

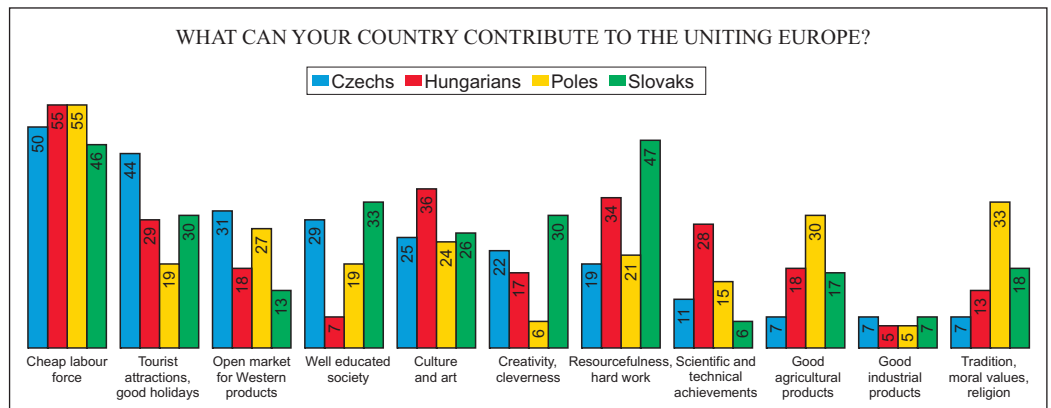
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THE PERCEIVED CONTRIBUTION OF POLAND, THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Shortly before the enlargement of the European Union, the public opinion research institutions in Poland (CBOS), the Czech Republic (CVVM), Slovakia (FOCUS) and Hungary (TARKI) asked their respondents what these countries could contribute to the European Union. The opinions vary from country to country. However, it is a universal belief that these countries will be a source of cheap labour for the European Union. In three countries (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) it was the most frequently mentioned „contribution”. The Slovaks also see their country as a source of cheap labour, although they more frequently mention hard work and resourcefulness of their people. In all four countries, high quality industrial products were mentioned among the respective country's greatest assets the least frequently.

A comparison of the replies shows that the Poles are the most original in their opinions about the contribution of **Poland** to the European Union. The most frequently mentioned assets of Poland include tradition, moral values and religion, as well as high quality farm products. The remaining three countries pointed to these items significantly less frequently. In particular, the Czechs very rarely mentioned tradition or moral values, as well as the quality of farm products.



The **Czechs** mentioned tourist attractions of their country and an opportunity of spending a nice holiday there significantly more frequently than the respondents from the other countries. After cheap labour, it was the second most frequently mentioned potential contribution of the Czech Republic to the European Union. Furthermore, the Czechs see their country as a market for goods imported from the European Union more frequently than the respondents from the other countries participating in the survey. They also appreciate the education of their society, culture and art, which are found among the five most frequently mentioned assets of the Czech Republic.

The **Hungarians** want to contribute their culture and art to united Europe more frequently than the respondents from the other countries. They also mention hard work and resourcefulness of their people and tourist attractions of the country. Among the surveyed societies, the Hungarians alone mentioned scientific and technological achievements among their country's five greatest assets which they can contribute to the united Europe.

The **Slovaks** believe that their people are the greatest contribution of their country to the European Community. These people are more than just cheap labour they are hard working and enterprising, well educated, clever and creative. According to the Slovaks, four

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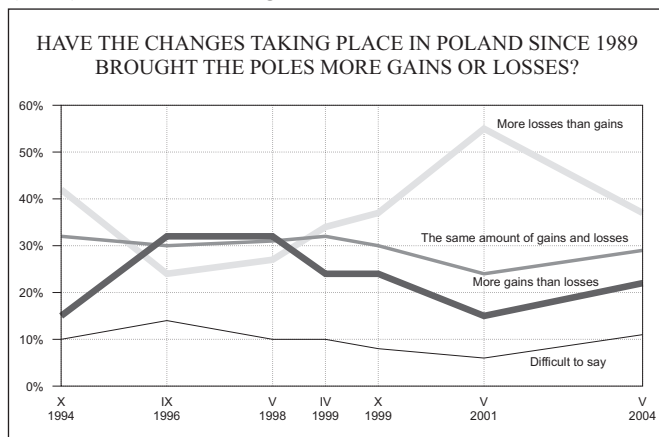
main assets of their country are the qualities of their society. In addition to the human capital, the biggest advantages of Slovakia include tourist attractions and holiday opportunities.

More information about this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish) *What Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have to offer to the EU*, June 2004. Surveys executed in April 2004. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N=993. The survey in the Czech Republic (CVVM Sociological Institute) was executed on a quota sample N= 1043, in Hungary (TARKI) on a random sample N= 1027, in Slovakia (FOCUS) on a quota sample N=1047.

EVALUATION OF THE CHANGES AFTER 1989

In June 2004, 15 years passed from the Parliamentary elections that brought about a complete change of the situation not only in Poland, but indirectly also in the whole Central and Eastern Europe. Initially, the shift from communism to democracy and market economy met with massive support of the society. With time, however, this support somewhat decreased, as the memories of life under the communist regime were fading and new problems were emerging.

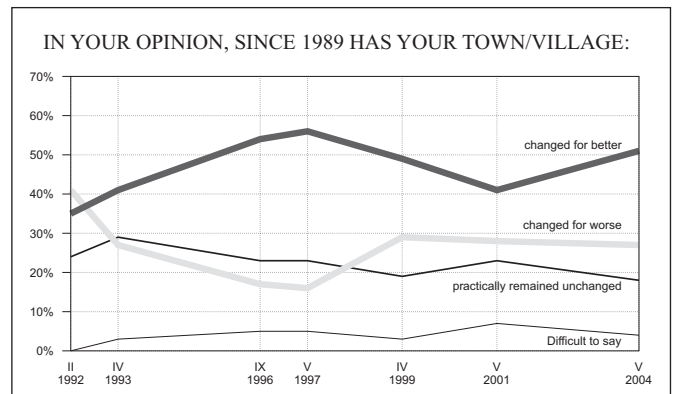
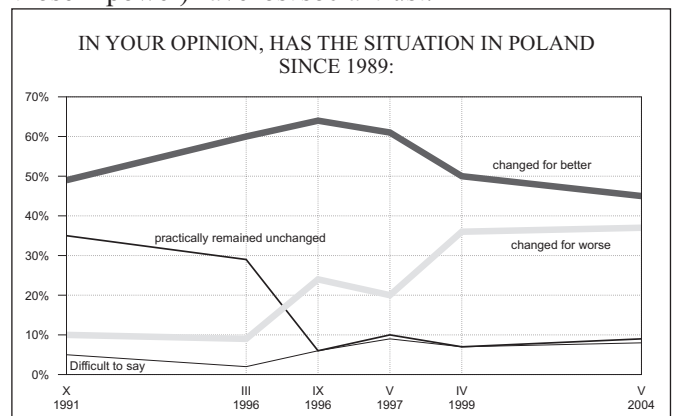
Today the evaluations of the whole period of transformation are still rather negative, although better than at the beginning of the present decade. At present, almost two-fifths of the respondents (37%) express negative opinions about the changes taking place in Poland since 1989 and believe that they have caused more harm than good. Slightly more than a fifth (22%) believe otherwise. Slightly below one third of the respondents (29%) believe that the gains and losses balance.



The most positive evaluations of the transformation were recorded in the mid-nineties (1996 and 1998). At that time, positive opinions even slightly outnumbered negative ones. Since 1999, the evaluations have been deteriorating quite systematically. The opinions were particularly critical in 2001, when over half of the respondents (55%) believed that the negative effects of the transformation prevailed over positive ones,

and only one-seventh (15%) believed otherwise. Now the downward trend in the opinions about the whole transformation period seems to be over.

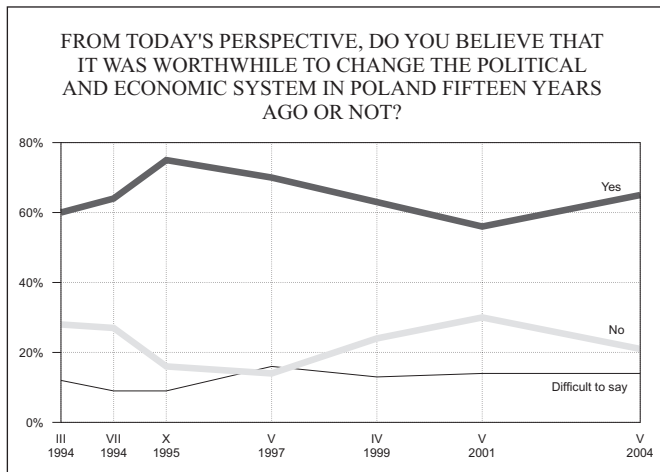
Although only slightly over a fifth of the Poles believe that the transformation has brought more gains than losses to the Polish people, the general evaluations of the changes in the country and in the respondents' place of residence are relatively positive. It seems that the Poles appreciate the full independence of Poland, the building of democracy and extension of civil liberties, but at the same time believe that negative phenomena prevail over positive ones in the sphere of everyday life of ordinary people (unemployment, low incomes, difficult access to healthcare, a loss of feeling of social security etc.). At present, 45% of the respondents (a drop by 5 percentage points as compared with five years ago) believe that the situation in Poland has changed for better since 1989. A slightly smaller group (37%) have a negative opinion about the changes that have taken place during the last fifteen years. It is the most pessimistic evaluation since 1991 there have never been so few positive opinions about the general changes in the country and so many negative ones. Such pessimism may be partly due to the fact that the political situation in Poland has been bad for months - both the most important democratic institution the Parliament, and the political parties (particularly those in power) have lost social trust.



Over half of the respondents (51%) believe that their town or village has changed for better during the last fifteen years. Half of this proportion (27%) say that the

situation in their place of residence has changed for worse during this period. As compared with the previous survey (2001), the opinions have improved a little. However, in a longer perspective (as compared with the late nineties), the evaluations have changed only slightly. The evaluations of the changes on both the national and the local level were the most positive in the mid nineties.

Despite the critical evaluations of some aspects of the transformation, the Poles invariably believe that it was worthwhile to change the political and economic system 15 years ago. This belief was the strongest in 1995, when it was shared by three quarters of the respondents. Since then, the percentage of those who accept the transformation was decreasing rather systematically until 2001, when only slightly more than half of the respondents considered the changes worthwhile. Now the percentage of those who believe so is higher than at the beginning of the present decade, but lower than in the mid nineties.

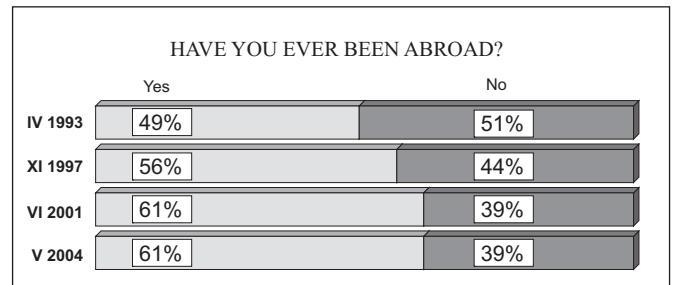


More information about this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish) *The Poles about the changes after 1989*, June 2004. Survey executed in May 2004. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 1006

FOREIGN TRIPS OF THE POLES AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

One of the effects of the 1989 transformation was the abolition of foreign travel restrictions. Nowadays, the only barriers to international travel are financial. The accession of Poland to the European Union is a further step towards easier travelling to almost all European countries. One may suppose, therefore, that the number of the Poles who know other countries will grow further.

Eleven years ago, less than half of adult Poles declared that they had visited a foreign country at least once. In 1990s., this proportion was growing slowly, but steadily, to stabilise at the level of 61% at the beginning of the present decade.

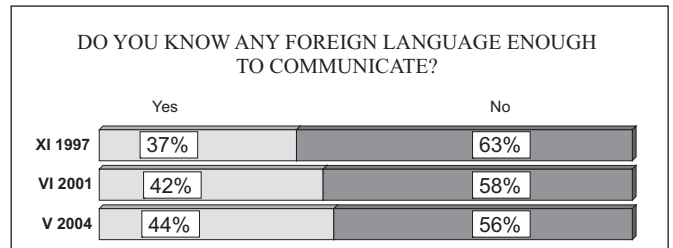


The most frequently visited country is Germany. In the last twenty years, one-third of all Poles (34%) have visited this country. The Czech Republic and Slovakia come next (the combined proportion of the Poles who have been to the Czech Republic (20%) or Slovakia (14%) is the same as the proportion of those who have visited Germany). Other quite frequently visited countries include: Hungary (11%), Italy (9%), Austria (9%) and France (8%). The Eastern neighbours of Poland, the former Soviet republics are relatively rarely visited: 4% of Poles have been to Russia, 4% to the Ukraine, 2% to Lithuania and 1% to Byelorussia.

Invariably, few Poles travel out of Europe 2% of the Poles have been to the USA and 1% have been to Canada. Very few have visited exotic countries: 2% of the respondents have been to Africa or Asia.

Since the late 1980s., when Poland opened to the world, knowledge of foreign languages has gained importance. The ability to communicate in a foreign language is more than just useful, it has become indispensable, as it is often a necessary condition of employment.

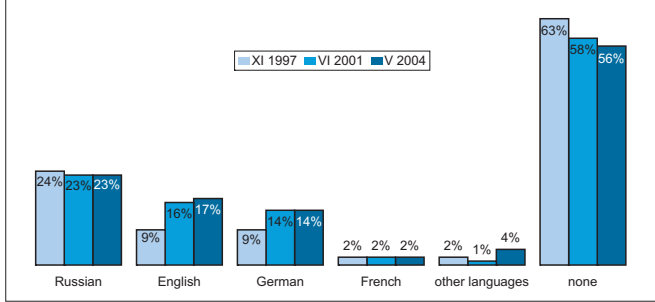
The proportion of the Poles who declare communicative knowledge of a foreign language has grown recently. However, more than half of adult Poles still cannot communicate in any foreign language.



Almost every third adult Pole (30%) is able to communicate in one foreign language. One-eighth (12%) know two foreign languages and very few (2%) three or more.

The biggest proportion of the Poles declare knowledge of Russian. Almost a quarter of the respondents can communicate in this language. English and German come next. The knowledge of these languages increased considerably as compared with the 1990s. It should be noted that very few Poles know French.

KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AMONG THE POLES:



More information about this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish) *Foreign trips of the Poles and their knowledge of foreign languages*, June 2004. Survey executed in May 2004. A representative sample of adult Poles. N = 1006

LIFE VALUES OF THE POLES

As far as the values constituting the sense of life are concerned, the Poles mention family in the first place (70% of indications). Their own and their family's health is almost as important (67%). For over half of the respondents (54%), love and friendship are the most important values.

Work is also very important permanent employment was ranked fourth among the life values of the Poles (43% of indications). However, the Poles attach much less importance to the general effects and nature of their work: professional success, being good in their job was ranked eighth among the most important values (23%), and satisfaction with work and having an interest in it came twelfth (13%).

Faith in God and life consistent with faith occupy the high fifth position among the values constituting the sense of life (40%).

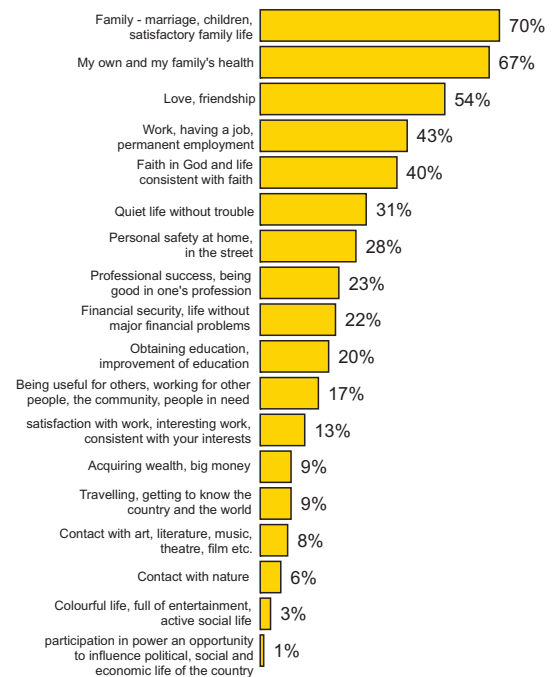
The following values were placed in the middle of the ladder (20 - 31% of indications): quiet life without trouble; personal safety; professional success; financial security, life without major financial problems; and,

finally, education. Interestingly, financial security was mentioned more than twice as frequently as wealth or big money (22% and 9%, respectively).

Relatively few persons (17%) mentioned being useful for others and working for the benefit of others among the values that give one's life a meaning.

Few respondents pointed to the values associated with self-fulfilment and development of personal interests. Less than one-tenth of the Poles mentioned getting to know the country or the world (e.g. through travel) or contact with art, literature etc. Very few persons pointed to contact with nature and a life full of entertainment as the most important values.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT IN LIFE FOR YOU, WHAT CONSTITUTES THE SENSE OF LIFE?



More information about this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish) *Life values*, June 2004. Survey executed in April 2004. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 993

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

- ◆ Priorities of Marek Belka's government
- ◆ Elections to the European Parliament
- ◆ The Poles' views on corruption
- ◆ Preferences in the elections to the European Parliament
- ◆ The feeling of influence on public affairs
- ◆ The perceived and desired amount of earnings
- ◆ The attitudes to democracy
- ◆ Political party preferences in June
- ◆ Preferred dates of Parliamentary elections
- ◆ Opinions about the government of Marek Belka
- ◆ Opinions about the job market and the threat of unemployment in June

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