



# Weekly Briefing

**Poland Social briefing:**  
**Social Development in Poland**  
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Regarding the latest social development, two major issues should be discussed: Polish society attitude towards different nations and second the social perception of having the impact on the politics in Poland.

The Czechs, Italians, Americans, English people, Slovaks and Hungarians have the most significant sympathy within the Polish society, for whom more than two-fifths of respondents declare a positive attitude (from 42% to 44%). Fewer respondents - over a third - are sympathetic to Spaniards, Norwegians, Greeks and Swedes (from 34% to 40%). Every third respondent has a positive attitude towards Japanese and French (33% each). It should be noted that in the case of the nations as mentioned above sympathy prevails over reluctance. Concerning other countries, the hesitation is dominant, or it is expressed comparatively often as sympathy.

Three in ten respondents (30%) declare a positive attitude towards Germans, and negative - more than a third (36%). Lithuanians (28%) are attracted by similar sympathy, while their reluctance towards them (25%) is expressed less frequently than to German people. About every fourth respondent has a positive attitude towards Latvians, Chinese, Jews and Ukrainians (24% each), however, the sympathy and aversion to Latvians are expressed almost the same often (24% and 22%), while the other nations in this group - in a smaller or larger one reluctance prevails (from 31% in the case of Chinese people to 40% in the case of Ukrainians). Approximately one-fifth of respondents sympathize with Vietnamese (21%), Belarussians (21%), Serbs (19%) and Russians (18%), while the reluctance towards Russians is declared more often than to Belarussians, Vietnamese or Serbs (49%, 32%, 31%, 30% respectively). Over a half of respondents are distant from Roma (59%) and Arabs (62%), and their affection is declared by relatively few (12% and 10% respectively).

It is worth emphasising that the vast majority of respondents have a correct attitude towards the Germans (94%), Ukrainians (92%), Russians (92%), Englishmen (91%) and Roma (91%). However, the least respondents can

determine their attitude to Latvians (75% have a precise position) and Serbs (79%). Compared to 2017, deterioration in mentality towards practically everyone nations is evident. Taking into account the average ratings, you can see that the most substantial decline of attitudes concerns Germans (decrease in average by 0.61), Belarusians (reduction by 0.53) and the French (down by 0.51), the smallest - Arabs (down by 0.20), Greeks (down by 0.22) and English speakers (down 0.23). Besides, compared to the measurement from 2011, it deteriorated attitude towards Latvians.

Given the longer (several-year) perspective, we can talk about a decrease in sympathy and an increase in dislike towards the French, Germans and the increase in reluctance towards Ukrainians. As regards the level of sympathy for Ukrainians, this year the percentage of respondents declaring a positive attitude towards them is slightly lower than the one registered two years ago (a decrease by three percentage points), while much lower than that recorded in 2008-2015. The attitude towards Russians has also deteriorated, but it is similar to that registered two years ago but worse than in 2010-2013, in the period preceding the Crimean crisis. In comparison with the measurement carried out in 2016, the percentage of respondents declaring sympathy to the Czechs, Slovaks and Swedes (decreases by six percentage points), as well as Italians, Japanese (drops by 5 points) and Belarusians (reduction by 4 points) also decreased.

Analyzing changes in attitudes to individual nations during the last quarter of the century, we have observed trends associated with the unification of Poles' attitudes towards other countries. Reaction to the nations that once had great affection, such as Italians, Americans, and French, deteriorated, and the likes of the less liked Germans, Ukrainians and Jews improved. This year, however, there was a significant deterioration in attitude towards both Germans and Ukrainians - currently, it is close to that registered more or less ten years ago.

Although the deterioration of attitude recorded this year, favourite Polish neighbours are Czechs and Slovaks. At the beginning of the nineties and in the

first years of this century - more or less until the Orange Revolution - we approached the Ukrainians with the most considerable distance. The sympathy still prevails over the reluctance in attitude towards the Czechs and Slovaks and, to a small extent, to the Lithuanians. In the case of Chinese people Poles declared that they have the positive feeling (24%), indifference was declared by 29% and reluctance by 31%. 16% of the respondents failed to have any opinion. The above mentioned attitude placed Chinese people between Ukrainian, Jews and Latvian and Lithuanian.

It is interesting that almost a quarter of the respondents (23%) did not express sympathy for any of the nations. The quarter (25%) expressed the sympathy to no more than three nations (from 1 to 3), the same group (25%) declared a favourable attitude towards more nations ( from 4 to 11) and over a quarter (27%) to at least half of the nations included in the survey (up to at least 12 nations). The reluctance was expressed a little less frequently than sympathy - on average, up to 6 out of twenty-four nations. Over a quarter of respondents (27%) declared negative attitude to at most one nation. Less than a quarter (24%) to 2-4 nations, more than a quarter (27%) to more nations (from 5 to 10 nations), and just over one fifth (22%) up to 11-24 nations. Over a quarter of respondents (27%) declared negative attitude to at most one nation, less than a quarter (24%) to 2-4 nations, more than a quarter (27%) to more nations (from 5 to 10 nations), and just over one fifth (22%) up to 11-24 nations.

The second important issue is how the ordinary people approach their political participation. The majority of respondents still believe that ordinary citizens are deprived of the opportunity to influence the affairs inside Poland (57%). What should be observed, however, is that since the problem has been monitored this percentage is currently at the lowest level. More to the point, it is lower than the one recorded in the nineties of the twentieth century and the first years of this century. Over the last six months, the sense of citizens' influence on state affairs has increased slightly (by four percentage points), but it is somewhat lower (by 3 points) than the record one that we noted two years ago.

Currently, the belief that ordinary people influence the affairs of the country is expressed by more than a third of respondents (38%), while 57% of respondents share the opposite opinion, In comparison with the measurement in July 2017, it shows a 6-point decrease. The sense of influence on the affairs in Poland is declared more frequently within the social strata with the higher level of education of the respondents, with more significant professional position, higher satisfaction with the material situation and higher income per capita. What should be noted having the impact on domestic political affairs is declared by the most religiously practising people, defining their political views as right-wing. while in party electorates they are mainly followers of the Law and Justice and the Kukiz'15 movement. The lowest declared level of having the impact on the political affairs is proclaimed by the electorate of the Civic Platform party.

Traditionally, the conviction that citizens can influence the affairs of the local community, and hence their city or commune, is significantly higher than the sense of subjectivity in the national dimension. Besides, since the beginning of the 1990s, the significant and relatively systematic increase in the percentage of respondents who believe that people like them have an impact on the affairs of their local community has increased. At the moment 59% of the Polish citizens considering themselves as affecting the local community development. The opposite opinion is expressed by slightly over one third of respondents (37%) and relatively more often than others are respondents dissatisfied with their financial situation (54%) and achieving the lowest per capita income (46%), people aged 65 and more (52%), respondents with primary (50%) or primary vocational (48%) education, and in social and occupational groups - unskilled workers (51%), pensioners (49%) and pensioners (48%).

The synthetic approach allows us to state that almost two-fifths of Poles (38%) think that people like them do not care about what is going on nationwide or at the local level. One-third of the respondents (35%) have a sense of influence on the affairs of the country, the city or the municipality, a quarter

(24%) - only on what is happening in their town, and a few (3%) - just on the situation in a country

### **Conclusions**

The critical dynamic is observed in the Poles' perception of the Ukrainian society. At the moment there more than two million of Ukrainians work in Poland. This year, this number will reach 3 million. At the same time, salaries of employees from the East are growing faster than average wages in enterprises. This is the reason for more sceptical opinions on the Ukrainians in Poland. The mentioned above current course of events in the Polish society might play a role in shaping the Polish government policy towards Ukraine. By following public opinion preferences, the government might play more hard policy toward Kiev that apparently is not Polish *raison d'état*.

The second issue should be perceived from the somewhat positive side. More and more Poles believes that they have the impact on their local communities, rather than on the central governments. The question for future, however, remains unanswered: how the central government will narrow this gap? In this regard the problem occurs with the electorate of the opposition parties, not the Law and Justice. Undoubtedly, a greater sense of influence on both local and national issues is fostered by the civic involvement of Poles both within associations and organisations or promoted local civic budget when people can vote themselves for the projects further sponsored by the local authorities. On the other hand, the sense of subjectivity in public life motivates people to undertake social and political activities, starting with participation in elections.