

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- THE POLES, CZECHS AND HUNGARIANS ON TAXES
- OPINIONS ON PROPERTY RESTITUTION
- ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUDIOVISUAL AND COMPUTER PIRACY
- THE POLES ON HOLIDAY

**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](mailto:cbos@pol.pl)

<http://www.cbos.pl>

© COPYRIGHT BY CBOS 1999

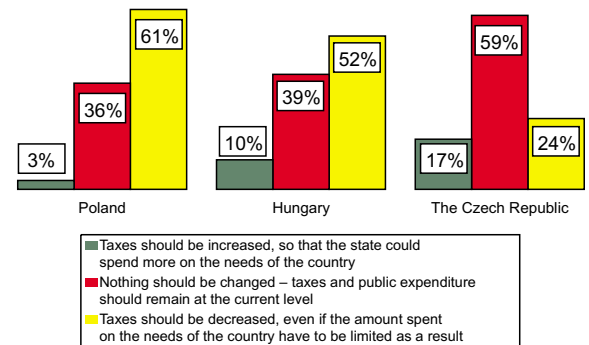
ALL SOURCES MUST BE CREDITED WHEN ANY PART OF THIS PUBLICATION IS REPRODUCED

## THE POLES, CZECHS AND HUNGARIANS ON TAXES

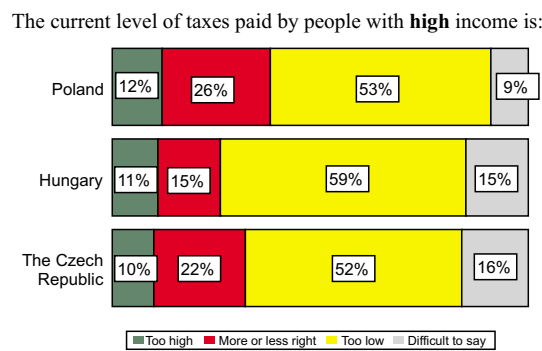
Among residents of the three of "Visegrad Group" member countries, Poles are the most convinced that the taxes in their country are too high. Most of them believe that taxes should be decreased, even if public expenditure had to be limited as a result. Hungarians opt for lowering taxes rather than maintaining their current level, too. On the contrary, in the Czech Republic most respondents accept the current tax level, and those who would like taxes to be decreased are in a minority.

In all three countries, respondents believe that their tax

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE STATE DEPENDS ON THE AMOUNT OF TAXES COLLECTED. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN THIS RESPECT:



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF TAXES PAID BY PEOPLE WITH HIGH, AVERAGE AND LOW INCOME? IS IT TOO HIGH, MORE OR LESS RIGHT OR TOO LOW?



incomes pay too much tax. Hungarians have a similar opinion on taxes paid by the poorest residents of their country (80%). The Czech are less convinced - 63% share this view.

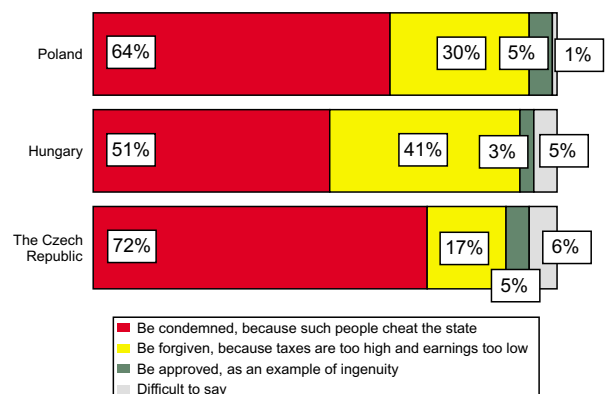
The opinion on taxes paid by the richest people is a little more divided, although in all three countries over half of the respondents believe that they are too low. The Hungarians are more convinced about it (59%) than the Poles (53%) and the Czechs (52%). The opinion of Poles in this respect is the most divided - one quarter of respondents believe that the level of taxes paid by the richest Poles is just right, and one in eight think that it is even too high.

Taxpayers behave in a similar way everywhere. They try to reduce the amount of tax paid as much as possible, not always using legal methods. The simplest method of tax evasion is hiding part of one's income. In all countries that took part in our survey, most respondents

systems tolerate too large differences between the incomes of individual citizens. Those who earn the most do not pay enough tax, while those with the lowest incomes pay too much. Obviously, a low level of tolerance to differences in income may be associated with rather strong egalitarian tendencies in this respect, which are characteristic of most societies that have experience of living in a socialist economy.

In all three countries discussed here, the respondents' views are the most consistent as far as taxes paid by people with low incomes are concerned. The vast majority believe that they are too high. The Poles are most convinced. As many as 91% of them believe that people with low

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT PEOPLE HIDING A PART OF THEIR SALARY IN ORDER TO DECREASE INCOME TAX? SHOULD SUCH BEHAVIOUR:



regard such behaviour as blameworthy and treat it as cheating the state. The Czechs disapprove of such behaviour the most. In contrast, Hungarians seem the most tolerant to such acts, as two fifths of them expressed the opinion that such behaviour should be forgiven, because taxes are generally too high.

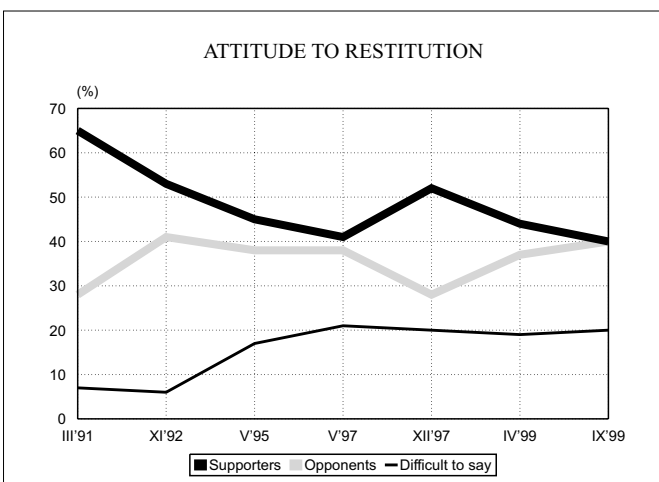
Similarly, in all three countries most respondents believe that giving false information in order to obtain social benefits from the state should be condemned. Here, also, Hungarians are the most tolerant almost two-fifths of them think that such acts should be forgiven. One quarter of Poles and slightly less than one-fifth of our Czech respondents share this view.

In all three countries illegal employment, practised in order to avoid the costs associated with employing people, is condemned the most. Over four fifths of respondents in Poland and Hungary (83% in each of these countries), and over three quarters of the Czech (76%) believe that such behaviour is blameworthy.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The Poles, Czechs and Hungarians on taxes", October 1999.

## OPINIONS ON PROPERTY RESTITUTION

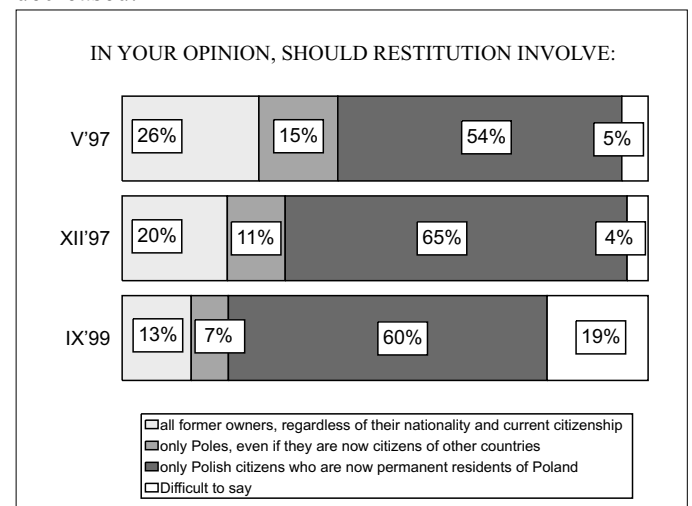
Poland is the last country in Central and Eastern Europe where property restitution (the term reprivatisation is used in Poland) has not yet been carried out. After almost ten years of dispute, at the beginning of September the government approved a bill on restitution. In accordance with this bill, persons whose property was nationalised after World War II, in violation of the law in force at that time, will receive compensation. Such property will be returned in kind or, alternatively, former owners will receive compensation in restitution bills. However, in both cases only half of the value of the nationalised property will be refunded.



Support for the idea of property restitution is not so unquestionable now as in the early period of transformation. The change is caused by the passage of time, as well as by public discussion on the financial and legal problems connected with restitution. Currently the number of supporters of restitution is the same as the number of opponents (40%). The most important

argument for restitution is an ethical one – it is seen as a remedy for past injustice and restitution of the inviolable property right. On the other hand, the most frequently raised argument against restitution is the bad condition of the state budget, and the conviction that it is impossible to make up for past injustice without causing another injustice.

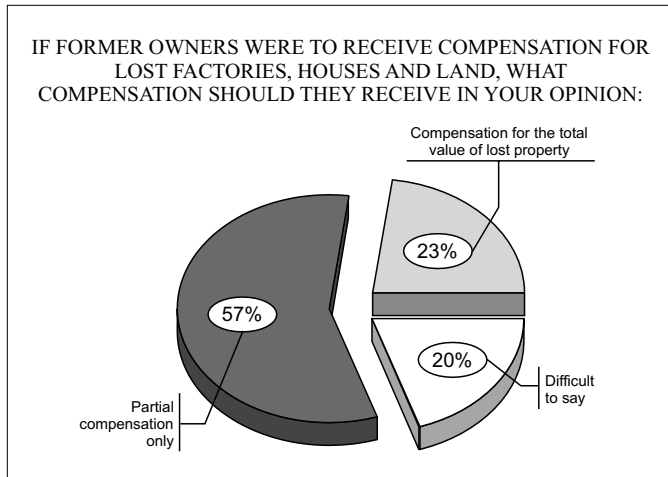
Most respondents think that property should be returned only to Polish citizens who are currently permanent residents of Poland. Only 13% of respondents share the opinion that all former owners should be given their property back, regardless of their nationality and present citizenship. It can be noticed that the scope of restitution and the method of meeting claims raise more and more doubts, as more and more people avoid giving clear answers to these questions. As compared to the results obtained two years ago, less people opt for unconditional restitution, but at the same time the percentage of those who believe that restitution should be limited to Polish citizens living in Poland has also decreased.



Since the early 1990s, the belief that our economy would suffer losses as a result of meeting restitution claims has become very common. At the moment over half of all respondents (55%, a 21% growth since May 1995) believe that restitution will have a negative effect on our economy. Only one-tenth of respondents (10%) have a different opinion. Evaluation of the effects of property restitution on the state of the Polish economy is associated the strongest with declared support for this idea. However, even among supporters of restitution, the percentage of respondents who think that restitution will have a negative effect on our economy is higher than the percentage of those who do not share this opinion.

It is currently estimated that half of all restitution claims would involve property located behind the present Eastern border of Poland, lost as a result of the change in the territorial shape of Poland after World War II. Over half of respondents (56%) think that the claims of persons who left their property in the east, or their heirs, should be satisfied.

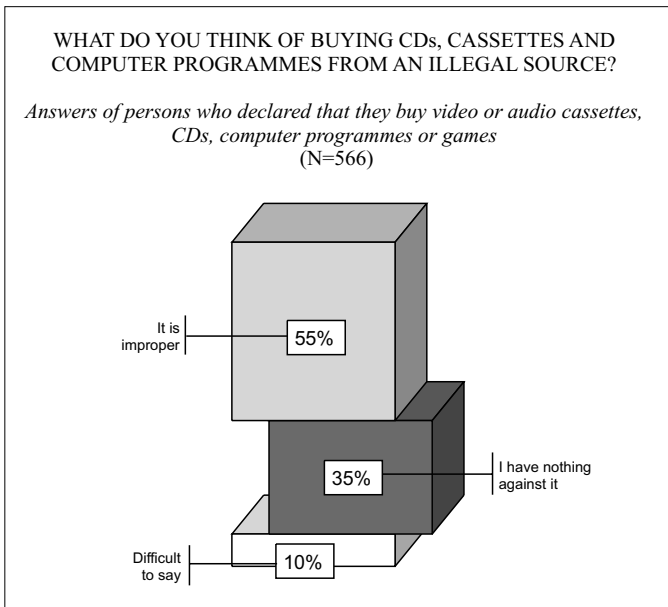
Most respondents accept only partial compensation, and over two-fifths support the protection of the rights of new owners, who acquired nationalised property in good will.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Opinions on property restitution", October 1999.

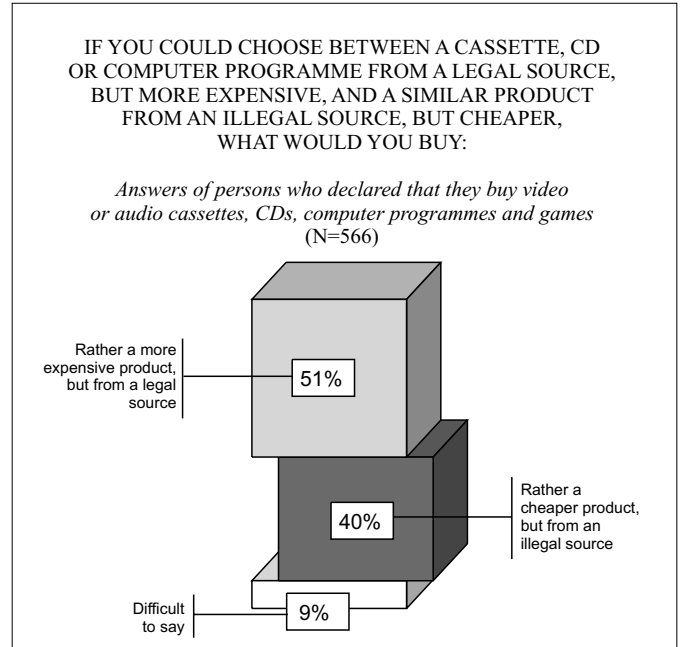
### ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUDIOVISUAL AND COMPUTER PIRACY

In connection with the liberalisation of life in Poland after 1989, audiovisual and computer piracy has become one of the plagues of our economic life. It is obvious that piracy exists because there is a demand for pirated products. Do Poles attach any importance at all to buying products from a legal source? Do price differences between legal and pirated products overshadow all the other attributes of these products that affect consumer behaviour? We asked about it in one of our surveys.



According to respondents' declarations, the largest part of them buy video and audio cassettes, CDs, computer programmes and games in specialist shops (music stores, shops with computer programmes, etc.). In the rating of the most popular places where such goods are bought, second position is occupied by supermarkets. However,

these products are also frequently bought at open-air markets, where illegal copies are often distributed. This is particularly true of audio cassettes, for which the demand is greatest. Over two-fifths of respondents who buy audio cassettes look for them at markets. Buyers of CDs (33%), video cassettes (27%) and computer programmes and games (26%) shop at markets less frequently.



Most of those who buy CDs, cassettes and computer programmes pay attention to the source of these products (whether legal or not). However, a large part of them (42%) do not attach any importance to it. Almost one-third of buyers admit that they are unable to distinguish between a legal product and a pirate copy (29%). More than one-fifth are not interested in the source of such products at all, although they claim that they can recognise whether a product is legal or not.

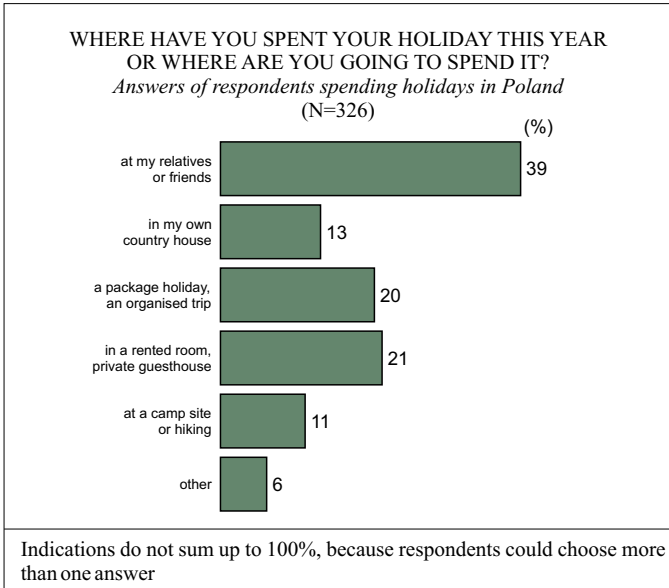
Over half of all respondents (57%) do not condone the illegal copying of cassettes, CDs, computer programmes and games and selling them at lower prices. However, a significant percentage of those who buy such goods (32%) see nothing wrong in distributing pirate copies. The level of disapproval for buying illegal products is as high as in the case of distribution of such products over half of respondents disapprove of it and over one-third accept it. It must be the result of public education campaigns carried out by the media, legal manufacturers, producers and artists, addressed to those who buy CDs, cassettes and computer programmes.

However, if the economic background of piracy is taken into account, moral disapproval does not explain everything. Over half of those who buy CDs, cassettes and computer programmes agree with the statement that legal manufacturers and producers should blame nobody but themselves, because the prices for their products are too high. Therefore, in the opinion of most respondents, piracy is wrong, but buying pirate products is understandable.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Attitudes towards audiovisual and computer piracy", October 1999.

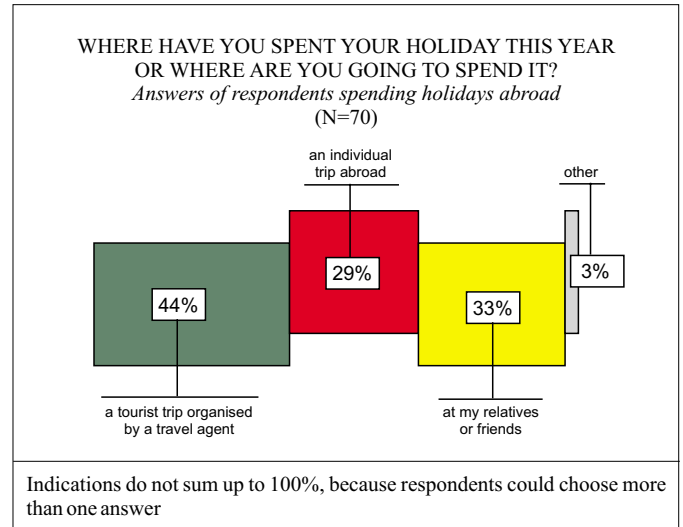
## THE POLES ON HOLIDAY

Although exceptionally sunny and warm, last summer did not differ significantly from other years as far as the frequency of holiday excursions by Poles was concerned. As with the last three years, only one quarter of adults spent at least one week on holiday outside their place of residence and an even smaller percentage (3%) plan to go on holiday before the end of this year. As with the previous year, most Poles spent their holiday in Poland, and only one in seventeen went abroad (6% of total population).



Those who spent their holiday in Poland usually stayed with friends. This way of spending holidays, probably the cheapest, was the most popular in the early 1990s. The percentage of persons spending their holidays in this way gradually decreased until the year before last, and since then it has remained at the same level. However, as compared with the previous year, the percentage of persons staying at private rooms and guesthouses has decreased, although it was growing steadily before. The percentage of holidaymakers using different forms of package holidays is also lower this year. Similarly, fewer people stay at camp sites or go hiking.

Those who go on holiday abroad usually use the services of travel agents. The number of respondents using travel agents has been growing steadily in recent years, while the percentage of people organising their foreign trips themselves is gradually falling. As with last year, one third of those who spent their holiday abroad stayed at their relatives or friends.



Holiday trips are connected with preferred lifestyle (depending on such factors as level of education, age, place of residence etc.), but a respondent's financial situation is the most important factor. The better respondent's education, the bigger his or her place of residence and the better their financial situation, the most frequently respondents declare that they spent a holiday outside their place of residence. Farmers almost never go on holiday. The same is true about the vast majority of pensioners, the unemployed and manual workers. The percentage of those who leave their place of residence to go on holiday is the highest among managers and the intelligentsia (63%), self-employed persons not working in agriculture (61%) and university and school students (56%). The same categories of respondents spend their holidays abroad the most frequently.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Holidays 1999", October 1999.

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

- "Opinions on significant socio-political issues among supporters of different parties"
- "Opinions on the demonstration of 24 September. Should the right to public assemblies be restricted?"
- "Expectations associated with the development of the political situation"
- "Evaluations of the lustration process"
- "Performance of public institutions in the social opinion"
- "In the family circle"
- "Poles suggest candidates for the President"
- "Political party preferences in October"
- "Social moods in October"
- "Attitude towards the government and the state administration"
- "Attitude to foreigners staying in Poland"

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: sekretariat@cbos.pl

Http://www.cbos.pl

Yearly subscription rate for "Polish Public Opinion" is 80 USD

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.