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## SUPPORT FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF POLAND IN THE EU

The public support for the membership of Poland in the European Union is currently the highest ever. 88% of the Poles support the membership and only 6% are against it. It means that the percentage of the supporters of the integration has grown by 24 percentage points since the accession (in April 2004, shortly before the accession,



64% of the Poles supported the membership). The percentage of the opponents of Poland's membership in the EU has decreased by 23 percentage points in the same period. There was no "post-accession shock" in Poland at all.

The support for the membership of Poland in the European Union prevails in all socio-demographic groups. In each of them the proportion of the supporters of the integration exceeds three-quarters. Acceptance for the integration prevails among the supporters of all the political parties, which currently enjoy the highest social support.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): Social support for the membership of Poland in the EU, November 2006. Survey executed in October 2006. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 999.

## WORK OF THE POLES IN THE EU COUNTRIES

The job markets of the other EU countries are more and more accessible to the Poles. The United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden, which have allowed the citizens of the new Member States to enter their job markets without work permits since the moment of accession, have been followed by other countries. Since 1 May 2006 the Poles have been allowed to work without any limitations in Finland, Greece, Spain and Portugal, and since August in Italy as well. The precise number of the Poles who left their country to work in other European Union countries after 1 May 2004 is unavailable. According to various estimations, it varies from a few hundred thousand to a few million persons.



The number of people who leave Poland to work abroad has grown visibly in the last several months. Between March 2005 and October 2006, the percentage of the respondents whose close relatives went to work in another EU Member State after 1 May 2004 has doubled (from 15% to 31%). As their relatives declare, a majority of the people who left Poland after the accession still work abroad.

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ALL SOURCES MUST BE CREDITED WHEN ANY PART OF THIS PUBLICATION IS REPRODUCED In the first months after the accession, the most persons were trying to find employment in Germany. Now, the United Kingdom is by far the most popular destination of the economic migrations of the Poles. The popularity of this country as a job market has more than doubled during the last eighteen months. Currently, the United Kingdom is mentioned by more than half (45%) of the respondents who declare that their close relative has left Poland to work in another EU Member State. The interest in working in Germany has decreased, but still remains significant. According to the respondents' declarations, every fifth person who has left Poland to seek employment abroad has chosen Germany (21%). Relatively large groups of the Poles can also be found in Ireland (9%), Italy (7%) and the Netherlands (5%).

Due to the fact that the restrictions on the employment of people from the new Member States are gradually being removed and, at the same time, a growing number of the Poles migrate to the countries where they have free access to the job market, the Poles working abroad are more and more frequently employed legally. According to the relatives' declarations, eighteen months ago two-thirds (67%) of the Poles working abroad were employed legally, whereas now this proportion has grown to 80%. In the same period, the proportion of "black labourers" has dropped from 23% to 12%.

According to the respondents' declarations, as many as 3% of all adults living now in Poland have worked in one of the EU countries after 1 May 2004. Another 2% have so far been unsuccessful in their efforts to find employment there.



The Poles have already fulfilled their plans concerning work in other countries to a significant extent. Shortly before the accession, in February 2004, 32% of the respondents were interested in working in the European Union and 18% declared that they would seek employment in one of the Member States. Almost a year after the accession, the percentage of people interested in finding employment in the EU was significantly lower. At present, i.e. after two and a half years of the membership, the interest in working abroad is still lower. Only 11% of the respondents are going to seek employment in the EU and another 6% would accept a job offer if they received one.



The interest in working in the European Union is mainly related to the respondents' age and occupational status. Young people are among the groups which are the most interested in finding employment in one of the "old" Member States. According to the respondents' declarations, 32% of those aged up to 24 are going to take some actions to find a job abroad. In general, almost a third of all students (31%) are going to try to find such a job. Blue-collar workers express higher-than-average interest in working in the EU. 20% of skilled workers and 22% of unskilled workers are going to look for a job abroad. On the other hand, it is relatively the lowest among the best educated persons, managers and the intelligentsia and owners of businesses.



The preferred locations have changed visibly during the last eighteen months: the United Kingdom and Ireland have become a more attractive job market, whereas Germany and France have lost some of its appeal. Ireland is the second country now, whose attractiveness for the Poles has grown considerably during the last eighteen months.

Although some other Member States, such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, Finland and Italy, have facilitated the access to their job markets, their popularity has not grown during the last several months.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): *Work of the Poles in the EU countries*, November 2006. Survey executed in October 2006. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N=999.

### FOREIGN TRIPS AND KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

One of the effects of the transformation which began in 1989 was the abolishment of restrictions on foreign travel. The accession of Poland to the European Union was another step towards free travel to almost all countries of Europe.

Thirteen years ago less than half of adult Poles declared that they had been abroad at least once. This proportion was growing slowly, but steadily over the nineties to stabilize at the level of 61% at the beginning of the present decade.

Considering the fact that a large part of the population of Poland (an estimated one million or more persons) are currently living abroad, and therefore are not included in the sample, one must assume that the actual percentage of the Poles who know other countries is slightly higher (by 3-4 percentage points) than our survey would indicate.

Yes	
No	
	No

Germany is the most frequently visited country. One in three adult Poles have been there in the last twenty years (more than half of all the Poles, who have been abroad). The Czech Republic, which has been visited by one in five Poles, ranks second. More than ten percent of the respondents have been to Slovakia and Italy. Other quite frequently visited countries include France, Hungary and Austria.



Since Poland became open to the outside world in the late eighties, the knowledge of foreign languages has been increasingly important. Not only is the ability to communicate in a foreign language more and more useful, but it has become virtually necessary, e.g. if one wants to find a job abroad.

The knowledge of foreign languages in the Polish society is improving. However, still more than half of adult Poles cannot communicate in any foreign language.



Almost one-third of adult Poles (31%) can communicate in one foreign language. One in eight (12%) know two foreign languages, and very few (2%) three or more.

Nearly every fourth Pole can communicate in Russian (22%). Almost the same proportion are able to communicate in English (20%). A relatively large number of the respondents speak German (14%) and relatively few speak French (2%).

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): *Knowledge of foreign languages and foreign trips*, November 2006. Survey executed in November 2006. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N=979.

## THE EXTENT **OF "COLLECTIVIZATION" OF WORK RELATIONS**

The "collectivization" of work relations is rather low in Poland. Its symptoms, such as the trade union membership rate, the popularity of collective labour agreements, the participation of employees in the management of companies, place Poland on a level much lower than that of most Western European countries.

The declared trade union membership has not changed significantly for four years; 6% of all adult Poles, or 14% of the employed, declare such membership.

The biggest drop in trade union membership was recorded in the first half of the 1990s. In the years 1991-1995, the union membership rate decreased from 19% to 11% of all adults. The number of trade union members stabilized in the second half of the 1990s to drop again in the years 2000-2002. Recently, this percentage has changed only slightly.

Trade union membership is much more common among the employees of the public sector (28%) than among those working in the private sector (3%).



On the whole, one-third of all employed Poles (32%) work in companies or institutions, in which there are trade unions. It should be noted that only two years ago trade unions were present in almost two-fifths of all Polish enterprises.



One-fifth of the employees say that collective labour agreements have been signed in their workplaces. In fact, the number of employees covered by the provisions of such agreements can be bigger, because a large proportion of the employees do not know whether such an agreement is in force in their workplace or not.



In connection with the accession to the European Union, certain solutions extending the employees' rights and improving the work environment had to be introduced. For example, an obligation to organize workers' councils in enterprises with more than 50 employees has been imposed. Nevertheless, not even one-fifth of the employees declare that there is a workers' council in their workplace.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): Collective labour agreements, violations of employees' rights and the grey sphere in employment. November 2006. Survey executed in October 2006. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N=999.

<ul> <li>In addition to the reports referred to above, the following have been published recently (in Polish):</li> <li>Opinions about the reconstructed government coalition of Pis, the Self-Defence and LPR</li> <li>Local elections according to the pre-election declarations of the Poles</li> <li>Political party preferences in November</li> <li>Social moods in November</li> <li>The attitude to the government in November</li> <li>The attitude to the government in November</li> <li>The opinions about the work of the President and the Parliament</li> <li>Trust in politicians in November</li> <li>The Poles about certain rights and tasks of the UNO</li> <li>The attitudes to abortion</li> <li>Holiday trips in the years 1992-2006</li> <li>The Poles' opinions on TVP, TVN and Polsat</li> <li>Evaluations of the work of journalists</li> </ul>	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: sekretariat@cbos.pl http://www.cbos.pl Yearly subscription rate for "Polish Public Opinion" is 80 USD Circulation: 210 copies
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