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 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.

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>16%</th>
<th>26%</th>
<th>28%</th>
<th>15%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, because failure to do so may have negative, political and economic consequences for Poland</td>
<td>Yes, because the rule of law in Poland is under threat</td>
<td>No, because Poland is a sovereign country and cannot succumb to this kind of pressure</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>No, because the rule of law in Poland is not threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>16%</th>
<th>35%</th>
<th>19%</th>
<th>18%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One country would take Poland’s side</td>
<td>More countries would take Poland’s side</td>
<td>No country would take Poland’s side</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

First evaluations of the government of Mateusz Morawiecki

The government of Mateusz Morawiecki has been received by society quite well. Reactions to its creation are clearly better than those expressed over two years ago at the formation of Beata Szydło’s cabinet. Nearly half of respondents (46%) express hope that the situation in Poland will improve in connection with the establishment of the government of Mateusz Morawiecki. Much smaller groups of respondents react to the formation of the government with disappointment that nothing will change (15%) or with fear of deterioration (13%). Indifference to the government is declared by almost one fifth of respondents (18%).

Reactions to the formation of the government of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Hope for the better</th>
<th>Disappointment that nothing will change</th>
<th>Fear of deterioration</th>
<th>Indifference</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mateusz Morawiecki (I ’18)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beata Szydło (XII ’15)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of acceptance of Mateusz Morawiecki as Prime Minister is quite large. More than half of respondents (54%) are satisfied with the new head of government. Dissatisfaction is expressed by every fifth respondent (20%). Beata Szydło was much less widely accepted at the beginning of her term in office.

The first evaluations of Mateusz Morawiecki as Prime Minister are better than Beata Szydło’s last. The new head of government has slightly more supporters, but far fewer opponents than Beata Szydło in December 2017.

Are you satisfied that Beata Szydło/Mateusz Morawiecki is Prime Minister?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beata Szydło</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mateusz Morawiecki</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don’t know omitted

The new government receives relatively large public support at the commencement of its activity, larger than Beata Szydło’s cabinet at the beginning of the term. Over two-fifths of respondents (42%) are supporters Mateusz Morawiecki’s government. Only every seventh respondent (14%) self-identifies as opponent of the new government. One-third (33%) keep their distance to the government and declare indifference.
The first ratings of Mateusz Morawiecki’s cabinet are better than the last ratings of Beata Szydło’s. The new government has far fewer opponents.

Evaluation of Andrzej Duda's presidency in the middle of the term

On February 6, two and a half years passed since Andrzej Duda was sworn in office as president. Results of CBOS research show that in the middle of his term of office, Poles assess his performance well.

Over two-thirds of respondents (69%) think that Andrzej Duda serves well as president, while a quarter (25%) think that he does not fulfil his duties in a satisfactory manner.

Almost half of respondents (47%) are of the opinion that in his actions president Andrzej Duda is motivated primarily by the interests of the country, not by the interests of political camp from which he originates. A slightly smaller percentage, i.e. two fifths of respondents, have the opposite view on this subject and believe that the president remains a party politician and in his actions he primarily takes into account the interests of the political community with which he is associated (40%).

In your opinion, president Andrzej Duda, when making decisions:

- 47% is primarily guided by the interests of the country
- 40% is primarily guided by the interests of the political circles from which he originates
- 13% Don’t know

The vast majority of respondents (77%) believe that the current president well represents Poland abroad.

How does president Andrzej Duda represent Poland abroad?

- 27% Very well
- 50% Moderately well
- 9% Moderately badly
- 9% Very badly
- 9% Don’t know

In public opinion President Duda not only represents our country abroad well, but also his foreign policy is assessed positively, although the opinions here not so clear. Less than two-thirds of respondents assess well the actions of the president in the field of foreign policy (64%), one fifth of respondents (21%) criticize them.

How do you assess president Andrzej Duda's foreign policy?

- 48% Moderately good
- 16% Very good
- 15% Don’t know
- 6% Very bad
- 15% Moderately bad

Over half of respondents positively evaluate the activity of President Duda as head of the armed forces (57%), whereas slightly over a quarter are of the opposite opinion on the subject (28%).

How do you assess president Andrzej Duda’s activities in the area of defence and national security, i.e. as head of the armed forces?

- 44% Moderately good
- 13% Very good
- 15% Don’t know
- 10% Very bad
- 18% Moderately bad

According to Article 126 para. 2 of the Polish Constitution, the president shall ensure observance of the Constitution. Meanwhile, in the opinion of a large part of the legal profession, several acts adopted by the parliament and
signed by president Duda were inconsistent with it. Despite the associated controversy, over half of adult Poles positively assess the actions of the president in the field of law in Poland (52%). A critical opinion on the activities of President Duda as the guardian of the constitution is expressed by over a third of respondents (36%).

**How do you assess president Andrzej Duda’s activities in the area of law, i.e. as guardian of the Constitution?**

More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: “Midterm Opinions About President Andrzej Duda”, February 2018. Fieldwork for national sample: January 2018, N=951. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

### Subjective well-being in 2017

Last year more than half of Poles often or very often felt satisfied with some success (60%), were confident that everything was going well (57%), felt proud of their own achievements (53%). More than two fifths of respondents (44%) reported frequently feeling particularly curious, excited in 2017. These positive emotions were experienced more often than the negative emotions included in the survey. Out of negative emotions, respondents most often experienced stress and irritability (40% experienced them often or very often). About a quarter frequently felt discouraged or exhausted (24%) and helpless (24%). Emotions such as rage and sadness or depression were experienced less frequently (16% of respondents frequently felt that way). Occasionally they mentioned suicidal thoughts (1%).

Results for 2017 do not differ significantly from findings obtained in 2016. Poles felt satisfied that they succeeded in something in their lives slightly more often (an increase of 2 percentage points). They less often reported interest, excitement (decrease by 4 points) and rage (decrease by 2 points).

From a longer perspective of almost thirty years, it is clear that subjective well-being of Polish people has clearly improved. During this period, the percentage of respondents experiencing all positive emotions included in the survey has increased. At the same time, the proportion experiencing nervousness, irritability, sadness, weariness and rage has decreased significantly. However, we have not recorded a clear downward trend in case of helplessness.

### Respondents declaring they felt the following emotions often:

The analysis of socio-demographic factors shows that people in a better financial situation, university graduates, respondents aged 25-34 report best subjective well-being. In professional groups, the best results were obtained for managers and specialists with higher education, mid-level professionals, technicians and the self-employed. Taking into account the world-view, it can be noted that in 2017 respondents identifying with the right wing had a better subjective well-being, as did people often participating in religious practices.

More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: “Psychological Wellbeing in 2017”, January 2018. Fieldwork for national sample: December 2017, N=925. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

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