

**CONTENTS:**

- ATTITUDE TO ISLAM AND MUSLIMS
- EXPECTED CHANGES IN TEACHING OF THE CHURCH
- PERCEPTION OF ECONOMIC SITUATION AND MATERIAL LIVING CONDITIONS IN POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY
- SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF AUTISM

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## ATTITUDE TO ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

The image of Muslims in Poland is largely based on information drawn from the mass media. It is not significantly shaped by personal contact with adherents of this religion, as the scale of such contacts is very small. Only one-eighth of adults (12%) personally know a Muslim.

Respondents were asked to describe their attitude to people of different faiths and to non-believers on a scale metaphorically called a 'thermometer', which took the values from “-50” to “+50” degrees. Among different religions, the feelings towards Muslims are coldest. Over two-fifths of Poles (44%) express cold attitude, while only a quarter (23%) have warm feelings for them. A third of Poles (33%) are indifferent. The overall temperature is sub-zero. Negative feelings prevail also in case of Jehova's Witnesses.

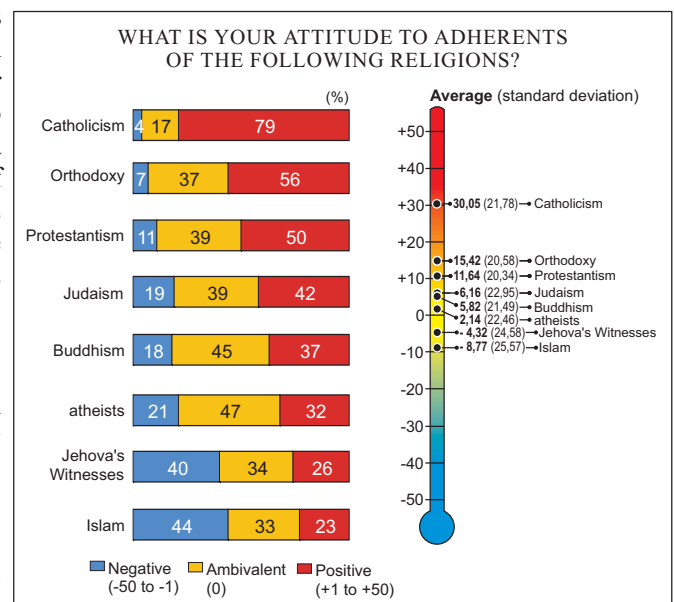
Negative feelings towards Islam may be related to potential associations with violence or terrorism. The attitude to Jehova's Witnesses may be a consequence of their style of converting, which is sometimes perceived as intrusive. The reception of different religions is largely determined by the degree of cultural proximity and the number of its adherents. Thus, the best attitude is recorded towards Catholics, followed by other Christians, i.e. Protestants and the Orthodox, for whom the feelings are not so warm. Positive attitude prevails also in relation to religious Jews, Buddhists and atheists, who are usually perceived ambivalently.

The perception of different religious groups is correlated. Positive feelings to members of one religion tend to coexist with warm feelings for others, and negative attitudes are also related.

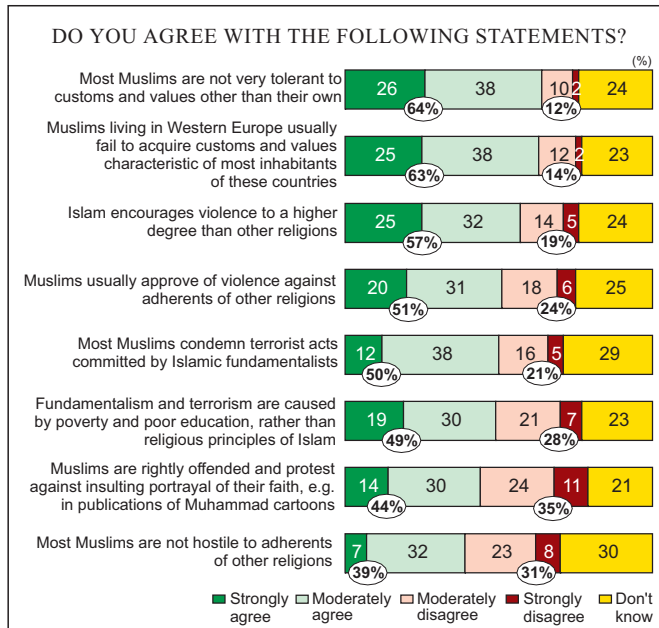
Islamic fundamentalism caused a lot of negative associations, such as intolerance, violence, war and, first of all, terrorism. This mental association was magnified and reinforced in the consciousness of western societies after the attack on World Trade Center on 11th September 2001.

Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) share the opinion that most Muslims are intolerant to customs and values other than their own. A similar proportion (63%) mention problems with assimilation, claiming that Muslim minorities living in Western Europe do not acquire customs and values characteristic of the majority of residents of these countries. The majority of respondents associate Islam with violence: 57% think that this religion encourages violent actions, and 51% believe that Muslims usually approve of violence against adherents of other religions. However, in the view of half of Poles (50%), the majority of Muslims condemn terrorist attacks committed by Islamic fundamentalists.

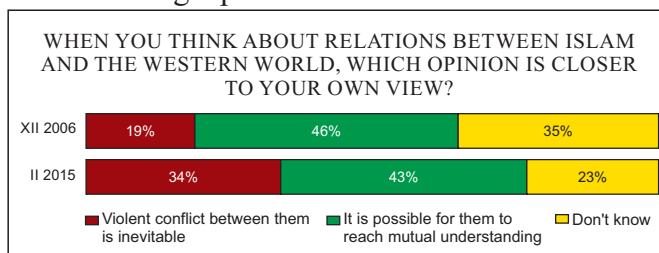
Many people attribute terrorism to non-religious reasons and show some understanding for the feeling of injustice suffered by Muslims when their religious feelings



are violated. Almost half (49%) agree that poverty and poor education, rather than religious principles of Islam, are the main factors contributing to terrorism or, more broadly, extremism. Over two-fifths (44%) agree that Muslims are rightly offended when their faith is shown in insulting way, for instance by the publications of Muhammad cartoons. The opinions about the attitude of Muslims to adherents of other religions are strongly differentiated. Almost two-fifths of respondents (39%) share the opinion that most Muslims are not hostile to people of different religion, while a third (31%) disagree.



In recent years, the conviction has strengthened that conflict between Islam and the western world is inevitable. Nevertheless, the plurality of respondents (43%) still believe that understanding is possible.

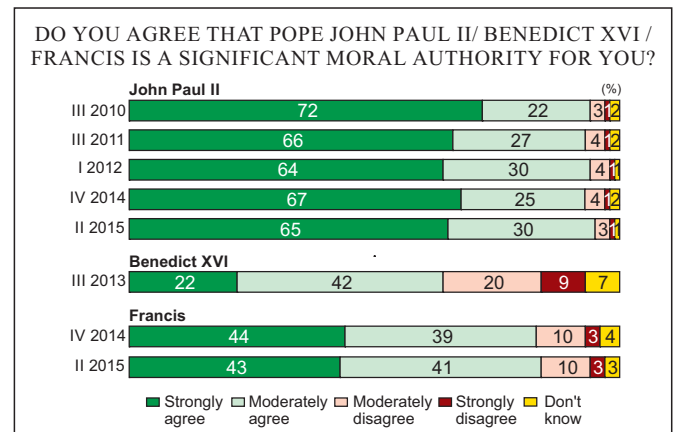


More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Attitude to Islam and Muslims", March 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: February 2015, N=1003. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

## EXPECTED CHANGES IN TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

Systematic CBOS surveys show that religiosity of Poles has been falling slowly but steadily since the

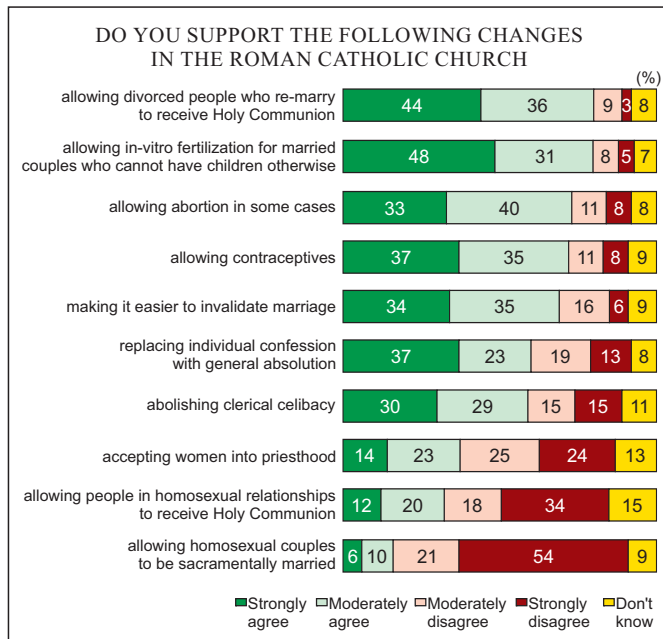
death of pope John Paul II. Nevertheless, a vast majority of Poles are religious believers (92%) who practice their faith more or less regularly (87%). In spite of the high indicators of religiosity, there is an increasing privatisation of religion, which is reflected, for instance, in questioning Church teachings about morality and lifestyle issues. There is an increasing discrepancy between the Church doctrine and the attitude of believers. This phenomenon is observed outside of Poland, too. It indicates that the authority of the Church weakens and influencing life choices has become a challenge for this institution. Various public pronouncements of pope Francis, in particular during synod assemblies devoted to the pastoral challenges of the family (held in 2014 and planned for 2015), lead many people to believe that the present pontificate will introduce significant changes in Church teaching. Regardless of any possible modifications to the Church doctrine, the change in rhetoric introduced by the pope has brought him a great deal of popularity. A vast majority of Poles (84%) declare that pope Francis is an important moral authority for them. His standing is not as high as that enjoyed by John Paul II, but clearly higher than the authority of Benedict XVI.



Poles are open to changes in Church teaching. The possibility to allow re-married divorced people to receive Holy Communion is accepted almost universally (80% of respondents). Such a change is supported by divorced or separated people universally (90%) and strongly (65% of them strongly support such a measure). A vast majority of respondents (79%) support Church acceptance for the in-vitro fertilization for married couples who cannot have children otherwise. Moreover, almost three-quarters believe that the Church should allow contraception (72%) and allow abortion in some cases (73%). Over two-thirds (69%) think that the Church should make it easier to invalidate marriage.

On the other hand, there is widespread rejection of any change in the attitude to homosexual couples which would imply acceptance of their lifestyle. Three-quarters (75%) oppose granting them the right to get

married. Giving people in homosexual relationships the right to receive Holy Communion is supported by one-third (32%) and rejected by half (52%) of respondents. The other proposals which are accepted by the majority are: replacing individual confession with general absolution (60%) and abolishing clerical celibacy (59%). On the other hand, accepting women into priesthood is rejected (49%) rather than accepted (37%).

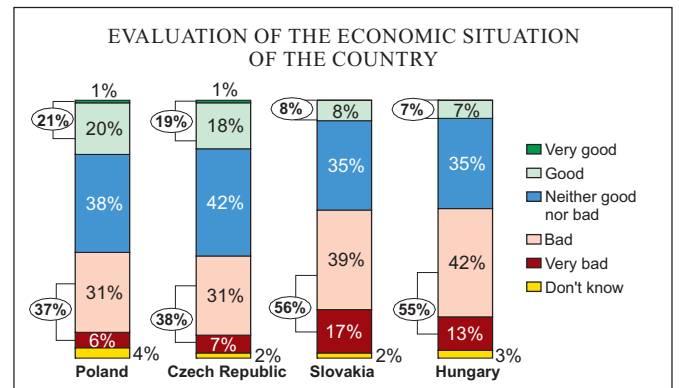


The attitude to changes in the Church and its doctrine is differentiated by religiosity, i.e. declared faith and frequency of religious practice. The need for change is stressed primarily by the least religiously active: those who attend service rarely or never, and by non-believers.

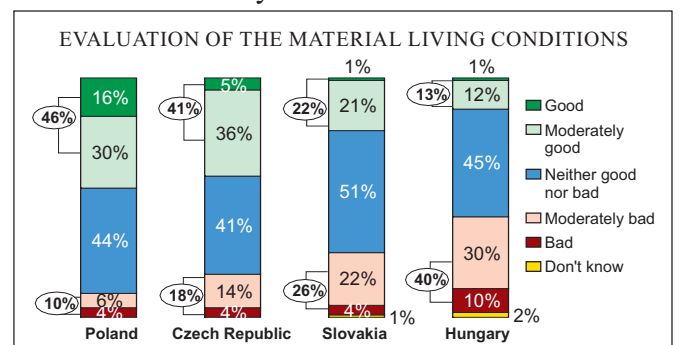
More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Expected changes in Church teaching", March 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: February 2015, N=1003. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

## ECONOMIC SITUATION AND MATERIAL LIVING CONDITIONS IN POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY

In all four countries, negative assessment of the economic situation prevails over positive. However, they can be divided into two different groups. The first pair is composed of Poland and Czech Republic, where the economic situation was usually described as average (neither good nor bad). The other pair, composed of Slovakia and Hungary, is characterized by strong prevalence of negative opinions. The economy is evaluated best in Poland.



Among the inhabitants of the countries of the Visegrad Group, Poles are the most satisfied with their material living conditions. Czechs are second in the ranking of satisfaction. In these two countries there are more people who rate their conditions as good than the dissatisfied. In Slovakia, average assessment is most common. Hungarians rate their material conditions worst: two-fifths describe them as bad or moderately bad.



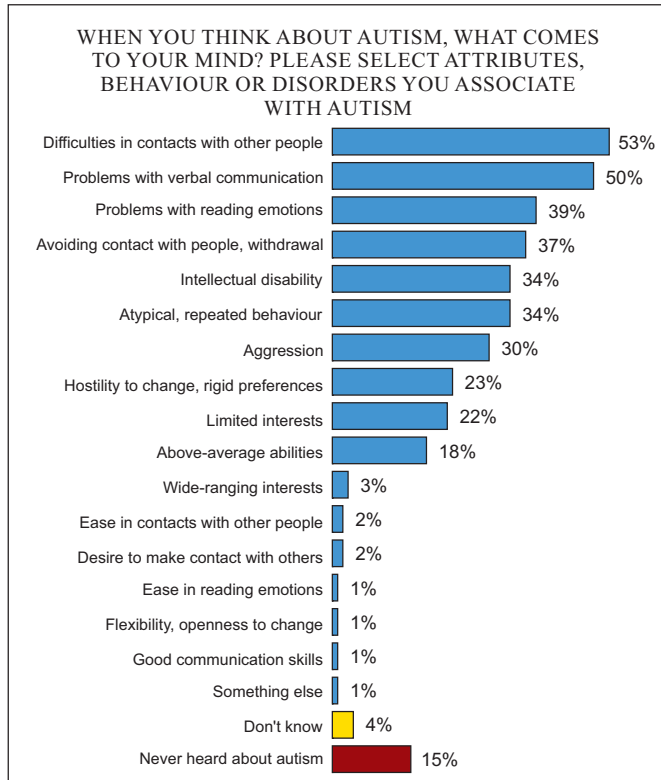
More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Evaluations and predictions of economic situation and material living conditions in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary", March 2015. Fieldwork for national sample in Poland: January 2015, N=1005; Czech Republic (CVVM Sociological Institute): January 2015, N=980; Hungary (TARKI): January 2015, N=1004; Slovakia (FOCUS): January-February 2015, N=1010. The samples are representative for adult populations.

## SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF AUTISM

Autism is a developmental dysfunction which is reflected in three spheres: impaired social relations, communication deficit and schematic pattern of behaviour. Strength of difficulties typical for autistic people and their level of functioning can vary, therefore the term "autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)" is used. Recently, the frequency of disorders of this kind has increased. Some research indicates that now they may affect one in 68 people.

A vast majority of respondents (85%) have heard about autism. In total, 62% have had contact with an

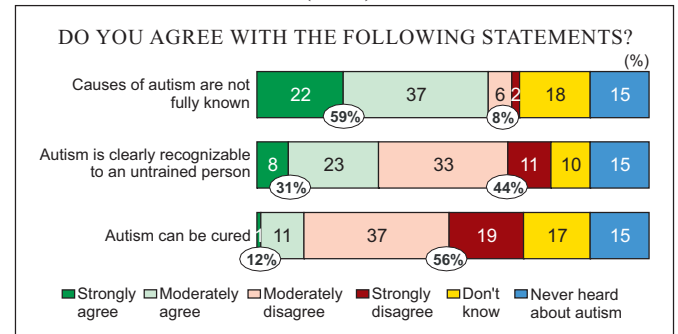
autistic person, usually via mass media, films or literature (47%) Less frequently, they know an autistic individual personally (35%).



In public opinion, autism is associated primarily with difficulties in contact with others and with spoken communication problems. Less frequently, respondents associate this disorder with difficulties in reading emotions, refusal to make contact with other people or withdrawal. Almost a third think that autism involves atypical, repeated behaviour, mental disability and

aggressive behaviour. Less frequently, such attributes as hostility to change, rigid preferences, limited interests and above-average capabilities are attributed to autistic people. Other patterns of behaviour, attributes or disorders were mentioned sporadically. It is worth mentioning that development of autistic people can sometimes be uneven: they are not able to perform some actions which are easy for their age group, but show above-average capabilities in other areas. People with special abilities are called savants and constitute from 5% to 15% of autistic people.

Diagnosing autism takes several steps and is complex. It is especially difficult among young children; their behaviour may be the same as that of children without this type of disorder. In spite of the generally correct associations, the plurality of respondents (44% v. 31%) think that autism is not obvious to an untrained person. The majority of respondents correctly believe that causes of autism are not fully known (59%) and that the disease is not curable (56%).



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Social perception of autism", March 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: March 2015, N=1062. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.

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

- ◆ Faith in Poland
- ◆ Relations with Neighboring Countries – Politics and Attitude to Nations
- ◆ Sacred and Profane Space in Society
- ◆ Party Preferences in March
- ◆ Preferences in Presidential Election
- ◆ Attitude to Government in March
- ◆ Party Preferences in the Middle of March
- ◆ Trust in Politicians in the Middle of March
- ◆ Declared Participation and Preferences in Presidential Election
- ◆ Opinions about Presidential Candidates
- ◆ Opinions about Public Institutions
- ◆ Social Moods in March
- ◆ Presidential Election – Voting Confidence, Assessment of Chances and Electoral Alternatives
- ◆ Catholic in Public Life – Potential Conflicts of Norms and Values
- ◆ John Paul II in Collective Memory Ten Years after His Death

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