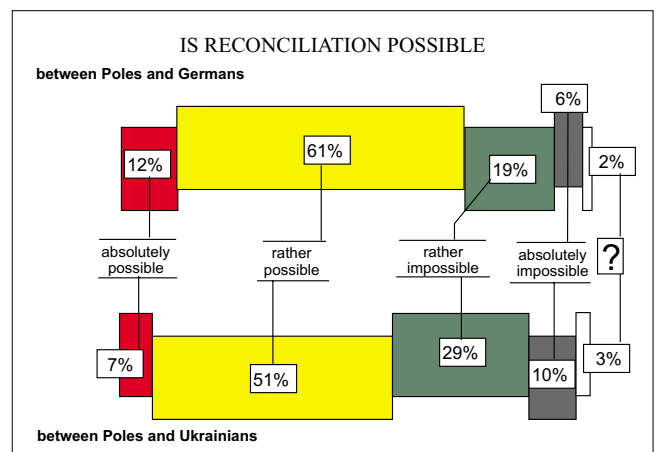
The changes in the balance of forces on the international arena at the beginning of the nineties were the cause in our society of a major feeling of uncertainty and threat - almost half of those polled were afraid at the

time that our country might lose its independence. In the years 1993-94 there was a clear decrease in the feeling of threat (to around one fifth), on the other hand in 1995 we noted its renewed increase, which no doubt was a result of Russia's stubborn opposition to Polish entry into NATO. However in the following year the feeling of threat clearly lessened and this year, on the eve of NATO's Madrid summit, such fears were experienced by only nearly one fifth of respondents.

Respondents perceiving a threat to Poland's sovereignty do not always have in mind a danger coming from other states. Almost one in three of those polled in this group sees a threat in the faulty operation of Poland's legal system, the immaturity of the political elite or our "national failings", social pathologies etc. People who treat as real the threat to Poland's independence from "outside", most often see it coming from Russia or the - vaguely described - "neighbours from the East". The majority of all the respondents perceive Russia in addition as a state which has not given up its imperial ambitions, which can threaten Poland's sovereignty if not now then in the future.

The eventual decisions on NATO enlargement towards the East which were advantageous to Poland made for an increase in trust towards the West. The conviction that in the event of a direct threat to its independence our country can count on help from western countries is currently expressed by 58% of those polled (compared to 27% of sceptics).

In the poll we also mentioned the question of Polish-German and Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation. The majority of respondents think that an end to the strife and quarrels with our biggest immediate neighbours is possible. However respondents show much more optimism towards the steps being taken towards reconciliation with the Germans than with the Ukrainians. People who are over 65 years old, the least educated, farmers and unskilled workers have the most sceptical attitude to the possibility of both Polish-German and Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation.



PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH CENTER - CBOS -

4a Żurawia
00-503 Warszawa
POLAND

Ph: (48 22) 629 35 69
(48 22) 628 37 04
(48 22) 693 58 94

Fax: (48 22) 629 40 89

E-mail: cbos@pol.pl

<http://www.korpo.pol.pl>

© COPYRIGHT BY CBOS 1997

ALL SOURCES MUST BE CREDITED WHEN ANY PART OF THIS PUBLICATION IS REPRODUCED

Despite the fact that nearly two fifths of respondents see reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians as being impossible, a clear majority approves of the steps leading to such an ordering of our contacts. An example of this may be the positive attitude to the declaration signed in Kiev between presidents Kwasniewski and Kuchma - two thirds of those polled saw it as necessary. The conviction that an independent Ukraine is advantageous for Poland is just as frequently held.

Source: CBOS bulletin "Poland's security and relations with its neighbours", August '97

DIRECTIONS OF POLAND'S FOREIGN COOPERATION

The fall of the Yalta order set Poland the question of choosing partners in cooperation in the political, economic and military areas. In the field of multilateral cooperation the choice made by our country on the threshold of the nineties - the aspiration to join the European Union and NATO - enjoys the support of a clear majority of the public. This does not however prejudice the issue of bilateral contacts. What are the social expectations concerning the policy conducted by Poland in this field? What states, in society's judgement, are the most desirable partners, and in what areas?

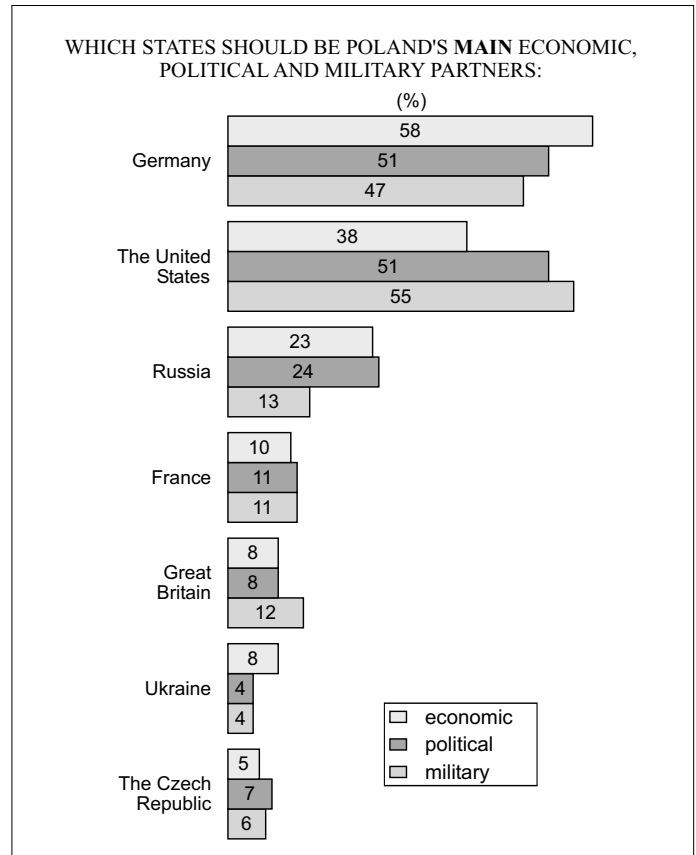
Out of a list of eighteen states, the respondents indicated five with which Poland should cooperate more closely in three areas: economic, political and military (they were asked separately about each area). Afterwards out of the five states selected, two states were indicated as the **main** desirable partners for cooperation. On the list of states were all countries directly bordering Poland and the more important (from the point of view of our interests) European and non-European states.

Countries that are seen as economic powers are mentioned first as Poland's most **desirable** economic partners but - as it seems - the element of geographical closeness and the given country's real involvement in economic relations with Poland also plays a part. That is probably why the respondents judge cooperation with Germany as more attractive than with the United States, and among desirable partners in this field they also include the Czech Republic. It is also worth noting the relatively high position of the Ukraine.

As in the case of economic cooperation the leading group among **desirable** partners in the political field consists mainly of great powers. However when it comes to the next in line a marked difference occurs - states that are Poland's neighbours clearly come before others, that being economically developed were indicated as being more attractive partners in the economic field. Among the **main** political partners Germany and the US are most often indicated, the number three is Russia.

Social expectations concerning military cooperation can be described as clearly pro-western. The first two **desirable** partners are the same as in the other areas, but this time the US is ahead of Germany. As a desirable military partner Russia is only number six.

Among the **main** partners in a common defence policy Russia regains third place, it is true; it is however indicated almost as frequently as the countries following - Great Britain and France.



Generally speaking, in all areas Poland's socially most desirable partners are Germany and the US. A numerous group of respondents would also like to see Russia among Poland's main economic and political partners, but relatively few would accept close cooperation with that country in the field of defence.

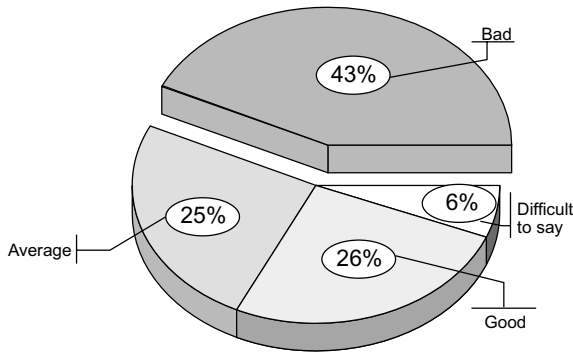
Source: CBOS bulletin "Opinions on the directions of Poland's cooperation with other countries", August 97.

THE FLOODS IN POLAND

July flowed past in our country under the sign of the "flood of the millennium". The reaction of the state authorities and their activities during the cataclysm became the subject of criticism from many sides. Simultaneous television, radio and press reports about the actions organised on behalf of the flood victims show that the help of Poles solidary with those who had suffered gained an extra-ordinary momentum. Proof of this is shown by the amount of money obtained during public collections and the number of donations in kind sent to the flooded areas.

In a CBOS opinion poll conducted during the floods we asked respondents to assess the competence of the actions of the central authorities and their direct or indirect participation in help for the flood victims. People suffering damages as a result of the floods also assessed the extent of their losses and the activities of the local

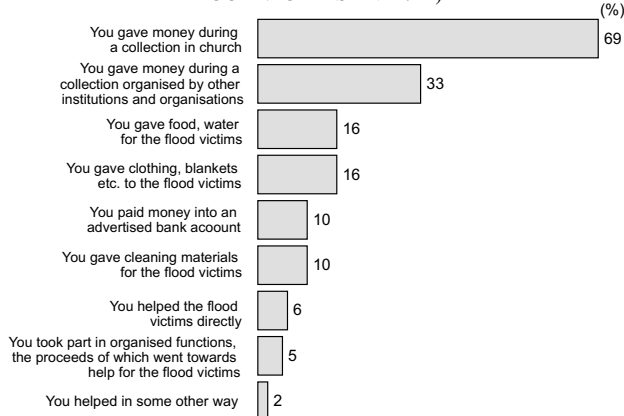
HOW IN GENERAL DO YOU ASSESS THE COMPETENCE OF THE CENTRAL AUTHORITIES IN THE CASE OF THESE FLOODS? (ANSWERS OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO DID NOT SUFFER DURING THE FLOODS - N = 744)



Respondents who did not have direct experience of the floods give the government more negative (43%) than positive (26%) assessments for its actions in the fight against the cataclysm.

Opinions on the competence of the central authorities' actions are differentiated most according to party preference and people's attitude to the government. Negative evaluations are most frequent among potential voters for the Freedom Union (UW), Solidarity Election Action (AWS) and the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP) as well as people who declare themselves to be opponents of the present government. On the other hand, better assessments of the government's actions are to be found among the sympathisers of the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), the Union of Labour (UP) and the National Party of Old Age and Disability Pensioners (KPEiR) as well as respondents favourably disposed towards the government. In the electorate of the Polish Peasant Party (PSL), which is one of the government coalition partners, negative opinions predominate.

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO HELP THE FLOOD VICTIMS? (REPLIES OF PEOPLE WHO DID NOT SUFFER DURING THE FLOODS AND TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF HELPING THE FLOOD VICTIMS - N = 744)



In addition to this, the actions of the central government meet with most criticism on the part of management staff and the intelligentsia, low level white collar workers and private entrepreneurs. Positive assessments are most frequent among the jobless and skilled and unskilled manual workers.

It is necessary to treat the views of people who suffered during the floods with great care considering the

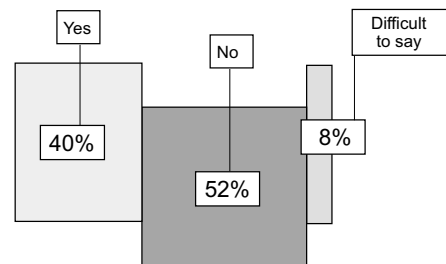
small numbers of this group in the test sample (4% of all respondents). In general these people think that the local authorities, especially gmina councils, performed better than the central authorities.

Respondents who were harmed or suffered losses as a result of the flooding, in general assess the activities of the specialist services which brought them aid as being good. Opinions about them are much better than is the case with the authorities on various levels, especially at the centre. The best evaluations were recorded by the fire brigade and the army (73% and 69% respectively).

The majority (69%) of those respondents who did not suffer during the floods, declare that they took the opportunity of helping the flood victims. In most cases money was donated in churches and during collections organised by other institutions and organisations, somewhat less often donations in kind were given in the form of food, clothing, cleaning materials. Direct help (building flood barriers, cleaning, cooking, taking in flood victims under one's roof, saving property and other forms of help) was given mainly by respondents from flood hit areas.

Despite the undoubted solidarity with the people who have suffered as a result of the floods, the idea of introducing a special tax for helping the flood victims and repairing the flood damage does not gain general support - half the respondents are against it. Such a tax is perceived in the category of national solidarity, it is also a consequence of people's ideas about whose duty is it to help the flood victims. The opponents of a general tax for flood victims and to remove its after effects predominate among people who expect the state to fulfil a caring role - there are more supporters among those who think that the whole society should help the flood victims.

IN THE PRESENT SITUATION DO YOU THINK THAT A SPECIAL TAX SHOULD BE INTRODUCED ON EVERYBODY, THE INCOME TO BE ALLOCATED TO HELP THE FLOOD VICTIMS AND CLEARING UP THE FLOOD DAMAGE?



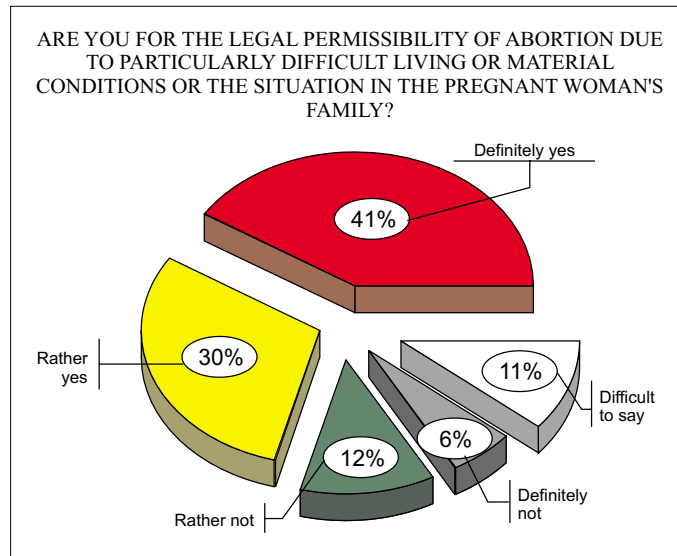
Source: CBOS bulletin "The floods - a test of social solidarity" and "The activities of the authorities and specialist services during the floods", August '97.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ABORTION AFTER THE VERDICT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL TRIBUNAL

In late May the Constitutional Tribunal ruled that last year's liberalization of the anti-abortion act (including the provision allowing abortion if a pregnant woman's living conditions are hard or her personal situation is difficult) is unconstitutional. The Sejm has

half a year to relate to this verdict. Some MPs have announced that they will attempt to conduct a referendum on the permissibility of abortion.

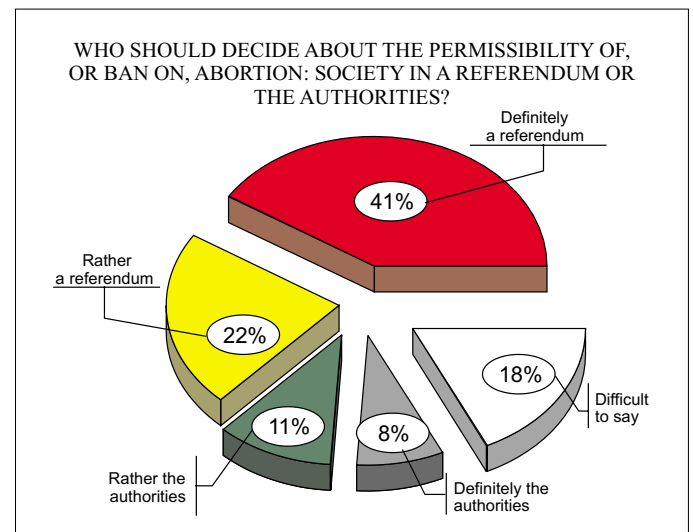
The views of Polish society on the issue of legal regulation of abortion are quite stable. The present results are similar to the results from September '96. Half of the respondents believe that abortion should be allowed with some restrictions or without any, a little over a quarter believe that abortion should be banned, although they allow some exceptions, while one in seven of the respondents opts for a strict ban. The factor most strongly diversifying the respondents' opinions on this question is their declared frequency of participation in religious practices.



A large majority of the persons who believe that abortion should be allowed (with or without restrictions) or allow some exceptions to the ban on abortion opt for legal permissibility of abortion for so-called social reasons. They make up 51% of the total polled population. The slight changes of opinion on this issue observed over recent years show that neither the last verdict of the Constitutional Tribunal, nor the

discussions about the problem of permissibility of abortion for so-called social reasons, which have been going on for years, have had a notable effect on the views of society.

Almost two thirds of the respondents believe that the question of permissibility or ban on abortion should be decided by society in a referendum rather than by the authorities. However, if the idea of solving the question of the legal permissibility of abortion in a referendum is confronted with the opinion of the opponents of abortion stressing the ethical character of the problem (as an alternative, in a separate question - "The problem of abortion cannot be solved in a referendum, because it is a moral issue, independent of the majority opinion"), the number of respondents who are for the referendum drops to 42% and the number of those who believe that this problem cannot be solved in this way goes up to 46%. It seems to indicate a very high susceptibility of public opinion to the persuasive character of expressions used in the questions on this issue.



Source: CBOS bulletin "Attitude towards abortion after the verdict of the Constitutional Tribunal", July '97.

In addition to the bulletins referred to above, the following have been published recently:

Attitudes to the government, the prime minister and the ruling coalition

Social moods after the great floods

Trust in politicians in July

The floods - the causes of material losses, the forms of help demanded

The assessment of the election chances of the biggest political groups. The phenomenon of "tactical" voting

Negative voting and electoral antipathies

For more information on CBOS services and publications please contact:

CBOS POLAND
4a, Żurawia, 00-503 Warsaw
Phones: (48 22) 629 35 69, 628 37 04
Fax: (48 22) 629 40 89

E-mail: cbos@pol.pl

<http://www.korpo.pol.pl/cbos>

CBOS expertise in providing professional, accurate and timely research studies has made us the leading authority in political, social, international and consumer research concerning Poland.