

IN THIS ISSUE:

- AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTION. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE NEW PARLIAMENT.
- THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE LAST MONTHS
- THE ATTITUDE OF OUR SOCIETY TOWARDS OTHER NATIONS
- UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBOURS

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH CENTER - CBOS -

4a Żurawia
00-503 Warszawa
POLAND

Ph: (48 22) 629 35 69
(48 22) 628 37 04
(48 22) 693 58 94

Fax: (48 22) 629 40 89

E-mail: cbos@pol.pl

<http://www.korpo.pol.pl>

© COPYRIGHT BY CBOS 1997

ALL SOURCES MUST BE CREDITED WHEN ANY PART OF THIS PUBLICATION IS REPRODUCED

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ELECTION. EXPECTATIONS FROM THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

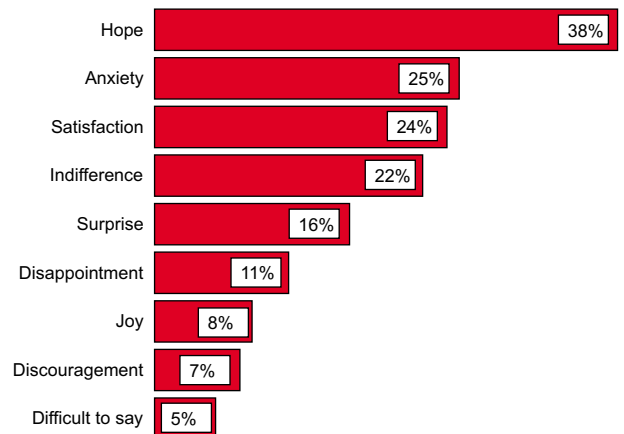
The result of the September election was rather surprising for many commentators, as there had been little indication before of such a substantial majority of Solidarity Election Action (AWS) over its political opponent - Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). Were ordinary citizens also surprised by the result of the election, or was the social reaction dominated by other feelings?

The assessment of the election results is dominated by moderate optimism. The majority of respondents reacted positively (the total of 70% of indications), while negative reactions were considerably less frequent (43%). The most frequently expressed feeling was hope - it was mentioned by nearly two fifths of respondents, one third described their feelings as satisfaction, and 8% of them even spoke of joy. A quite large part of respondents (16%) felt first of all surprised by the result of the last election, while over one fifth were indifferent. Obviously, positive feelings appeared jointly: joy was combined with satisfaction and hope, satisfaction - first of all with hope. Negative reactions were combined in a similar way - disappointment with discouragement and anxiety. It should be stressed that the persons who welcomed the result of the election with hope, also often speak of accompanying anxiety.

Generally, the present reactions to the result of the election are more positive than the feelings expressed after the elections which took place at the beginning of the period of transformation. The number of indications pointing out to indifference as the most frequent reaction to the result of the election decreased considerably as well.

The range of feelings caused by the result of the election seems to follow first of all from the respondents' political views and sympathies. Persons declaring right-wing orientation reacted

WHAT DID YOU FEEL UPON LEARNING THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION TO THE SEJ M?

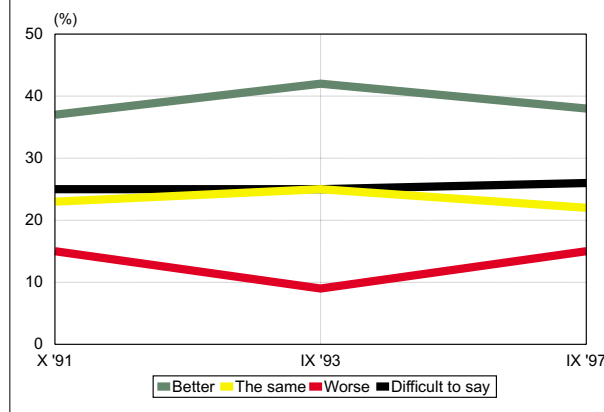


Respondents could choose no more than two feelings.

to the new alignment of power in the Parliament positively - they welcomed the result of the election with first of all hope and satisfaction. Respondents with centre political views associate quite a lot of hope with the result of the election, but at the same time they express quite a lot of anxiety, while respondents declaring left-wing views welcomed the result of the election with mixed feelings - first of all anxiety, as well as surprise and disappointment.

Political grounds of different types of reactions to the result of the election are confirmed by declarations of the electorates of the particular parties and groupings. Persons who voted for the two largest groupings in the last election,

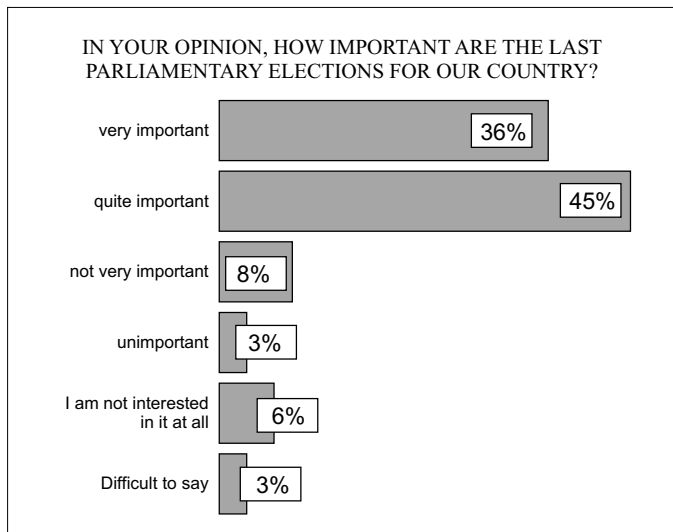
IN YOUR OPINION, WILL THE NEWLY ELECTED SEJ M BE BETTER, THE SAME OR WORSE THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE?



the AWS and SLD, repeat the types of reaction typical of the supporters of the right and the left almost precisely. Supporters of the Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland (ROP) welcomed the result of the election with great hope, while among the Freedom Union (UW) electorate, apart from the prevailing hope and satisfaction, surprise and anxiety are also quite common. The supporters of the Labour Union (UP) are full of anxiety and hope, but also disappointed with the result of the election, while the reaction of the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) electorate is dominated by anxiety.

As a rule, voters regard a newly elected Parliament as better than the outgoing one. It is also the case now, when nearly two fifths of respondents believe that the new Sejm, which has not been sworn in yet, will be better than the Sejm of the second term, although the opinions on this matter are also dominated by moderate optimism - respondents believe that it will be "rather" and not "considerably" better.

Positive reactions to the result of the election are accompanied by expectations that the newly elected Sejm will be better than the previous one, while anxiety and disappointment are associated with the belief that it will be worse. The expectations from the new Sejm result first of all from the political sympathies of respondents and their general tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic about the

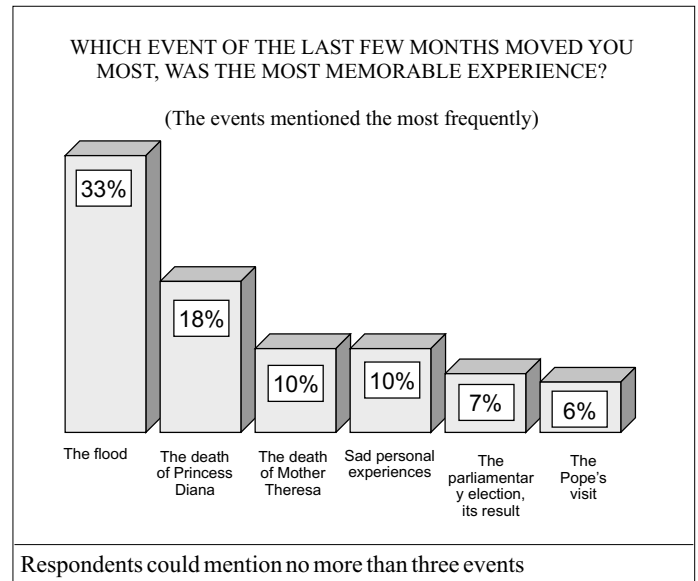


More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "An assessment of the election. Expectations from the new Parliament.", October '97.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE LAST MONTHS

A lot of important events took place in the last months, both in politics and in other spheres of life. We asked our respondents which events of the last few months they remembered best, which of them moved them most, which were the most memorable experiences. In order not to restrict them in any way or suggest anything, we asked an open question, i.e. instead of choosing events from a ready-made list, respondents

spontaneously mentioned the ones they considered the most important for themselves.



The greatest common experience of Poles during the last months, and probably also during the whole year, was the July flood. One in three of those polled declared that this was the event that moved them most, although obviously only a relatively small percentage of respondents were direct victims of the disaster. One should also bear in mind that the closer a given event to the date of the survey, the higher the probability of mentioning it. In contrast, the flood occurred around two months before our survey, but it outdistanced all other events as far as the emotions associated with it are concerned.

Only four of other "public interest" events reported by the media were mentioned by a significant percentage of respondents. They were the following: the tragic accident of Princess Diana, the death of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the September parliamentary elections and the visit of John Paul II to Poland in June.

Respondents were moved by the death of Princess Diana much more than by the death of Mother Theresa of Calcutta. There are two possible reasons for this: the first is the unprecedented media coverage of this event, and the second - the fact that Diana's death, unexpected and sensational, was accompanied by dramatic circumstances.

Women were moved by Diana's death much more than men, while the death of Mother Theresa of Calcutta made the same impression on all social and demographic groups differentiated in our survey.

The September parliamentary election was the only political event regarded by a quite large group of respondents as particularly important and moving. It should be noted, however, that the survey was conducted a few days after the election, and due to this fact the probability of mentioning it as one of the most important events was considerably higher.

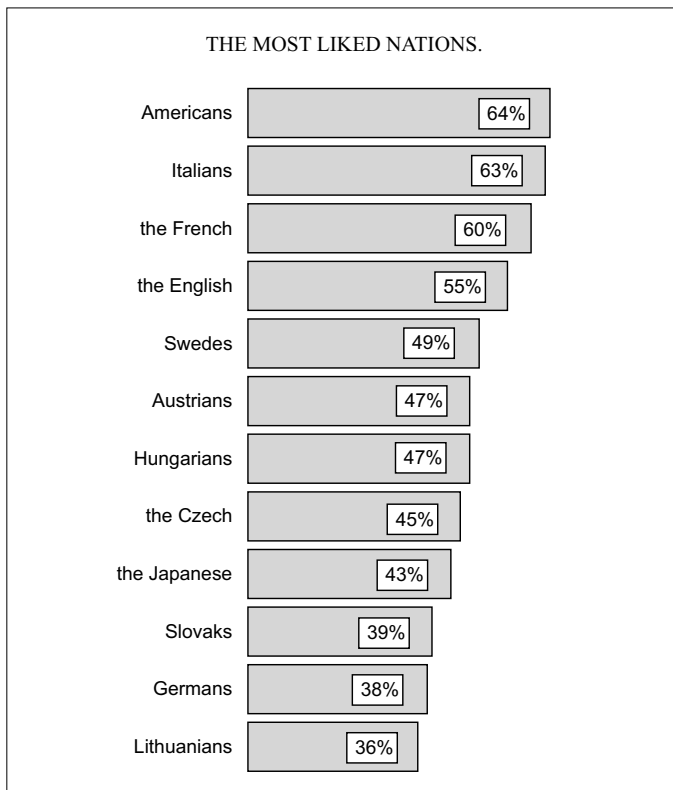
More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The events of the last few months.", October '97.

THE ATTITUDE OF OUR SOCIETY TOWARDS OTHER NATIONS

Our attitude towards other nations - whether we like or dislike them - follows first of all from the existing positive or negative national stereotypes. Besides, a smaller or greater liking or antipathy to inhabitants of other countries is not peculiar to Poles, but it occurs in other societies as well. Like in the previous years, also this year we analysed the feelings of Poles towards the representatives of different nationalities.

We have liked Italians, Americans and the French more than other nationalities for several years and it has not changed. The English, then Swedes, Austrians, Hungarians, the Czech and the Japanese are liked a little less. Slovaks, who got ahead of Germans on our list this year, are the last of the ten nationalities most liked by Poles. The last nationality to which we feel liking more frequently than antipathy is Lithuanians.

The top of our rating list is occupied by economically developed Western societies, which we admire and want to imitate. As far as the nations of Eastern and Central Europe are concerned, we like Hungarians most, then the Czech, Slovaks and Lithuanians. Our feelings towards the remaining nations are visibly dominated by dislike. As in the previous years, the most persons declare antipathy to Romanians and Gypsies.



The declared liking for Americans increased last year and as a result they are on the top of the list again. The liking for the English also increased slightly, while the liking for Germans, Swedes and the Japanese decreased a little.

For a few years we have been recording a trend of decreasing antipathy towards the nations which we do not like; the level of declared antipathy to Israelis, Serbs and Belorussians is decreasing systematically, although slightly. It may indicate a greater tolerance of our society, i.e. a certain reduction of prejudice and xenophobia.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The attitude of our society towards other nations.", October '97.

UNDESIRABLE NEIGHBOURS

In recent years the cases of residents' resistance to different kinds of technical or business developments realized in their neighbourhood, as well as establishing social care centres there, have been particularly frequent. According to common experience, even such developments as a car park, petrol station or shopping centre can cause social resistance.

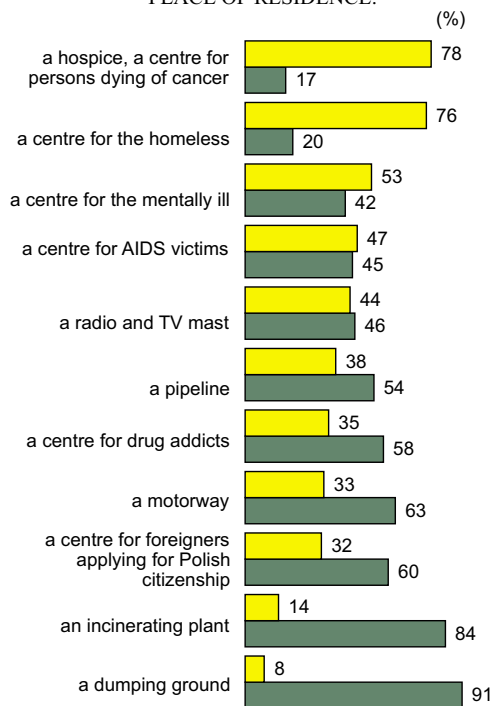
The subject of our survey was social reaction to selected social care or therapeutic institutions as well as technical and business developments situated near the respondents' place of residence.

Among the analysed developments, situating a dumping ground or an incinerating plant near a respondent's place of residence would cause the greatest resistance. Slightly less persons would object to building a motorway or pipeline, although the number of opponents is bigger than the number of persons accepting it in both these cases as well. A construction of a radio and TV mast would raise the relatively smallest resistance, as the opinions on this matter are divided. Among social groups, farmers are relatively the most ready to accept situating in their neighbourhood such developments as a motorway, a pipeline or even a dumping ground. However, compared to other groups, they would object to constructing a radio and TV mast the most frequently.

Most respondents would not agree to establishing an asylum for immigrants or a centre for drug addicts in their neighbourhood; they are the two institutions which would raise the strongest social resistance of all social care institutions considered in the survey. The lack of acceptance for foreigners as neighbours probably follows from the fact that their culture is different and strange, but it can also be caused by unfriendly attitude towards this group of people motivated by economic reasons, i.e. unwillingness to maintain them on the cost of the taxpayer and share jobs with them.

It is interesting that in the respondents' opinion a centre for drug addicts is more undesirable in the neighbourhood than a centre for AIDS victims. It seems that the latter group is perceived rather as affected by a disease, while drug addiction as such is treated as a symptom of social pathology. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the establishment of a centre for AIDS victims and the establishment of a centre for the mentally ill are supported or rejected by a similar percentage of respondents.

THE RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TO ESTABLISHING NEAR THEIR PLACE OF RESIDENCE:



In the respondents' opinion, the most acceptable institutions in the neighbourhood would be a hospice for persons with cancer or a centre for the homeless, although it should be stressed that situating such institutions in the neighbourhood could also provoke protests of some persons.

The attitude to establishing different types of social care and therapeutic centres in a respondent's neighbourhood is connected first of all with his/ her education and socio-occupational group. Such institutions would be the most frequently accepted in the

neighbourhood by persons with higher education, while respondents with primary or basic vocational education would object the most frequently. A decision to establish such an institution in the close neighbourhood would raise the most objections among farmers.

The strongest acceptance of establishing such institutions as a centre for AIDS victims, a centre for drug addicts or an asylum for foreigners is characteristic of non-believers, while the lowest acceptance is characteristic of the respondents who consider themselves as believers. The persons declaring their deep faith would agree to the establishment of a hospice or a centre for mentally ill and the homeless in their neighbourhood the most frequently. It may mean that these persons react to human suffering, diseases and personal disasters with relatively more sensitivity, but on the other hand they are less tolerant to different lifestyles and systems of values than non-believers.

The lack of acceptance for the particular developments or institutions in the neighbourhood may have different reasons, ranging from fears for the health or even life of oneself and the family to the fear of difference or of contact with phenomena which we usually prefer to forget about (suffering, death etc.). It seems that the source of resistance to such developments as an incinerating plant, dumping ground or radio nad TV mast is first of all the conviction that they are harmful to health. On the other hand, the opinion about establishing different social care or therapeutic institutions in the neighbourhood shows the attitudes towards different groups of people existing as if on the margin of the society and can be treated as a measure of social distance from them.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Undesirable neighbours.", October '97.

In addition to the bulletins referred to above, the following have been published recently:

What coalition after the elections?

Social moods after the elections

The attitude to the outgoing government and an assessment of its work

Parents' expenses on the education of school-aged children

Interest in politics. The influence of family and friends on voters' preferences

The absent from the elections - reasons for absence

An assessment of the TV campaign. Candidates on TV

The influence of opinion polls on voters' decisions

Holiday rest of Poles

Elections'97 - stability of political situation

For more information on CBOS services and publications please contact:

CBOS POLAND
4a, Żurawia, 00-503 Warsaw
Phones: (48 22) 629 35 69, 628 37 04
Fax: (48 22) 629 40 89

E-mail: cbos@pol.pl

<http://www.korpo.pol.pl/cbos>

CBOS expertise in providing professional, accurate and timely research studies has made us the leading authority in political, social, international and consumer research concerning Poland.