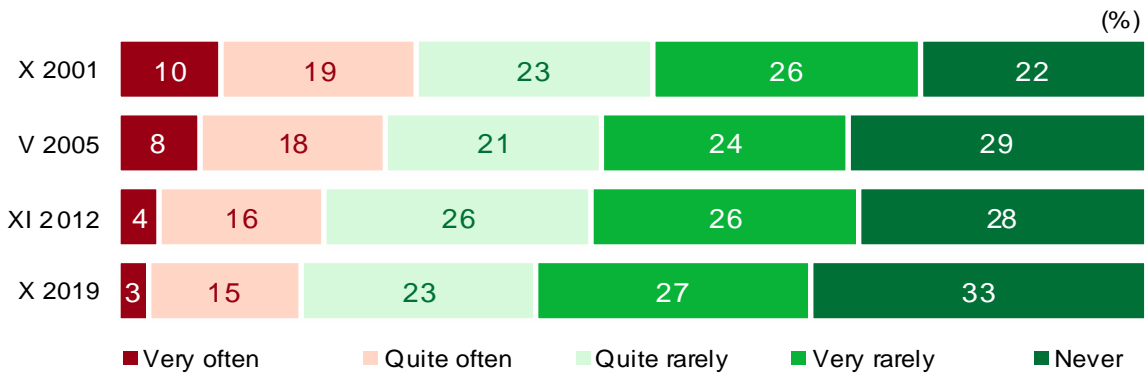


Attitude to death and funeral customs

As regards the attitude towards passing away in Western culture, death is considered taboo and is privatized. The prolongation of human life, the development of science and the associated treatment of death in medical terms, as well as secularization have meant that the experience of death functions on the margins of social consciousness. Dying and death have ceased to be a public event and have become a private matter. Community rituals rarely accompany dying today, but in Poland they still seem to play a significant role and are associated with funeral customs.

Most adult Poles do not think about death. Half of respondents declare that they think about death rarely, and a third never think about it. Analysing the results of research from the last years, it can be stated that Poles are less and less inclined to think about the ultimate things. In 2001, 29% of respondents often thought about death, 11 percentage points more than today (18%). The proportion of people who never think about death has increased from 22% to 33%.

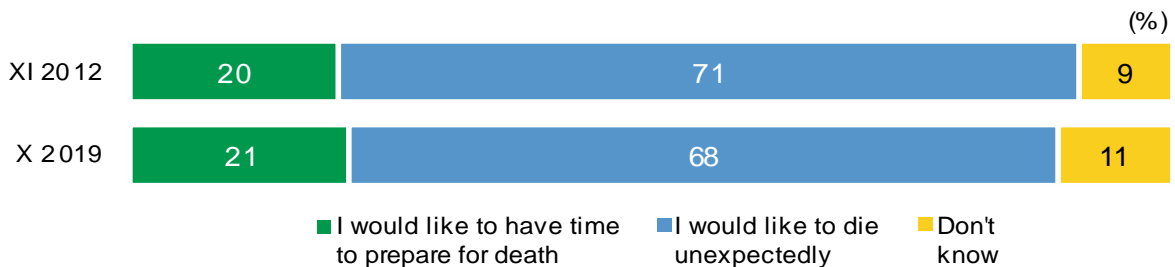
How often do you think about death?



Responses to this question are strongly differentiated by age and gender. Young people think about death the least: among the youngest (up to 24 years old), over half (56%) never think about it. Over time, thoughts of death become more frequent. Nearly two-fifths (38%) of people aged 75 or more often think about death, less than every fifth (18%) never do it.

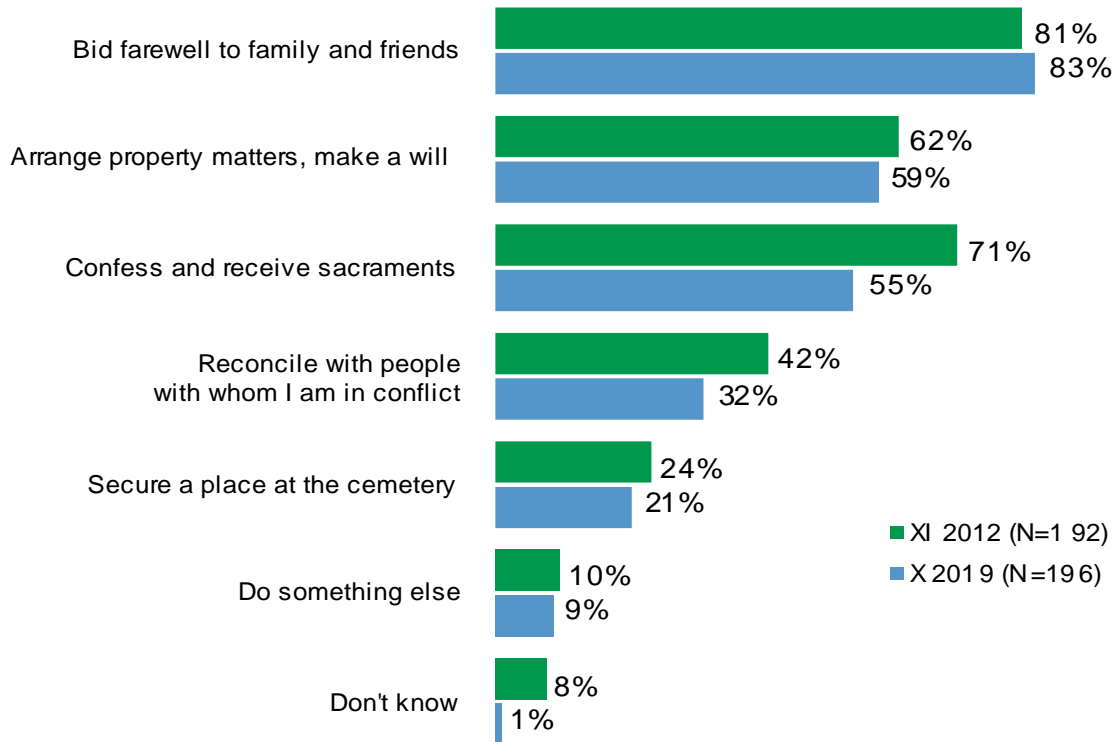
Most Poles (68%) would wish an unexpected death. Only one-fifth (21%) would like to have time to prepare for it.

Would you like to have time to prepare for death or would you rather die unexpectedly?



People who want to have time to prepare for death would like to say goodbye to their loved ones (83%). Most of them (59%) would also like to organize property matters and make a will. Many (55%) feel the need to confess and receive the sacraments. Less often, they have expressed their willingness to reconcile with a person or persons with whom they are in conflict, and to secure a place in the cemetery. Over the past seven years, the number of people who would like to confess before their death and receive sacraments has clearly decreased by 16 points. Significantly fewer respondents (decrease by 10 points) would like to reconcile with the person or persons with whom they are in conflict.

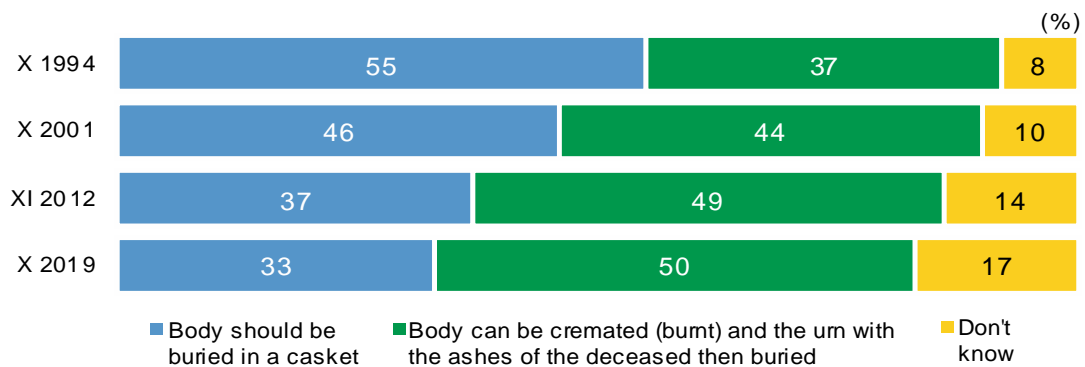
How would you like to prepare for death?



The percentages do not add up to 100, because the respondents could indicate all matters important to them.

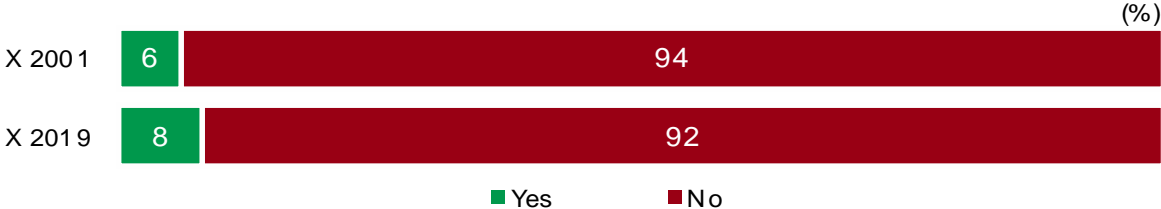
In 1994, more than half of Poles thought that the dead should be buried in a casket. Subsequent studies carried out in the previous and current decade have shown that attachment to this form of burial is weakening and approval of cremation is strengthening. Currently, like seven years ago, every second respondent (50%) is of the opinion that the body of a deceased person can be cremated and the urn with ashes buried. One-third (33%, down 4 percentage points) are in favour of burial in a casket, recommended by the Catholic Church.

How do you think the dead should be buried?



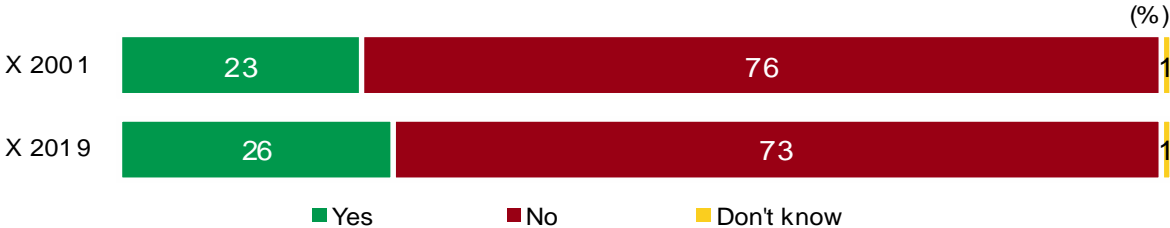
In Poland, the tradition of making wills is weak and in 18 years this state of affairs has not fundamentally changed. According to declarations, a will was made by eight out of a hundred respondents (8%).

Have you made the last will and testament?



Poles are more prudent when it comes to the place in the cemetery. Based on declarations, more than a quarter of respondents (26%), i.e. slightly more than in 2001, already have it.

Have you already secured a specific place for yourself in the cemetery, e.g. in a family grave or some other?



Aging encourages people to deal with practical matters related to death. Among those aged 75+, nearly a quarter (24%) made a will, while three quarters have secured a place in the cemetery.

More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Attitude to Death and Funeral Customs", 2019. Fieldwork for national sample: October 2019, N=965. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.