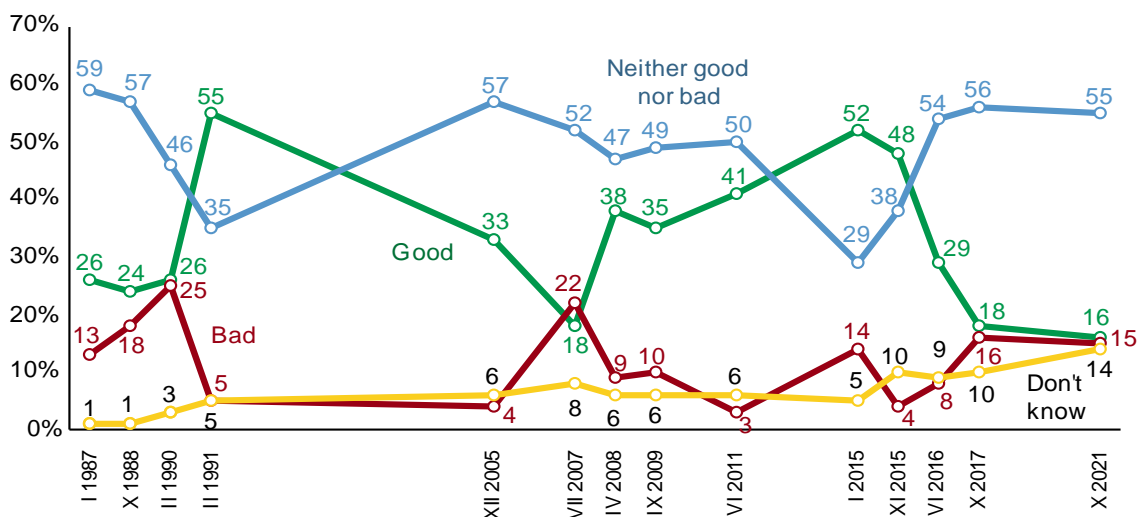


Perception of Polish-German relations

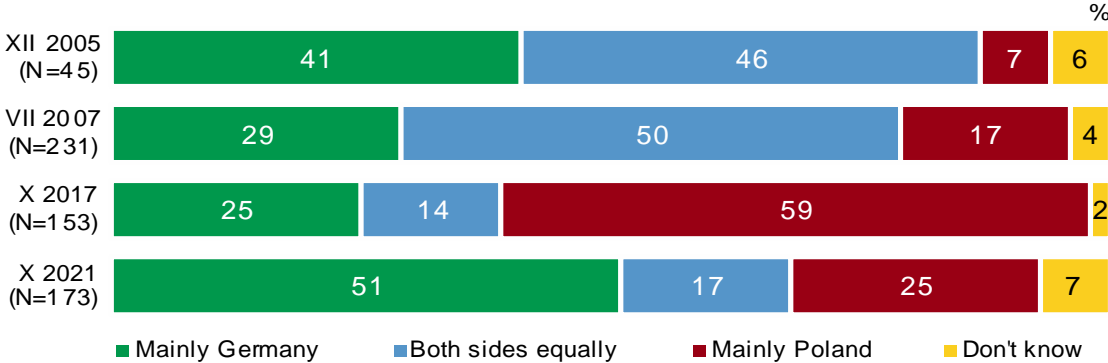
More than half of Poles (55%) perceive the current Polish-German relations as average, i.e. neither good nor bad. Others describe them as good (16%) or bad (15%). The assessments of Polish-German relations are similar to those recorded four years ago and are among the worst since January 1987, when we asked Poles about this issue for the first time. Public opinion on relations between Poland and Germany are characterized by high volatility. In CBOS surveys, they were best assessed in February 1991, shortly after the signing of the Polish-German border treaty. Positive assessments of mutual relations also prevailed at the end of the rule of the PO-PSL coalition in 2015. After Law and Justice (PiS) took government at the end of 2015, the perception of relations between Poland and Germany deteriorated quite quickly and very clearly.

How do you evaluate the current Polish-German relations?



Four years ago in October 2017, people who assessed Polish-German relations as bad, usually thought that the responsibility for bad relations was mainly borne by the Polish side. Currently, more than half of people who perceive Polish-German relations as bad (51%) blame the German side for this state of affairs.

Which side is more responsible for the poor condition of Polish-German relations?



Answers from people who think that the current Polish-German relations are bad.

In order to understand the reason for the poor assessments of Polish-German relations, respondents were asked to identify which issues are currently the biggest problem in mutual relations. Respondents answered an open question, formulating their own opinions. The answers generally referred to current political issues (often presented in a broader EU context), and less frequently to historical problems. When it comes to historical references, the issue of war reparations for Poland was raised the most frequently (12% of respondents in total). The remaining persons generally mentioned the Second World War and the events related to it (2%) or generally indicated the historical burdens on Polish-German relations (2%).

A large group of people criticized the attitude of both, or, more often, one of the parties. In this context, people mentioned Germany's domination in Europe and pressure on Poland, including through EU institutions, and German interference in the internal affairs of our country (5%). Those who were critical of the policy of the Polish authorities indicated their anti-German rhetoric and a hostile attitude towards Germany (3%). Some respondents (3%)

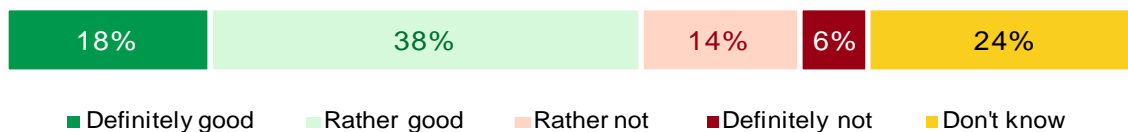
stated that there was a problem with mutual understanding and a lack of goodwill in neighbourly relations.

Some specific points of dispute and controversy were indicated. The most frequently mentioned was the construction of the Nord Stream II gas pipeline (12%) and the German-Russian rapprochement in general (1%). Economic problems in Polish-German relations were pointed out relatively often (5%), though generally quite briefly. Fears of German economic domination were directly expressed. The differences of positions between Poland and Germany regarding the admission of refugees and the migration policy were relatively often pointed out (4%). The divergent views on energy, climate and environmental policy were also emphasized (3%). Reference was also made to EU funds and the EU budget: apart from quite vague statements, there was talk of the distribution of money in the EU being unfavourable for Poland, as well as to the postponed payment of money for Poland from the Reconstruction Fund (2% in total). The other issues were: the dispute over the rule of law (1%), the pressure from Germany on the Polish justice system (1%), attitudes towards LGBT people (1%), the legal regulation of abortion (1%) and the functioning of the European Union in general, its future shape and disputes within this organization (1%). Respondents also sometimes referred to the inequality of living conditions. The differences in the standard of living in Poland and Germany as well as the disproportions in earnings (1%) were indicated. Moreover, some people referred to economic emigration of Poles to Germany and discrimination of Poles on the German labour market (1%).

Almost half of respondents could not identify any problem in Polish-German relations (47%) or, less frequently, claimed that they did not see any problems, and that cooperation between Poland and Germany was good (4%).

Angela Merkel leaves the office of the German chancellor after 16 years of holding her position. Most people (56%) believe that from Poland's point of view, taking into account the entire period of her rule, Angela Merkel was a good chancellor of Germany. One-fifth (20%) are of the opposite opinion.

From Poland's point of view, was Angela Merkel a good chancellor of Germany, taking into account the entire period of her rule?



More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Polish-German Relations - Evaluation and Perceived Problems", November 2021. Fieldwork for national sample: October 2021, N=1161. The random sample is representative for adult population of Poland.