

IN THIS ISSUE:

- THE ATTITUDES TO FOREIGN POLITICIANS
- THE ATTITUDES TO DEMOCRACY
- HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF DONALD TUSK
- EARLY RETIREMENT AND PAID WORK OF PENSIONERS

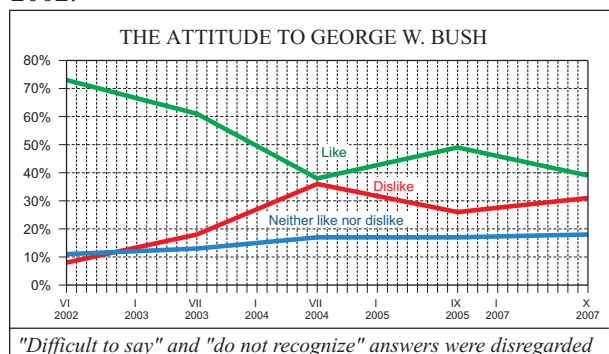
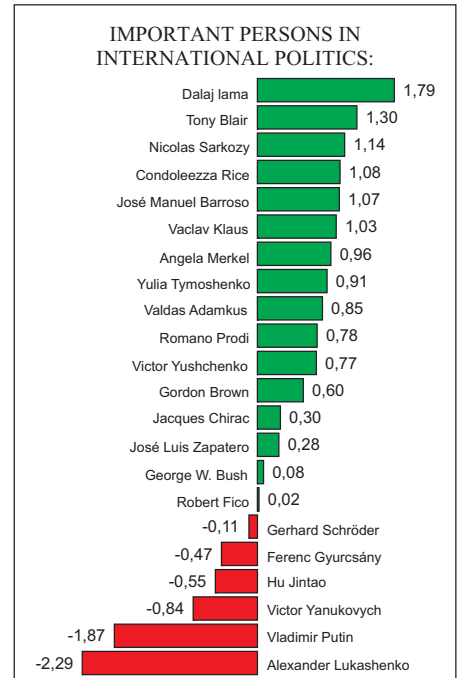
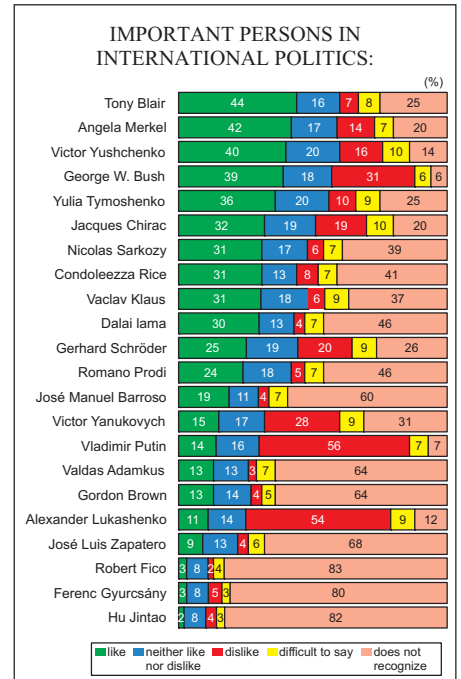
THE ATTITUDES TO FOREIGN POLITICIANS

The Poles commonly recognize the presidents and the United States and Russia, George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin. The presidents of two Eastern neighbours of Poland, Victor Yushchenko of the Ukraine and Alexander Lukashenko of Byelorussia, are almost equally well known. The best-known politicians also include the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the former French President Jacques Chirac.

Among the foreign politicians mentioned in our survey, no one is clearly liked by most Poles. Relatively, the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair is seen in the most positive light. He is liked by more than two-fifths of the Poles and disliked by very few. Four more politicians achieved a similar result: the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the President of the Ukraine Victor Yushchenko, the U.S. President George W. Bush, and Yulia Tymoshenko, one of the leading players on the Ukrainian political scene.

In contrast, the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Byelorussian President Alexander Lukashenko are usually disliked. More than half of the respondents declare negative feelings for them.

Until 2004, the Poles invariably liked the successive U.S. Presidents the most. In 1991, as many as 87% of the respondents declared positive feelings for George Bush. This situation continued in the following years. 75% of the Poles liked Bill Clinton in 1994, and 73% liked George W. Bush in 2002.



The feelings for President Bush deteriorated in 2003, probably due to the situation in Iraq, but he remained the unchallenged leader among the foreign politicians mentioned then in our survey. The situation changed dramatically before the American elections in 2004, in connection with growing criticism of the President's policy in both the American and the international media. The Polish media also covered this issue extensively. At the same time, the support for the participation of Polish soldiers in the stabilization mission in Iraq dropped

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 46 91

Fax: (48 22) 629 40 89

E-mail: sekretariat@cbos.pl
http://www.cbos.pl

Editors:
Krzysztof Zagórski
and Beata Roguska

Translated by
Kinga Pawłowska

© COPYRIGHT BY CBOS 2007

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

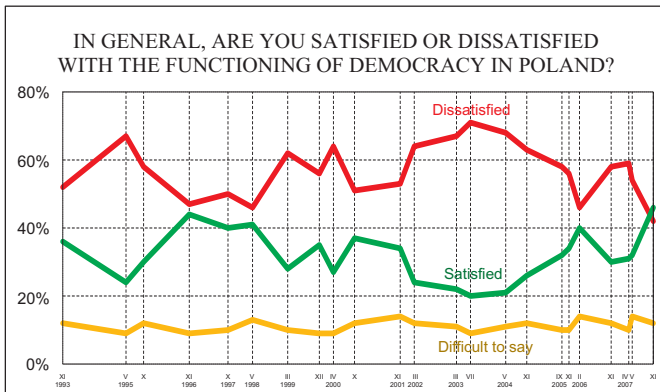
significantly. Due to all these reasons, for the first time the declared support for the U.S. President dropped well below 50%, although he still remained one of the most liked foreign politicians. Today George Bush occupies the fourth position in the ranking of the most liked politicians. At the same time, however, he is the third most disliked one.

The respondents described their attitude to a particular individual with the use of an eleven-degree scale, whose extremes indicated deep dislike (-5) and very positive feelings (+5). The average scores obtained by different politicians on this scale, calculated only for the respondents knowing given politicians, indicate that Dalai lama is seen in the most positive light. The second politician most liked by those who recognize him is Tony Blair, although the distance to the first one is rather big.

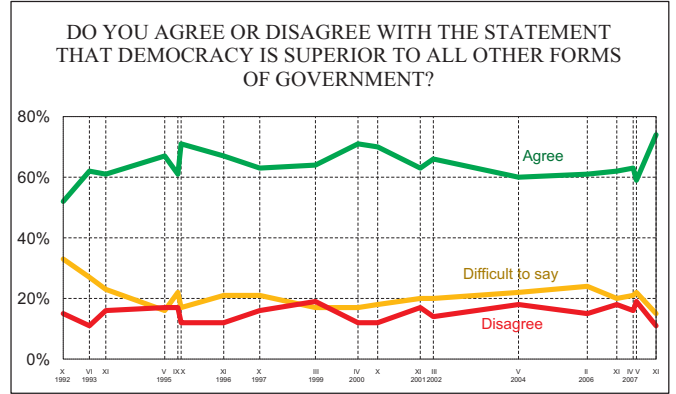
More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): *The attitude to foreign politicians*, November 2007. Survey executed in October 2007. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 1385.

THE ATTITUDES TO DEMOCRACY

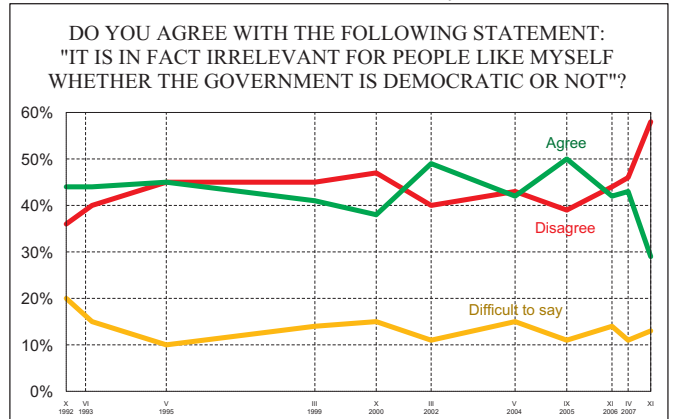
Early Parliamentary elections, which were held in October, met with great interest of the public. The turnout was relatively high for Poland. It reached almost 54% (compared with below 41% two years ago). Political commentators frequently noted that the election was in fact a referendum in which the people voted for or against the ruling rightist party (PiS). The Civic Platform (PO) won and formed a ruling coalition with the Polish Peasant Party (PSL). The election and the resulting political changes significantly contributed to an improvement of the opinion about democracy. The opinions about the way democracy works in Poland have never been so positive. For the first time since we started analyzing the evaluations of Polish democracy (i.e. since November 1993), more respondents expressed satisfaction with the way it functions in Poland (46%) than disappointment (42%).



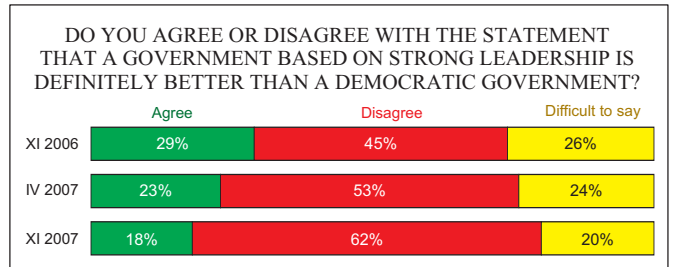
Although to date the Poles were not satisfied with the way democracy functions in Poland, they invariably accepted democracy as an ideal political system. Currently the level of acceptance for it is higher than ever before. Almost three quarters of the Poles (74%) agree with the opinion that democracy is superior to all other forms of government.



The level of identification with democracy is also the highest ever. For the first time most Poles (58%) declare that they do care whether Poland is governed in accordance with the rules of democracy or not.



The feeling of political alienation decreased in connection with the fact that authoritarian tendencies became weaker. In late 2006, 29% of the respondents agreed with the opinion that a government based on strong leadership is better than a democratic government. Now below a fifth of them (18%) think so.

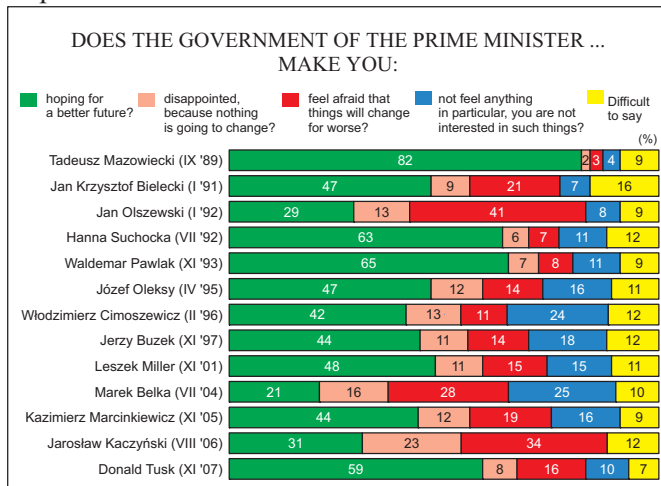


More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): *A look at democracy after the Parliamentary election*, November 2007. Survey executed in November 2007. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 863.

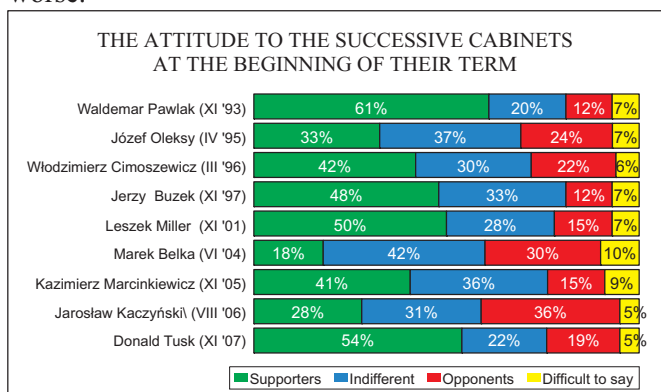
HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF DONALD TUSK

The government of Donald Tusk begins its term with a large credit of trust. No cabinet has awakened such high expectations among the Poles since the government of Waldemar Pawlak in 1993. Most Poles (59%) believe that the new government will contribute to the improvement of the situation in the country. 16% of the respondents are afraid that things could change for worse.

To date, the cabinet of the first non-communist Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, which was formed in October 1989, was welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm. At that time, as many as 82% of the Poles hoped that the new government would bring an improvement.

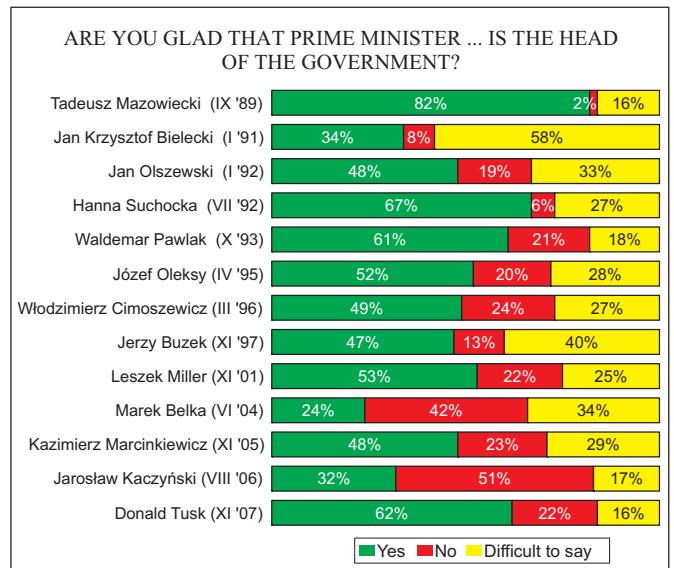


More than half of the Poles (57%) expect the cabinet of Donald Tusk to be better than the cabinet of Jarosław Kaczyński. One in six respondents (17%) believe that the new cabinet will be the same as the previous one, and one in eight (12%) expect it to be worse.



Compared with its predecessors, the new government enjoys strong public support. More than half of the Poles (54%) support the cabinet, while below a fifth (19%) are in opposition to it.

The Prime Minister personally is very popular. Almost 62% of the respondents are glad that Mr Tusk is the Prime Minister.



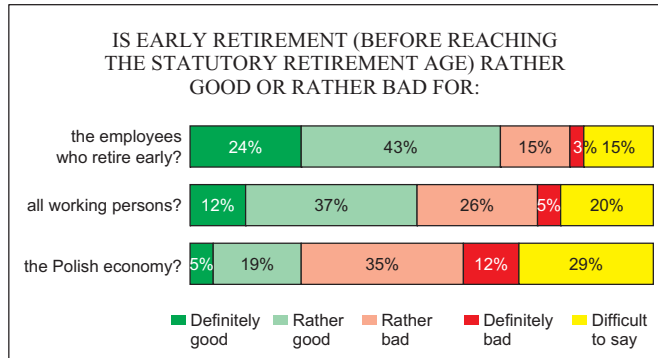
The new government was received well by all socio-demographic groups. However, it has particularly many supporters in the social groups and circles which were the most critical about the actions of the government of Jarosław Kaczyński. Apparently, the more someone criticized the previous government, the warmer their feelings for the new one. The new cabinet has the most supporters among the best educated and wealthiest persons, young people and the inhabitants of big cities. Farmers and rural people in general, as well as older persons, have relatively less positive attitude to the new government.

More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): *The attitude to the government of Donald Tusk*, November 2007. Survey executed in November 2007. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 863.

EARLY RETIREMENT AND PAID WORK OF PENSIONERS

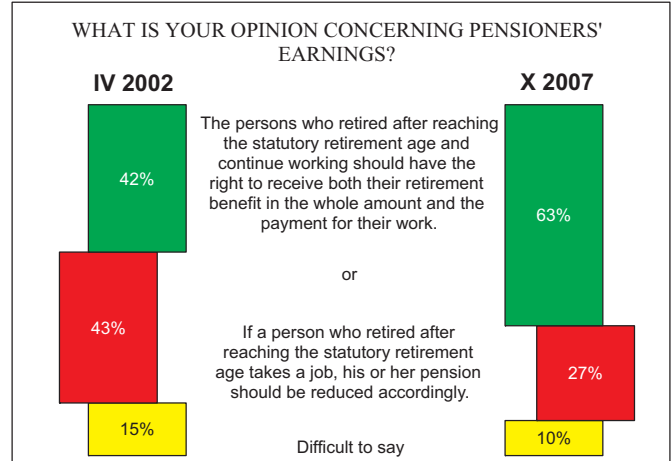
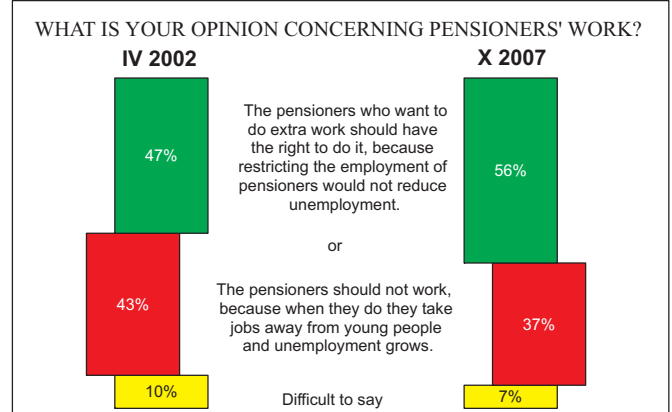
Poles leave the labour force at a relatively young age, and the so-called effective retirement age is among the lowest in the EU. In recent years, the number of pensioners has been growing significantly faster than the number of persons who have reached the retirement age (60 years for women and 65 for men). Last year, the average age of actual retirement was 56.0 for women and 58.7 for men. Consequently, the employment rate in the 55-64 age group is just above 26%. Should this situation continue, the Polish social security system will become inefficient. For this reason, the need to encourage pensioners to go back to work, increase the retirement age and limit retirement privileges is discussed more and more often.

In the opinion of two-thirds of the respondents, early retirement benefits the employees who decide not to wait until they reach the retirement age. Almost half of the respondents believe that it benefits the labour force in general. At the same time, almost half of the respondents are aware of the fact that early retirement does not have a positive effect on the Polish economy.



Those who are against the idea of working after reaching the retirement age argue sometimes that it takes jobs away from young people. Many people found this argument convincing in the period of high unemployment. Now the unemployment is decreasing and the social acceptance for paid work of pensioners is growing.

In line with growing social acceptance for paid work of pensioners, more and more people accept the right of the persons who retired after reaching the statutory retirement age and continue working to receive both their retirement benefit in the whole amount and the remuneration for their work.



More information on this subject can be found in the CBOS report (in Polish): Early retirement and paid work of pensioners, November 2007. Survey executed in October 2007. A representative random sample of adult Poles. N = 1385.

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

- ◆ The Election Code for the Sejm elections
- ◆ The attitude to intellectual property and copyrights
- ◆ Do Poles think about their future pensions?
- ◆ Political party preferences in November
- ◆ The attitudes to disabled persons
- ◆ Social optimism after the parliamentary elections
- ◆ The role of television in the election campaign
- ◆ Trust in politicians in the new political situation
- ◆ Opinions about the work of the President
- ◆ About the date of withdrawal of Polish soldiers from Iraq, the attitude to locating the elements of the anti-missile shield in Poland and fear of terrorism

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: 70 copies

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