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## **EVALUATION OF PRESIDENT LECH KACZYŃSKI IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS TERM**

After his election to the office of president, Lech Kaczyński enjoyed relatively high social trust. Soon, however, critical evaluations of his activities started to appear. Positive opinions prevailed over negative only in the first three months of his term in office, and even then gradual growth in disappointment with his presidency



DO YOU HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE OPINION ABOUT THE WAY PRESIDENT LECH KACZYŃSKI IS PERFORMING HIS DUTIES? Definitely Rather Difficult Rather Definitely positiv positive negative negative to say III 2006 42% 20% 23% VI 2008 32% 33% 12% 20%

Mid-term, only slightly more than a third of respondents believe that Lech Kaczyński is doing a good job as the head of state, while over half has a negative opinion about his activities.

Only less than one-third of the Polish people believe that Lech





his term (starting in April 2006) were characterized by clear prevalence of negative evaluations. Since Sept. 2006, the majority of Polish society have systematically had a bad opinion about the way the presidential office functions.

could be noted. Subsequent months of



Kaczyński is doing a good job representing Poland on the international scene. The majority have objections to his international policies.

The majority of the Polish people accuse the president of representing the political movement he came from, rather than the interests of the country as a whole.

More information on this subject can be found in CBOS report (in Polish): *Evaluation of Presidency of Lech Kaczyński in the Middle of his Term*, June 2008. Fieldwork in June 2008. Random sample representative for adult population of Poland, N=1107

## **OPINIONS ABOUT PROPERTY RESTITUTION**

Poland remains the only country in Central and Eastern Europe without property restitution program. The government of Jerzy Buzek was closest to solving this problem, but the law it prepared was vetoed by president Aleksander Kwaśniewski. At present, the government of Donald Tusk is trying to compensate the owners for the loss of property nationalized under the former system.

The support for property restitution is now lowest in history. Only about one-third of adult Poles (34%) support returning property to the former owners. Over two-fifths oppose property restitution, while more than one-fifth (22%) has no opinion on that subject.

In the previous years, attitudes varied: sometimes supporters, and sometimes opponents of such policy were more numerous. The highest support was in the beginning of the 1990s (65% in 1991).



The model of property restitution proposed by the government contains no provision for returning the property in kind, but for financial compensation only. According to the proponents of such a move, it would provide the same set of rules for everyone receiving compensation, and it would respect the acquired rights of the present owners of the property covered by restitution scheme.

The society is divided in its opinions about the methods of returning property. Over two-fifths of all respondents (regardless of their attitude to property restitution) believe that, wherever it is possible, property should be returned in kind, and in other cases financial compensation should be paid. A slightly smaller group approves of the government version: paying compensation regardless of whether it is possible to return property in kind.



According to the government proposal, the eligibility criterion for property restitution would be Polish citizenship at the time property was seized. People who had Polish citizenship when they lost property and their descendants would be entitled to compensation. The nationality and current citizenship of applicants would not matter.

The societal opinions contradict the government proposals. Most respondents want only current Polish citizens and their descendants to be eligible, provided they have Polish citizenship. Only about a quarter approve of the government proposal that Polish citizenship at the moment of property loss should decide about the right to claim compensation.



Some of the property taken over by the state after Word War II, and used by private persons now, belonged to Jewish people earlier. Property restitution would concern this property as well. Half of adult Polish people (50%) support returning property to Jewish people, preferably through financial compensation. The support for restitution of this property is similar to the level noted in 1994, and slightly higher than in 1999. The stable results are worth noting against the background of falling support for property restitution overall. The relatively high support probably has to do with the ongoing debate about the co-responsibility of Polish people for the fate of Jews during and after WW II.

The changing societal consciousness is documented by the particularly high support returning Jewish property enjoys among the youngest respondents. Overall, 68% of respondents at the age 24 or younger, and 72% of students support restitution of this property, either in kind or (usually) in the form of financial compensation.



More information on this subject can be found in CBOS report (in Polish): *Poles About Property Restitution, June 2008*. Fieldwork in May 2008. Random sample representative for adult population of Poland, N=1116

## POLICY TOWARDS ABORTION (INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE DATA FROM 18 COUNTRIES)

Together with institutes from countries around the world, CBOS participates in the research program WorldPublicOpinion.org. Among the participants are most of the largest countries in the world: China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Russia, as well as Mexico, Britain, France, Poland, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, the Palestinian Territories, Thailand and South Korea. Our recent topic was state policy to abortion. The survey asked respondents whether they thought "the government should be involved in trying to discourage abortions" or whether it "should leave these matters to the individual." Those who said the government should be involved in discouraging abortions were then asked if it should "use methods of criminal enforcement, such as fines and imprisonment for people who give or receive abortions" or whether it should "use such methods as education, counseling, and adoption services, but not criminal enforcement."



In nine nations, a majority says the government should leave these matters to the individual. This includes countries where abortion is legal: France (95%), Great Britain (81%), the United States (69%), Ukraine (69%), Russia (62%), and China (67%). It also includes three countries with highly restrictive laws: Poland (66%), Mexico (70%) and South Korea (62%). Majorities in seven countries favor government efforts to discourage abortions, though only one supports criminal enforcement. In Indonesia, nine out of ten (88%) back government efforts, including 60 percent who favor criminal enforcement.

Polish people resemble inhabitants of other developed countries in their opinions. Similarly to other European countries, the majority are against government interference. The results obtained in Poland are also similar to the findings from the other two post-communist countries: Russia and Ukraine.

## RIGHTS OF GAYS AND LESBIANS

Polish society is among the most restrictive in the European Union in its attitudes to homosexuality. Public demonstrations by gays and lesbians are frequently (sometimes violently) disrupted by people questioning their right to appear in public. While the list of countries where gay couples have the right to register their relationships is growing, Poland is unlikely to join them, as there is no political force ready to propose such measures. The possibility of introducing gay marriages is sometimes used by politicians to suggest a threat from EU. The attitudes to gays and their rights are stable.

Over a quarter (27%) of respondents believe that homosexuals should have the right to organize public demonstrations, while two-thirds (66%) disagree. Opinions about that issue are, to an extent, shaped by reactions to current events: at the end of 2005 support for the right to demonstrate rose after a gay parade was banned, which triggered a debate about possible threat to freedom of association and, one suspects, encouraged some people to think about gay parades in terms of civil rights.

More information on this subject can be found in CBOS report (in Polish): *Abortion Policies - Opinions of People from 18 Countries*, June 2008. Fieldwork in Poland in Dec. 2007. In Poland, random sample representative for adult population, N=870. For data on fieldwork in other countries, see: www.worldpublicopinion.org



The society is divided as far as the opinions about partnership unions of gays and lesbians are concerned. A large minority (41%) approves of introducing the possibility for gay and lesbian couples to register unions in which partners would have the same property rights as married couples (for instance, the right to inherit after the deceased partner, or to file joint tax return). Almost half of respondents disapprove of it.



If the union of two homosexuals is called marriage, the support for its legal possibility is much

lower. Less than a fifth of adult Poles (18%) accepts marriage of gay and lesbian couples, while three quarters (76%) opposes them. In the last three years the opposition slightly rose.

CBOS asked questions about attitudes to homosexuals in 1988 for the first time, that is before systemic change. Polish authorities were hostile to gays at that time, considered gay community as a threat, and the police compiled profiles of gay people. It is worthwhile noting how attitudes changed in the long run.

The majority of respondents think that the Polish society is hostile to gay people. Both in 1988 and in 2008 two-thirds gave that answer. About a quarter believe that the society is indifferent, and hardly anyone thinks that the attitude is friendly. The durability of these answers proves that the attitudes are very deeply rooted indeed.



More information on this subject can be found in CBOS report (in Polish): *The Rights of Gays and Lesbians*, June 2008. Fieldwork in May 2008. Random sample representative for adult population of Poland, N=1116

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