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THE FEELING OF SAFETY AMONG THE POLES, CZECHS, HUNGARIANS, LITHUANIANS AND RUSSIANS

As compared to other European countries, Poland is rather safe. According to the police data, in Poland the number of reported crimes per 100,000 inhabitants is lower than in most Western European countries. It is also lower than in the Czech Republic and Hungary. However, objective data do not always accurately reflect the feelings of people. Among the societies taking part in the survey, it is the Czechs who most frequently declare that they feel safe in their place of residence. A definite majority (83%) of them say that they are not



afraid of any danger in their neighbourhood.



Most respondents in Poland (70%) and Hungary (73%) also regard their close neighbourhood as safe. The respondents from the former USSR express different opinions in Russia and Lithuania most respondents declare that they do not feel safe in their neighbourhood.

The safety of the country as a whole is evaluated much worse. Czechs feel the safest. Less than half of the Hungarians and one-third of Poles believe that their country is safe. Most Lithuanians (59%) declare that they do not feel safe in their country. Among the societies participating in this survey, the Russians' opinions are clearly the most negative only a quarter (25%) declare that they generally feel safe,

while most respondents express the opposite opinion. If the residents of a

particular country feel safe, they also have a better opinion about the work of the police in their place of residence. The Czechs' opinions are the most positive (69% are satisfied with the work of the police), while Hungarians and Poles are less satisfied (66% and 56%, respectively). Also in Lithuania satisfaction with the work of the police in the respondents' place of residence (48%) prevails over dissatisfaction.



Most Russians (63%) declare dissatisfaction with the police operations in their neighbourhood.

Death penalty is not carried out in any of the Central and Eastern European countries discussed here. Nevertheless, in each of those countries most respondents opt for the capital punishment for the gravest crimes. However, the level of such support differs between the countres.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Lithuanians and Russians about the feeling of safety and the use of death penalty", July 2001. In the Czech Republic the survey was conducted by CVVM, in Hungary by TARKI, in Lithuania by VILMORUS, in Russia by WCIOM.

THE POLES ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The number of supporters of Poland's integration with the European Union has not changed substantially since the mid 1999. Slightly more than half of all respondents (53%) still opt for joining the EU. The number of opponents increased slightly the last month (25%).

Spontaneously, the Poles most frequently mention generalised wellbeing of the country as the reason for voting for Poland's access to the European Union. More than a quarter of the respondents declaring that they would take part in such a referendum (27%) believe that the integration with the EU will be good for Poland, give us a chance for a better future and Poland will gain a lot. Almost one-fifth (19%) of those who declare voting in a referendum mention the expected economic benefits as the reasons for supporting Poland's access to the EU. Better chances for finding employment and access to the European job market are often mentioned. Slightly fewer respondents indicate subsidies for agriculture, construction of motorways, development of tourism. Other reasons include free travel and open borders. Smaller groups of respondents mention such reasons as: increased international importance of Poland or improvement of the national security. Some

respondents support European integration because of their generally positive attitude to international co-operation.



The arguments of the opponents of the integration may be divided into two categories: economic threats and generalised, unspecified hostility towards the EU or the integration process. As far as the economic threats are concerned, the competitive disadvantage of Polish companies (our products will not matter, Poland will be flooded with foreign goods): is mentioned the most frequently. Some respondents believe that the cost of the integration will be too high (Poland will have to pay, suffer losses). Others mainly see the risks for the Polish agriculture (EU will destrov the Polish agriculture), dangers related to the labour market or even the threat of poverty. Some respondents would generally be willing to support the integration, but they believe that it is not the right time yet, as the country is not prepared, we are not ready yet. Very few respondents are against the integration, because they are afraid that Poland could lose independence as a result or play a marginal role in the united Europe or that foreigners would buy out land in Poland.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (65%) believe that after Poland's access to the European Union a transition period should be introduced, during which the citizens of the EU countries would not be allowed to buy land in Poland. 21% of the respondents disagree with this point of view and 15% have no opinion. Two-thirds (65%) of those who believe that the Polish negotiators should demand introduction of such a transition period think that it should be shorter than 18 years.

On the other hand, a definite majority of all respondents (73%) share the opinion that Poland should not accept the proposed 7-year transition period during which the citizens of the candidate countries would not be allowed to work in the EU. 11% of the respondents say that the Polish government should accept that condition.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Views on the integration with the European Union", July 2001.

FOREIGN TRIPS OF POLES AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The number of Poles travelling abroad was growing systematically during the 1990s. At present, three-fifths of all adult Poles (61%) have visited at least one foreign country. However, going abroad is still strongly associated with social position. It is much more common in the groups with higher status than among people with lower social and financial standing. Education is an important differentiating factor, too. Only two-fifths (39%) of people with primary education have been abroad, as compared to 91% of those with university level education.



At the same time, the directions of foreign trips of Poles have visibly changed. In early 1990s., trips to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were the most common. At present, the Poles usually visit Western Europe.

The character of foreign travel is also changing. More and more frequently, the declared purpose of foreign trips is tourism, while shopping and trade are less and less common.



Almost half of the Poles who have been abroad do not know any foreign language. Among those who declare knowledge of foreign languages, Russian is still the most popular, although the percentage of those who speak English or German has increased significantly over the last four years. As far as the knowledge of foreign languages is concerned, three generations can easily be distinguished. Over half of young people (aged below 35) declare knowledge of a foreign language. Among the middle-aged (between 35 and 54), two-fifths are able to communicate in a foreign language, as compared to only one in four among the older generation.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Foreign trips of Poles and the knowledge of foreign languages", July 2000.

EVALUATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF POLAND, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, HUNGARY AND ROMANIA

In the countries discussed here, the cabinets usually obtain the best evaluations at the beginning of

their term. It is probably the reason why the Romanian government of Adrian Natase was evaluated more positively that the other cabinets discussed here. Positive evaluations outnumber negative ones (although slightly) also in the case of Victor Orban's government in Hungary. In the Czech Republic (Miloš Zeman's cabinet), negative opinions slightly outnumber positive ones. The Polish government of Jerzy Buzek is criticised more that the governments of the other three countries.

As compared with the beginning of this year, a visible improvement of the evaluations of the Czech government should be noted. The opinions on Jerzy Buzek's cabinet deteriorated significantly.



The Poles evaluate their parliamentary opposition more positively than the Czechs, Hungarians or Romanians. That should not be surprising, as the Polish government meets with the heaviest criticism. In Hungary, the percentages of positive and negative opinions on the opposition are almost equal. In Romania and the Czech Republic, the percentages of respondents criticising the parliamentary opposition are twice as big as the percentages of those satisfied with its activity. In Poland, the proportion of respondents expressing a positive opinion on the opposition has grown significantly during the last year.



The Poles not only have a very low opinion on their government, but also are less and less satisfied with the economic situation in the country. The evaluations of the condition of the national economy are much worse there that in the Czech Republic and Hungary and a little worse than in Romania.

As far as the economic perspectives of the country are concerned, the Romanians are the most optimistic. Their hopes are probably associated with their new government. Optimists outnumber pessimists in Hungary and the Czech Republic as well. In Poland, approximately half of all respondents believe that nothing will change and pessimists outnumber optimists.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Evaluations of the government and the opposition and the opinions on the economic situation of the country and the financial situation of households in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania", August 2001. In the Czech republic the survey was conducted by CVVM, in Hungary by TARKI, in Romania by IMAS.

WHOM DO POLES LIKE?

First and foremost, the Poles like people from developed countries. The inhabitants of poorer Eastern European or Balkan states are less liked. The French and Italians are the most commonly liked (over half of the Poles like them and less than 10% dislike). The Americans, Hungarians and Czechs are only slightly less liked.



As compared with the early 1990s., the Poles' likes and dislikes have changed: the feelings towards the inhabitants of rich Western countries are somewhat less positive (however, it is associated with growing indifference rather than growing dislike). At the same time, the Poles' attitude to the nations from the same region, especially the Eastern neighbours of Poland, but also the Romanies (Gypsies) or Serbs, has improved more respondents declare positive feelings and fewer declare dislike for those nationalities. It may be a reflection of the fact that the attractiveness of the West, overestimated at the beginning of the transformation period, has decreased.

A very visible change in the Poles' attitude to Germans should be noted. At the beginning of the decade, more than half of the Poles disliked Germans and less than a quarter liked them. At present, the proportions are almost equal. As far as the other neighbours of Poland are concerned, the Czechs and Slovaks are liked the most and the Ukrainians and Russians the least. During the last eight years, the Poles' attitude to all direct neighbours has changed for better. Dislike is less frequent now than eight years ago and positive feelings are more common. Negative feelings still clearly prevail over positive ones with regard to three Eastern neighbours of Poland the Ukrainians, Russians and Belorussians, but even they are much less disliked now.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The Poles' attitude to other nations", August 2001.

ABOUT CORRUPTION IN POLAND

More and more Poles believe that corruption is common in the public life. Ten years ago one in three respondents shared the opinion that corruption was a *very big* problem in Poland. Nowadays over two-thirds of the respondents believe so. The percentage of those who consider corruption a *very big* problem grew by 22 percentage points during the last year. The evaluation of the importance of this problem is quite similar in all sociodemographic groups.



In the opinion of most respondents (70%), a large number of civil servants gain unjustified benefits from their position. The percentage of the respondents having a negative opinion on the honesty of a large proportion of civil servants has been growing systematically since 1995. During the last year it has increased by 11 points.



In the opinion of over half of the respondents, the present government and the parliamentary opposition are equally corrupted. One in four respondents believe that such practices are common mainly in the government circles, while only 3% think that corruption is particularly common among the opposition. Such opinions may reflect declining confidence in the whole political class. Although a definite majority of the respondents have heard about the corruption cases in the government circles, only one-third expressed big interest in such news, which could be regarded as a further proof of a lack of confidence in politicians. The respondents usually approach such events with caution, treating them as a part of the pre-election strategy.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Corruption and corruption scandals in Poland", August 2001.

MOBILE TELEPHONES IN EVERYDAY LIFE OF POLES

At present, 76% of Polish households have fixed-line telephones and 42% have at least one mobile telephone. In total, 85% of households have either a fixed-line telephone or a mobile one. Every fourth respondent (27%) has his/her own mobile telephone for exclusive use. 23% declare that they are going to buy a mobile in the future.



Not only adults use mobile telephones. Schoolchildren or students living with their parents and supported by them have mobile telephones in approximately one in seven families (15%). The costs are usually covered by the parents, although in one-fifth of the families children pay their bills themselves.



Sending SMSs is quite common. 76% of mobile telephone users use this form of communication. Half of them (50%) declare using voice mail as well.

Most mobile telephone owners (65%) declare that they are not addicted to them, but a significant proportion (30%) say so with a certain amount of hesitation. Anyway, one-third of mobile phone users (34%) admit that life without a mobile would be difficult for them.



One-fifth of respondents (19%) declare that they are *often* irritated or embarrassed by the behaviour of mobile phone users. Almost two-fifths (39%) *sometimes* feel uncomfortable in such situations. Consequently, over half of the respondents (58%) are at least sometimes disturbed, irritated or embarrassed by people using mobile telephones. Residents of big cities find themselves in such situations the most frequently (75%).

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Opinions on using mobile telephones", August 2001.

POLAND AFTER 1989: WHEN DID POLES HAVE THE MOST COMFORTABLE LIFE?

At the same time of the year and in the same preelection period as before the previous parliamentary elections, we have asked the Poles whether they felt happy or not. As four years ago, a definite majority of Poles declare that they feel happy, although the number of those who are rather happy is significantly bigger than the number of those who are definitely happy. Over a quarter of all respondents are not happy, including one in twelve who feel definitely unhappy.



The feeling of happiness is mainly associated with age, education and income. Over four-fifths of young respondents (up to 34 years of age) feel happy, as compared with only slightly more than half in the above 45 age group. Education is a factor that determines the declared personal happiness even more.

The respondents were asked which of the four periods of the last twelve years they consider the most satisfactory as far as their private life is concerned. One in four respondents indicated the first one, i.e. the period of transformation after 1989. The years 1995-1997, where the SLD-PSL (the Democratic Left Alliance and the Polish Peasant Party) coalition was in power (the cabinets of Józef Oleksy and Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz), were the most satisfactory for less than one-fifth of the respondents.



While the Poles' opinions concerning the best years of their life during the last twelve years are divided and none of the periods mentioned above has been clearly evaluated as the best one, the answers concerning the worst period are more definite. The largest proportion of the respondents (almost half) say that their life has been the most difficult in the last period (the years 1998-2001), i.e. the period when the AWS-UW (the Solidarity Election Action the Freedom Union) coalition, and subsequently the AWS alone, has been in power.



The negative evaluation of the last four years is accompanied by the particularly critical opinions on the changes that have taken place in Poland since 1989. For the first time since this question was first asked, over half of the respondents said that the changes taking place in Poland from 1989 had brought people more losses than gains.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The last twelve years evaluations from the personal perspective", July 2001.

CRITICAL OPINIONS ON TRADE UNIONS

Privatisation and the economic changes in Poland have changed the role of trade unions. During last few years the unions have lost their political importance, but at the same time have not succeeded in assuming the role of a protector of the employees' rights. In some new companies trade unions practically do not exist. It is probably the reason why most respondents (65%) believe that at present nobody in Poland represents the workers' interests adequately. An even higher proportion evaluate the existing unions as completely ineffective.



Almost half of the respondents (47%) believe that currently there is no effective method of representation and protection of the workers' interests. Only 16% believe that the traditional trilateral negotiations between the government, trade unions and employers play such a role.

At the same time, the Poles would like the trade unions to play a more important role. Almost two-thirds believe that the present influence of the trade unions on the decisions of the Polish authorities is insufficient.



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

- Problems with access to medical services
- Opinions on the dismissal of Minister Lech Kaczyński
- ◆ The last twelve years evaluations from the personal perspective
- The Parliamentary elections certainty of voting, election alternatives, negative electorates
- About the elections to the Senate
- Evaluation of the consequences of the four reforms
- Keeping fit sport, recreation, rehabilitation
- Aid for victims of natural disasters

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