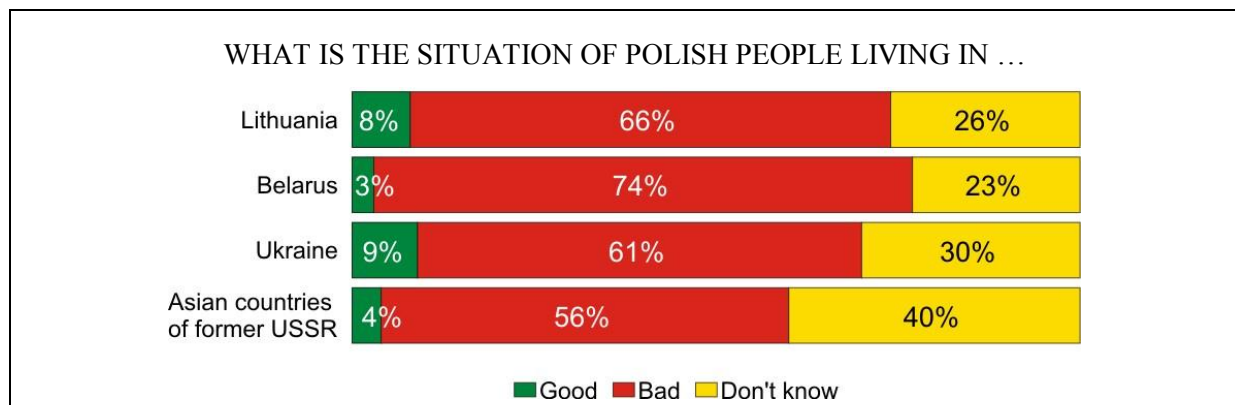


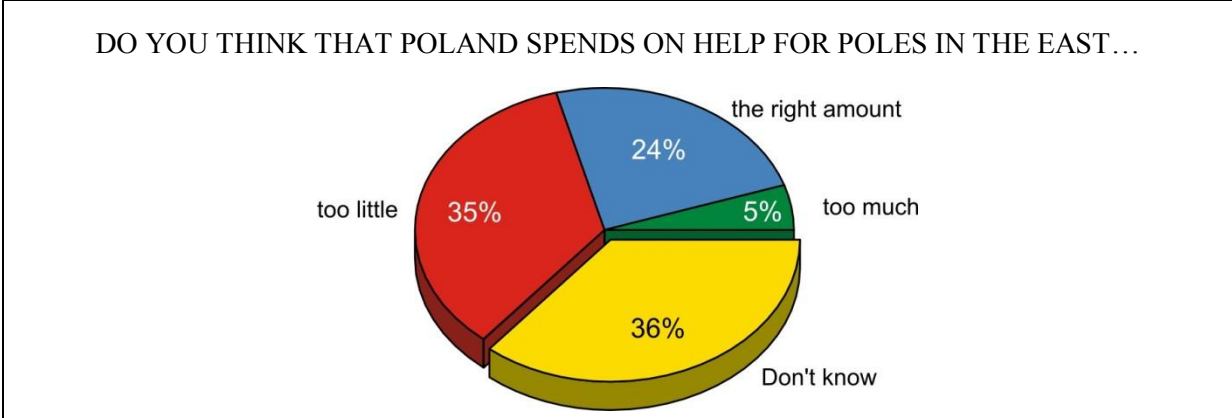
## SUPPORT FOR POLES IN THE FORMER USSR

It is estimated that about 20 million Poles live outside Poland. Among them are about 2.5 million citizens of the countries of the former USSR: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Their situation is addressed by the policy towards Poles living abroad. It is stressed that they did not choose their place of residence, and that their situation is often very difficult. Poles living in the area which formerly was a part of Poland are outside of Poland due to the post-war boundary changes, while residents of the eastern part of the former USSR usually were deported themselves, or are descendants of the deported.

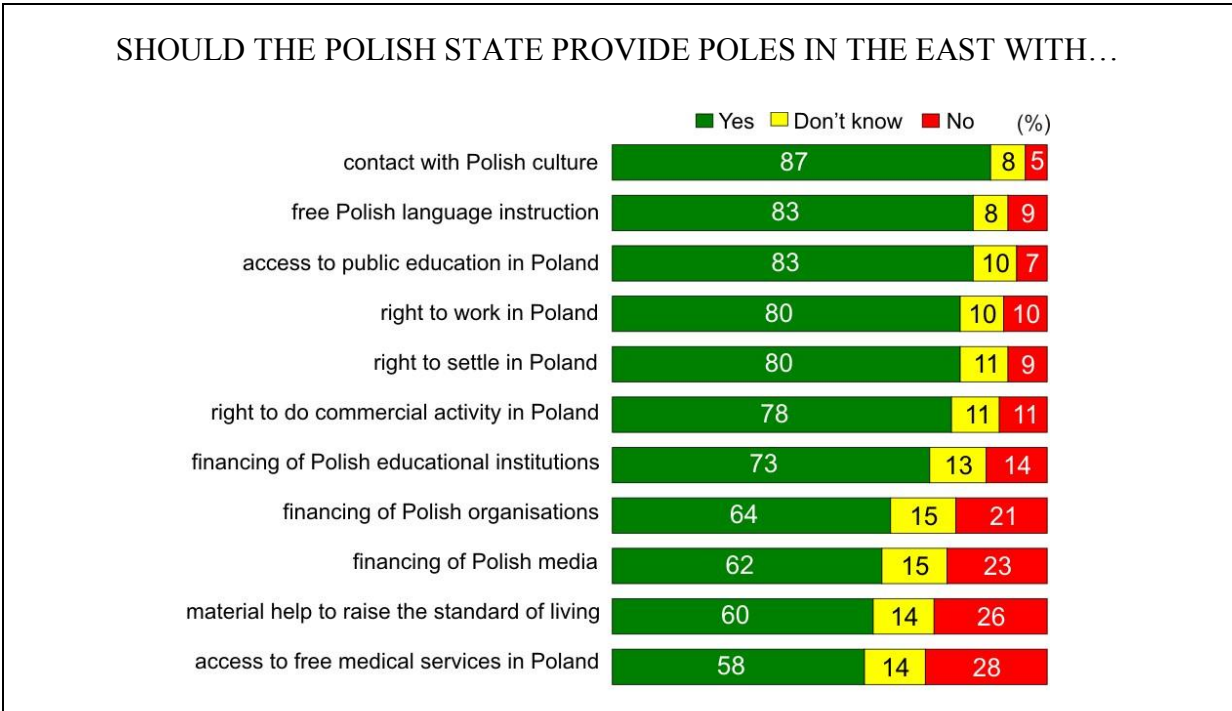
Although the number of people of Polish nationality in the East is high, and, relative to communities in other countries, there is a lot of information about them in the public discourse, their situation is not widely known to the public. A large number of respondents do not know how they live. In the opinion of the others, the situation of Poles in the former USSR is not good. The situation in Belarus is evaluated worst.



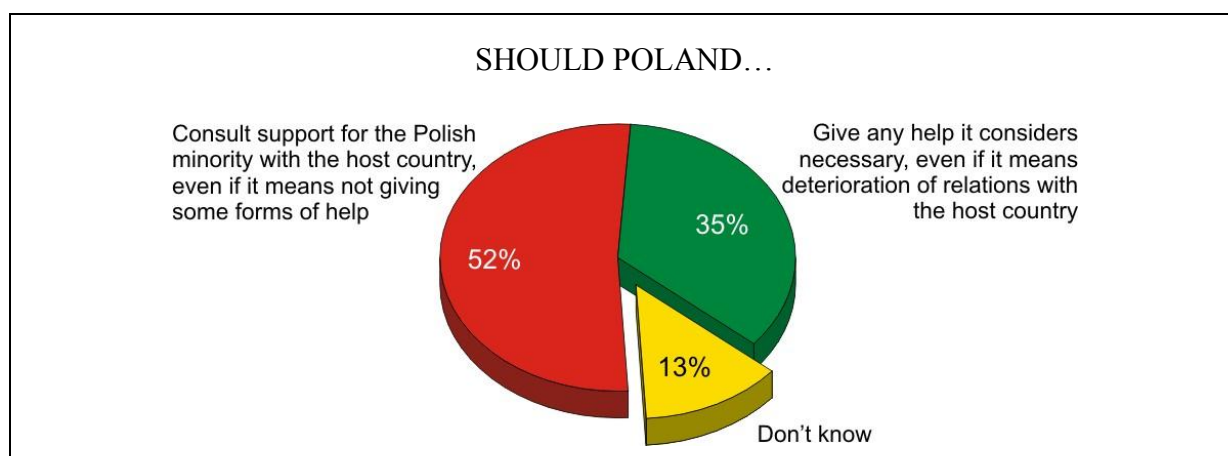
One in twenty respondents (5%) thinks that Poland spends too much public money on support for the Polish community in the East. A quarter (24%) think that the expenses are appropriate, while about a third (35%) believe they are insufficient.



Respondents almost uniformly think that the Polish state should provide Poles in the East with contact with the Polish culture, free Polish language instruction, and access to public education in Poland. A vast majority believe that they should have the right to settle and work in Poland, as well as being able to do commercial activity. Almost three quarter think that Polish educational institutions should be financed, while a slightly smaller group believe that help for organisations and media of Poles abroad should be given. The majority think that the Polish state should give Poles abroad charitable help and access to medical services in Poland.



Some forms of help for the Polish minority in the East are criticized by various communities and institutions in the host countries. There arises an important issue: to what extent is the support for the minority an internal affair, and to what extent is it an element of international policy. About half of respondents (52%) think that policy to Poles living abroad should be consulted with the state whose citizens they are, while a third (35%) think the support should be given regardless of the reaction of the host country.



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More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: *“Support for Poles in the former USSR”*, February 2012. Fieldwork for national sample: February 2012 (N=999) The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.