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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](mailto:cbos@pol.pl)

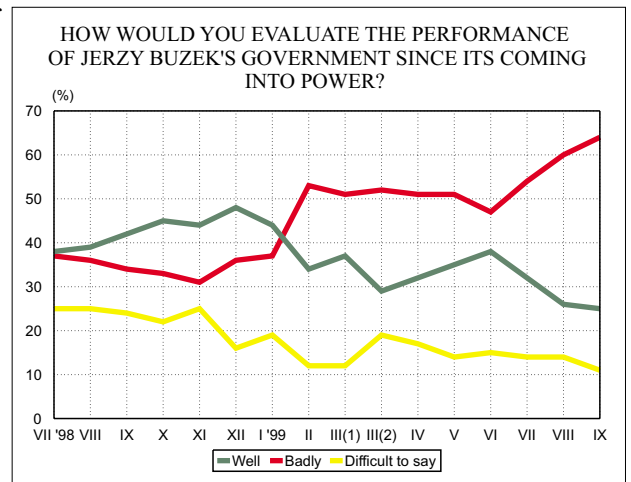
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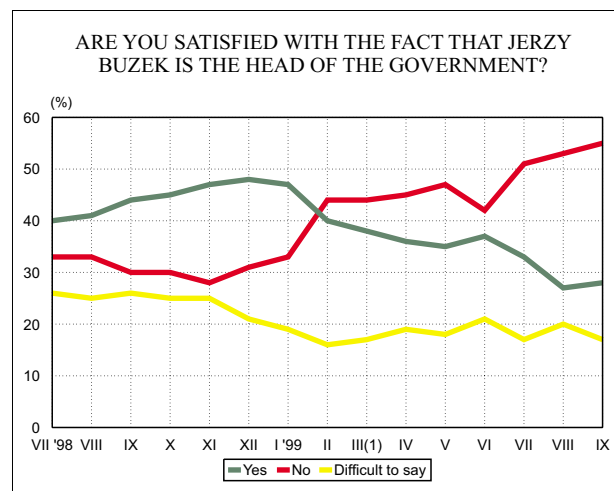
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## A DIFFICULT POSITION FOR JERZY BUZEK'S GOVERNMENT

In September evaluations of Jerzy Buzek's government were the lowest in its history. Opinions on the government have been deteriorating steadily since June, and during the last two months the cabinet has lost almost one quarter of its supporters. The respondents' current evaluations of the government, formed by the AWS (the Solidarity Election Action) and UW (the Freedom Union) coalition, are not only the lowest in the two years of its history, but also exceptionally low as compared with opinions on the four previous governments. It should be noted, however, that in September the increase of negative opinions is not accompanied by a corresponding decrease of positive ones. It may mean that the main reason for the decrease of the government's rating recorded in the last month is the bad publicity recently associated with Jerzy Buzek's government. The



protests against the government's policy reported in the media (e.g. farmers' demonstrations) and internal problems (such as the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs Janusz Tomaszewski), together with growing criticism on the part of the opposition, may encourage people who have had no opinion on the government so far to express negative opinions.



Over two fifths of respondents (43%, 4% more than in August) consider themselves opponents of Jerzy Buzek's government. This is the highest percentage of opponents of a government ever recorded (i.e. since the beginning of 1993, when we started measuring it). Supporters of the government are now clearly a minority - only one quarter of our respondents declare their support for the present government (25%, a decrease by 1%).

At the moment, almost two out of every three respondents (64%) evaluate the government's performance negatively, while only one in four (25%) expresses a positive opinion. None of the previous cabinets (our data allows us to track changes in the opinions on the policies of the last five governments) obtained so many bad evaluations and so few good ones. Previously Waldemar Pawlak's government was evaluated the lowest (in February 1995). Negative opinions outnumbered positive ones by 23% then, while now this difference is as big as 39%. Nor did the crisis last so long in the case of any previous government.

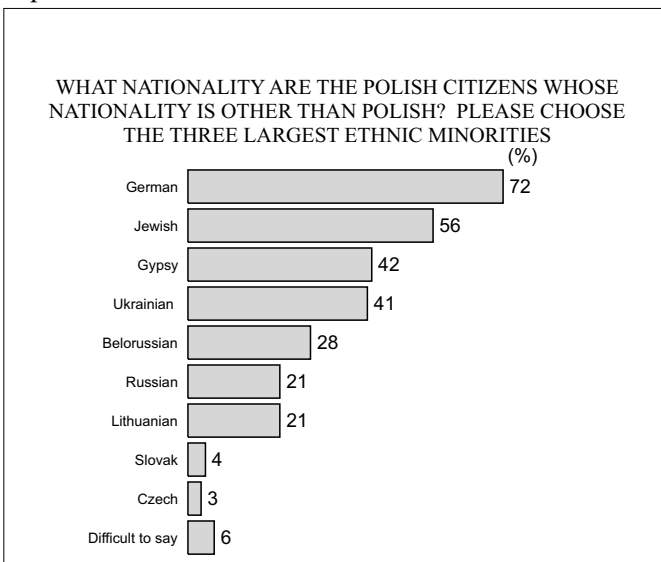
Almost half of the respondents (55%, an increase of 2%) are not satisfied that Jerzy Buzek is the Prime Minister, compared to only slightly more than one quarter who accept him (28%, an increase of 1%). These are the worst evaluations that any Prime Minister has obtained throughout the whole decade. No Prime Minister since 1989 has been evaluated so badly, and none of them was disliked by the majority of respondents. Waldemar Pawlak, the least liked Prime Minister so far, during the worst period during his term was approved by 34% of respondents (at the same time 48% declared their disapproval).

Pessimism still prevails in opinions on the economic prospects of our country. Over two thirds of respondents (67%, an increase of 3%) believe that the policy of the government does not give any cause for hope that the economic situation will improve. Less than one quarter (23%) express the opposite opinion. Among the different areas of the government's activity, agrarian policy is evaluated the lowest - almost three quarters of respondents consider it unsatisfactory. The social policy of the state, health care and the way the government takes care of its citizens' safety are also evaluated negatively. As compared with the situation at the beginning of the year, evaluations of government policy decreased the most with regard to the proper management of public money, economic policy and state administration.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The attitude to the government in September.", September 1999.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS ETHNIC MINORITIES

Polish society is ethnically homogeneous. It is estimated that around one million Polish citizens belong to ethnic minorities, which constitutes a very small percentage of the population (3-4%). The largest minorities are the Germans (around 700,000), Ukrainians (around 250-300,000) and Belorussians (around 250,000). Slovaks, Lithuanians, Roma (Gypsies) and Jews are less numerous. Polish citizens of Russian, Czech and Greek nationality form even smaller groups. Therefore, the opinions of most residents of Poland on ethnic minorities are probably shaped by the media and common stereotypes, rather than by personal contact with representatives of these communities.

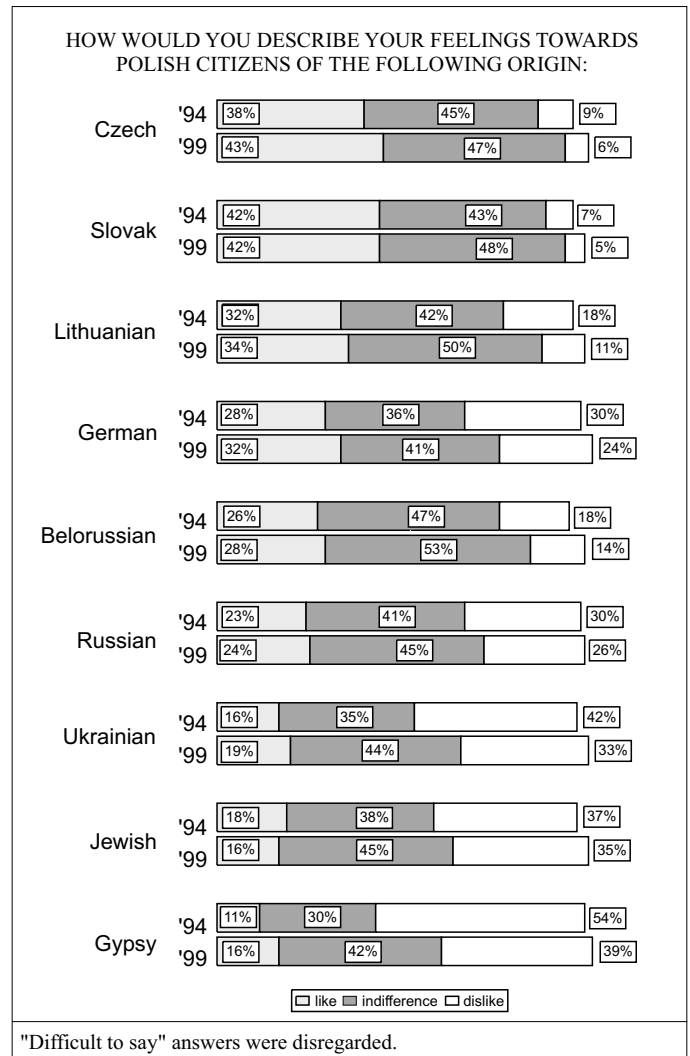


We asked our respondents to estimate the number of citizens of other than Polish nationality who currently live in our country. In the opinion of the respondents, they constitute a slightly bigger part of our society than is actually the case. The largest group of respondents (35%) estimate the percentage of ethnic minorities correctly (3 to 5% of the total population). However, other indications

show that we tend to overestimate rather than underestimate the presence of ethnic minorities in Poland.

The sizes of the Jewish and Gypsy minorities are overestimated the most. A large part of respondents consider them as the biggest minority groups in Poland. On the other hand, the ethnic minorities which are really the biggest (German, Ukrainian and Belorussian) are assessed correctly.

As far as different ethnic minorities are concerned, we like the Czech and Slovaks the most. Lithuanians, Germans, Belorussians and Russians are less liked. The most disliked are those minorities whose size is overestimated the most, i.e. Gypsies and Jews. Negative feelings also prevail in the case of Ukrainians, although to a lesser extent.



Respondents who believe that a particular ethnic minority is large tend to dislike this minority. Persons who overestimate the size of ethnic minorities in Poland at the same time present a much less positive attitude towards these minorities.

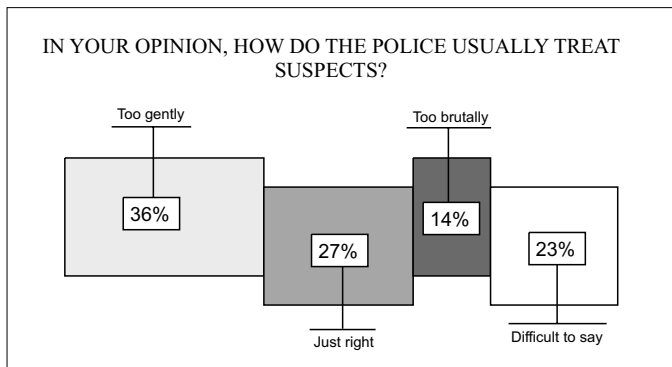
As compared with five years ago, the Poles' feelings towards Gypsies changed the most. The percentage of those who declare their positive attitude towards them has grown a little (by 5%), while the percentage of negative opinions has decreased significantly (by 15%). We like the Czechs more now, too. Our negative feelings towards

Lithuanians, Germans, Ukrainians, Russians and Belorussians have also decreased a little. On the other hand, our attitude to Slovaks has not changed. We are more indifferent to Jews now than five years ago.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "The attitude to ethnic minorities", September 1999.

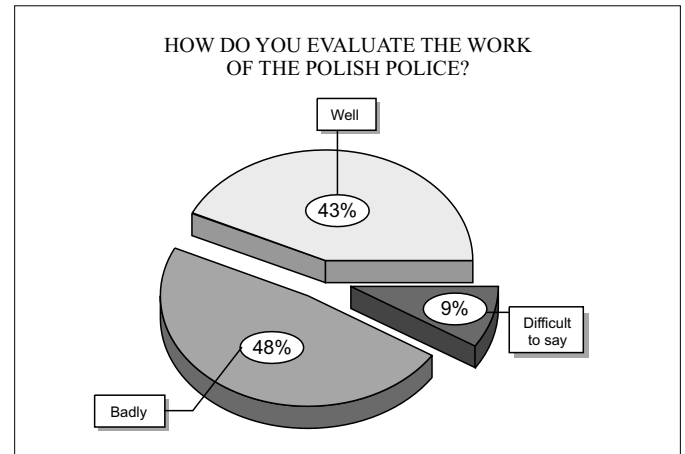
## OPINIONS ON THE WORK OF THE POLICE

According to the results of opinion polls, the view of Polish society on the law and obeying the law seem relatively strict. However, faith in the effectiveness of the firm actions of the police and stricter laws is easy to understand, taking into account a significant increase of crime in the last ten years, accompanied by the decreasing effectiveness of the police and a tendency to punish offenders less severely. In an earlier survey, respondents mentioned the following obstacles to fighting crime most frequently: too gentle laws; too much tolerance towards offenders; and too humane conditions in prisons. In the respondents' opinions, the crime rate could be decreased if more severe sentences were passed and conditions in prisons were harder. The results of one of the latest opinion polls confirm the conclusion that Poles blame the law and the police, neither of which in their opinion are strict enough, for the increase of crime.



In the respondents' opinions, the police, when confronted with criminals, are not only too gentle, but at times also vulnerable. As many as 73% of respondents agree with such a statement. On the basis of the respondents' views, two main reasons for the vulnerability of the police in confrontation with offenders can be distinguished. The first one is associated with the shortcomings of our legal system. Respondents mentioned the insufficient powers of the police and regulations that restrict the scope of their activity (25%). They mentioned poor laws (21%), a too liberal criminal law, and too low penalties for offenders (10%). They said that our legal system favours the rights of offenders at the cost of their victims (6%). They also indicated the weakness of our judicial system and bad work by judges and prosecutors. (*"The police catch criminals and judges let them go"*). The second reason is the poor functioning of the police force. In connection with this, respondents mentioned the insufficient equipment of the police, e.g. a lack of fast cars or modern weapons (20%). They noted

the inadequate training of policemen, and their passive attitude towards offenders (14%). In connection with the insufficient (in the respondents' opinion) number of policemen respondents mentioned their low salaries and the permanent deficit of funds allocated to financing police operations (14%). They also said that policemen are not adequately protected from threats made by the criminal world, which leads to fears connected with their own safety and the safety of their families.



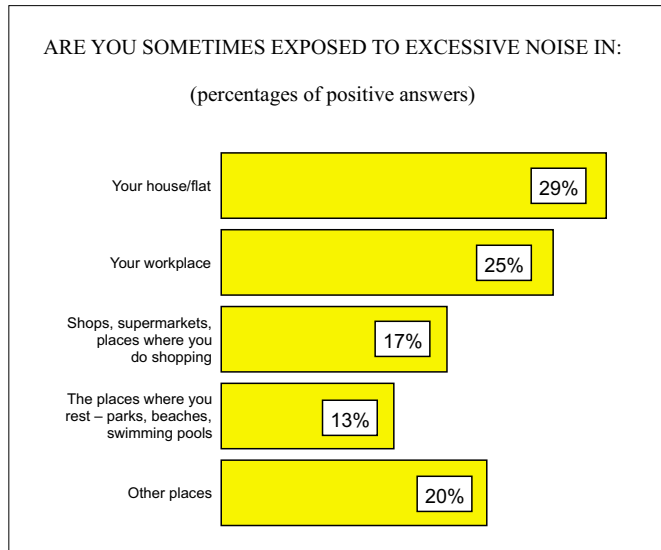
More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Opinions on the work of the police and using direct force", August 1999.

## DO WE SUFFER BECAUSE OF NOISE?

The effects of long-lasting noise are particularly harmful with regard to mental health. Excessive noise causes nervousness, overexcitability or a tendency for aggressive behaviour. The accumulative effect of noise leads to somatic diseases. In Poland the problem of excessive noise still seems to be treated with disregard, which is reflected in, e.g., the solutions applied in housing development or public transport. Over one third of Poles (36%) admit that they experience heavy noise often or very often, while only one quarter (28%) say that they are exposed to such noise rarely. Obviously, excessive noise is associated with urban life and persons living in the largest cities suffer because of it particularly often. As many as 46% of residents of the largest urban centres claim that they are exposed to excessive noise often or very often. The smaller their place of residence, the less problematic the noise. Only one in four residents of the countryside complains because of this.

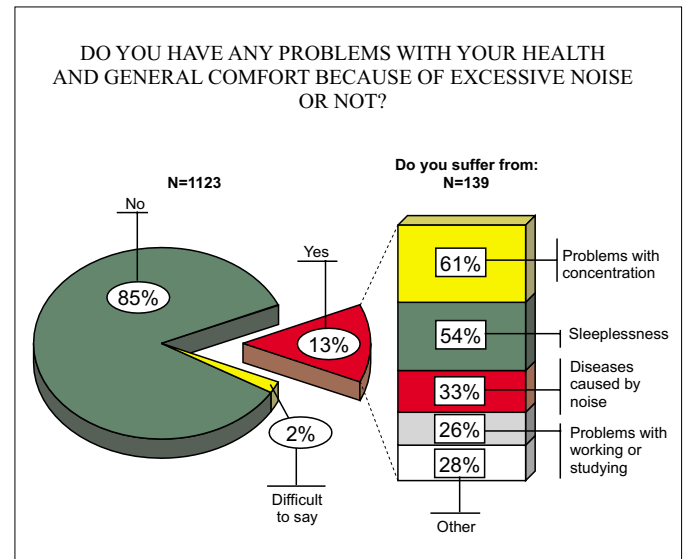
The main place where people suffer because of excessive noise, more than anywhere else is their house or flat. The older the respondents, the less immune they are to noise in their own home. Noise in the workplace bothers one quarter of respondents. It is particularly problematic for skilled workers (67% complain about it), semi-manual workers (48%) and junior office workers (44%). Smaller groups of respondents complain of noise in the places where they do shopping or rest. Streets, roads, city centres and the areas surrounding the respondents' places of residence were also indicated as sources of excessive noise.

The most annoying source of noise at home is the street and road traffic. One in three respondents complains of it. One in four considers his/her neighbours as a significant source of noise - children and teenagers playing in the neighbourhood, barking dogs or a new and very unpleasant phenomenon associated with the growing number of cars - wailing car alarms. Other household members and household equipment (TV, radio, various household appliances) are also sources of noise (16%). Noise made by neighbours behind a wall or fence is equally annoying (14%). The unfortunate location of their place of residence is also a source of stress for some respondents. For example, railway and air traffic, as well as industrial production, can produce dangerously high levels of sound. Leisure centres and sports grounds located in residential areas may also be sources of loud noise. One in twenty respondents is annoyed by noises made by pipes and other parts of the water supply system in his/her home.



As far as the workplace is concerned, the noise of machines or office equipment is the most troublesome (21% of respondents complain of it). Workplaces do not offer shelter from traffic noise, either one in eight

respondents (12%) believes that it is excessive there. Noisy co-workers are also annoying (5%). Finally, industrial noises also disturb our respondents at work (4%).



The simplest and the most common method of fighting excessive noise attacking our ears is avoiding noisy places, e.g. streets during the rush hour. 20% of respondents do this. Different methods of sound insulating flats and houses, such as keeping windows closed or sealing windows and doors are an almost equally common method of fighting noise (18%). Individual protective aids, such as earplugs or different kinds of earphones are also quite frequently used (11%). In spite of this, however, we are still rather helpless with regard to noise. One in ten Poles (10%) tries to cope with noise by ignoring it, not paying attention to it or separating himself from the environment. One fifth of Poles (20%) give up fighting noise altogether, because in their opinion it is impossible to win this fight, or get used to it, because they believe that there is no other option.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report "Do Poles suffer from noise?", September 1999.

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

- "Political party preferences in September"
- "Opinions on strikes and demonstrations in view of the current situation of the country"
- "Social moods in September"
- "Trust in politicians in September"
- "How do we protect the environment"
- "Opinions on bribes"

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

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