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NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

POLAND

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Executive Summary

Satisfaction with life domains

The expectations of Poles for the next one or few years show relatively high level of pessimism. In fact, this is not a surprise, since the reactions to such an important event as European integration are far from being enthusiastic (50% things that Poland will benefit from the accession, 31% express the opposite opinion).

Over the last 15 years the general improvement of life standards was accompanied with relatively high differentiation in the society. Not everyone benefited from the transition. The most important problem the society faced was unemployment that stayed high in spite of fast economic growth.

Poles perceive their present and future situation in quite a specific way. They are substantially more optimistic when talking about personal situation then looking at the general situation of a country. There are probably many factors that cause such attitudes. One of them is the influence of mass-media.

However this is also good to notice that this general tendency in Polish expectations is not different from the one observed in the rest of EU – all the respondents were more optimistic when talking about their personal situation then when taking into consideration the whole country.

When talking about all the dimensions of life satisfactions measured here, one can see that Poles express much more pessimism that other New Member States. Comparison to EU-25 countries emphasizes Polish pessimism is even stronger.

The percentages of pessimistic expectations in Poland increased from the previous Eurobarometer measurement. Previously 29% of respondents thought that their general life will get worse in year and the same percentage expected improvement. In current wave 36% expressed pessimism while only 22% thought their life will get better in a year.

The proportion of those expecting deterioration in their life satisfaction has never been so high in the new millennium as it is right now. A dramatically high percentage, 59% expect that the Polish economy will continue its recent slump, and as a result, this is the first time that more Polish families expect having less money in their pockets in the accession year than expect stability in household finances.

Looking at socio-demographic breakdowns, in Poland gender differences become especially visible in the questions concerning employment – no matter whether we speak about general question concerning employment situation in the country or more particularly about the job situation of respondent.

Women’s expectations are less optimistic – they more often tend to see their situation getting worse: 62% of women and 54% of men said they think the situation with employment will become worse in the coming year. This is caused by the general situation on the labour market in Poland, where women are in the more difficult position than men. Distributions of answers to other questions were not influenced by gender factor.

Respondent’s perception of the near future strongly depended on age. The older was respondent the less optimistic he/she was. Interesting enough, the respondents divided practically into two groups – those up to 40 years old and those over 40.

This is very probable that such structure of attitudes is connected with the expectations from the EU accession. Younger people are generally better prepared to take advantages of accession – they know languages, they are better educated or have a chance to get education that suits well the EU labour market. People over 40 already have their position on the market and in life in general and they are not looking for the possibility to change anything.
Nearly the same situation can be observed when analysing the expectations regarding financial situation of household, however in this issue in all age groups there were more pessimists than optimists.

**Present personal situation comparing with five years ago**

The perception of changes in personal situation during last five years was in Poland not much different from the one in all ten New Member States. Poles were only slightly less optimistic. The picture becomes worse when comparing these attitudes to those demonstrated by all 25 EU members. In comparison to them Poles look very pessimistic. 21% saw the improvement in their situation and more than twice as much (49%) felt it got worse.

In Poland there were no significant gender differences with regard to the question asking about comparison of current situation with 5 years ago; age groups were more differentiated from this point of view. The oldest group saw positive changes the least frequently (5% of respondents over 60 said their situation improved) and the youngest was the most optimistic (37% of those from 15-24 age group believed their personal situation improved during last five years). These attitudes can be connected – at least to some extent – with the respondents’ economic situation. For those who were over 60 at the moment of survey last five years could be the first years of pension. In Poland this usually means significant decrease of personal income. In addition, older people more often have problems with their health and last few years were in Poland the time for general reform of health care system. This also was the factor that could make worse the general perception of life changes in this age group.

The youngest group was just in the opposite situation. Last five years for many of them could be the time of entering the labour market or becoming a student etc. These are usually desirable changes that made respondents positively evaluate this period of their life.

The expectations for next five years were distributed in Poland exactly in the same way as in ten NMS as a whole. When analysing these expectations one can notice that both in Poland and in the EU as a whole there were more optimists than pessimists.

**Expected personal situation in five years**

The expectations for the next five years were connected with personal experience of the last five years. Those respondents who experienced the improvement of their personal situation during last five years were more likely than others to expect further improvement in the future. Among those whose situation recently got worse the percentage of optimists (24%) were smaller than the percentage of pessimists (37%)

Polish men tend to see their future in better lights than women, however in both gender groups optimists (those who expect improvement) prevailed over pessimists (those expecting the situation getting worse). There were 40% of men and 28% of women optimists and the percentages of pessimists were 21% and 25% respectively.

The age differences were similar to the one described above where discussing the expectations with regard to next year. The society divided into “under 40” and “over 40” groups as regards medium-term future expectations. In the younger one optimists prevail, in the second one – there are more pessimists than optimists.

**Issues facing the nation**

One of the most important social and political problem Poland is facing during all the transition period is unemployment. Its level stays quite high even now when the economy grows fast.

In the light of this fact there is no surprise that Poles mentioned unemployment the most frequently among the issues Poland needs to deal with. The significance of this issue was somehow smaller
when looking from the perspective of all 25 EU members states (47% of all respondents mentioned this issue, but it kept the first rank as it was when looking from the point of view of NMS.

The seven most important issues the country is presently facing are common for Poland and the New Member States as a whole. When comparing to the whole European Union one can notice some important differences. They concern first of all such issues as terrorism and immigration that in EU-25 got the rank 6 according to the frequency of mentioning, while both Poland and all NMS concerned them rather not important (in Poland terrorism got the 8th rank and immigration 10th).

There were no socio-demographic differences in the perception of those issues – with one rather natural exception. The oldest age category tended to attach more importance than others to the issue of pensions (14% of them mentioned this issue, while in other age groups this percentage was between 4% and 6%).

**Trust in various institutions**

Trust in institutions is one of the most frequently changing attitudes, especially in the countries like Poland that do not have a very long tradition in living in democratic political order. The most trusted institutions in Poland are: army (63%), the radio (59%) and charitable voluntary organizations (51%).

The same institutions are also on the top of ranking in New Member States as a whole. When taking into consideration all the EU countries we see that third most trusted institution is police, confidence in which were expressed by 61% of respondents from EU countries taken together.

Some institutions are more trusted in Poland than in other new member countries of the European Union; such are the religious institutions (+6 percentage points compared to NMS-10) army (+5), charities (+4). Other institutions, mainly in the political scene, gain less confidence in Poland than anywhere else in the European Union.

The one-digit level of confidence in the Sejm (-8 compared to NMS-10 and -27 compared to EU-25) as well as the trust in the government (-10 and -21) hit rock bottom at the Spring of 2004, not mentioning the total lack of credibility of the political parties that have the confidence of 3% of the Polish citizens (-4 and -11, compared to the NMS-10 and the EU-25 figures).

The erosion of trust has been consistent over the course of the past three years, leading to the current complete disappointment not only as regards the main actors in the political system, but the democracy as a whole as well. With only 16%, currently the Polish citizens are the least satisfied with their national democracy among all member states in the enlarged European Union with only the Slovaks coming close with 18%.

The Polish justice and legal system is also suffering from a certain lack of confidence with about one in five citizens trusting it (21%, -6 compared to NMS-10, -24 compared to EU-25). The television, however the majority trusts it, scores somewhat below of the NMS average too (54%, -3).

Besides this great disappointment in the political actors, the European Union as well gains a below-average trust from the Polish citizens with exactly one third claiming they tend to trust it, and the relative majority say they have no confidence in the Union (41%).
Information about the European Union

In Poland, in the public debate concerning the EU accession and especially the problem of information was broadly discussed. This is because everybody understood that lack of sufficient information could in long perspective decrease the public support for accession.

Various studies showed that the initial support for Poland joining EU was more of ideological and emotional type than rational one. The knowledge about EU, European institutions and the way they are functioning would be necessary to change these positive emotions into rational attitudes which mean also readiness for real integration of Poland into European Union.

The majority of Poles perceives their own knowledge about European Union as an average one (the average for Poland is 4.46 which gives Poland one of the first positions among NMS). However looking at the distribution of answers, one can notice that some more respondents perceived the level of their knowledge as lower rather than higher. The same situation was in all the accession countries taken as a whole.

The level of perceived knowledge changed depending on respondent’s level of education – those with university education much less frequently admitted that they don’t have enough knowledge concerning EU. The average self-evaluation of this knowledge changes from as low as 3.73 for people with primary or uncompleted primary education to as high as 5.56 for people with university education.

The answers differed also in age groups. The best-informed age group was the one between 25 and 39 years. These are people who have the biggest potential in European Union after the accession, so this is not a surprise that they well the best informed of EU itself.

There were also slight gender differences in the perceived knowledge about EU – men gave themselves higher marks than women (4.82 and 4.16 respectively) and this difference appeared to be statistically significant.

In addition, higher level of knowledge about EU demonstrated those people who declared they like to discuss political matters with others and those who tend to persuade others to share their view. Such opinion leaders might be effective vehicles of information dissemination regarding the European Union as well.

Actual level of knowledge

The actual level of knowledge about some basic facts related to the EU is in Poland slightly higher than in NMS taken as a whole. Poles are better informed about symbolic facts connected with EU – they gave the correct answers about the anthem, the flag of EU and the Europe Day more frequently than generally in new member states and more frequently in EU-15.

The level of knowledge of both Poles and NMS was not so high when talking about the facts concerning functioning of the EU (such as president of the EU or the next election to European Parliament). They were also not so well informed about the history of EU. It is worth to note that 4-5 months ahead of the EP elections only 26% were confident enough to dismiss the proposition as false that the next EP elections will be held in 2006.

The differences between socio-demographic categories were rather similar to those described when discussing the perceived knowledge. Men were better informed than women (average number of correct answers was 4.9 for men and 3.9 for women).

The best-informed age group was the one between 25 and 39 years old. The average number of correct answers was in this group 4.71. Generally speaking the age differentiation was not very significant. Only the oldest group (over 60 years old) was characterized by really low level of knowledge – average number of correct answers was only 3.37.
Information about accession, enlargement

Generally speaking, the majority of Poles feel not informed enough about the accession that was going to happen in about two months after the survey had been conducted. This is in spite of the fact that the accession issues had been present in public debate in Poland for quite a long time before the accession. The result can mean that Poles felt that the debates covered issues that are not the most important or are important for only some specific groups. Indeed, the pre-accession public debate in Poland was focused mainly on agriculture and employment issues. Especially the first one was a deep concern of rather low percentage of population in Poland.

From a broader perspective (although the differences are really minor) the Polish citizens were even less convinced that they had enough information about the enlargement process at large. Almost six in 10 citizens thought they are not well, or not at all informed about the possible effects of the “big boom”; the Eastern enlargement of the EU with 10 new member states that took place on the 1st of May, 2004.

As it was in the case of previously discussed general knowledge about European Union, also the level of information concerning accession was highly correlated with education. Among those respondents who completed university education there were no people who said they knew nothing about the process of EU enlargement, but every third of them (33%) felt “not very well informed”. The situation was much worse in other groups distinguished by education – more than fifty per cent of those with primary of technical education only declared they feel not informed at all (16%) or not very well informed (54%) about the process of EU enlargement in general.

The question of Poland joining European Union was a little better known among all groups of respondents, however the differences were not very big.

The perception of knowledge level concerning EU enlargement was also different depending on the settlement type. The highest percentage of those not informed at all or not very well informed was in rural areas. And this is in spite of the fact that the issues of agriculture that are generally interesting for the inhabitants of villages took much space in public debate concerning accession.

Desired sources of EU-related information

One of eleven respondents from Poland declared that he/she is not interested at all in receiving any information regarding European Union. These people were mostly from the oldest age category and had the lowest level of education. The rest of population expressed the will to receive some information about EU-related issues.

Traditional news media is considered to be the most important sources of EU-related information. The most frequently mentioned source where people look for the information regarding EU is television. The next positions were taken by radio and daily newspapers. Interesting that television is less trusted as institution than radio is, but it remains the primary source of information for the great majority of population.

Presentation of the EU in the national media

Polish citizens think that the coverage of the European Union in Polish media is rather poor and propaganda-like. Nearly half of population (44%) felt there was not enough information about EU in Polish media and majority (52%) perceived the created image of EU too positive. Slightly over a third of the Polish citizens feel that the media talks about the right amount about EU matters, and 15% say there is too much EU in the media. Compared to other accession countries Poles are the most likely to expect more information (i.e. say that there is not enough in the media about the EU), while Slovaks are the most content with the current coverage with 58% being satisfied with the quantity of EU information.

As to the objectivity of the information, the Polish are the most likely among all new citizens that the image that is presented in the national media about the EU is too positive. There is a general sentiment in the NMS-10 zone that EU information presented in the national media is just too positive, the relative majority in most countries share this opinion. But the Polish results are outstanding (52% think that the presented information is too
positive and only 35% believe it is objective) and only comparable to those measured in Estonia, the most EU sceptic country among the new members.

EU institutions

Among the European institutions there are two quite well known in Poland – the European Parliament and the European Commission, known by 88% and 84% of respondents. In the least percentage of respondents has heard of The Court of Auditors. Interesting that these institutions that not many respondents were aware of there were more of those who thought certain institution plays the important role than those who declared awareness. This may mean that certain percentage of Poles generally attach an important role to the European Institutions, so once they were informed by interviewer that the institution exists, they automatically assumed it plays an important role.

The differences in answers between various socio-demographic groups were similar to the pattern observed when analysing the general level of knowledge about the European Union. Men were better informed than women, so they more frequently tend to declare they had heard of certain institution. With regard to age differences – the picture was also similar to the one obtained in previously presented analyses. The best-informed age group was the one between 25 and 39 years. They also trusted all the institutions more frequently than the representatives of other age groups. The oldest respondents demonstrated the lowest level of interest to EU institutions.

Support of European Union membership

As of Spring 2004, among 10 accession countries Lithuania demonstrates the highest support for EU membership (52% said EU membership is a “good thing”), followed by Malta (50%). Poland, with 42% of EU membership supporters took a middle position, before Cyprus (42%), Czech Republic (41%), Slovenia (40%), Latvia (33%) and Estonia (31%).

Slovenia, Hungary and Lithuania were the countries where citizens the most frequently expected benefit from becoming EU members (in Slovenia there were 64% of such respondents, in Lithuania and Hungary – 58%). Poles appeared to be more sceptical – only 50% of them tended to expect benefit and this was below the average for 10 accession countries (52%).

Change of support for EU membership

Looking at the trend of last five years one can notice that the support for EU membership for Poland stayed approximately at the same level of about half of the population being in favour of the membership. In 2003, the year of pre-accession referendum the percentage of those who thought it would be good to be a member of EU increased to 61%. This happened not only in Poland. In all the accession countries taken together we see the same shape of the trend. The campaign before referenda temporarily increased the proportion of those who supported the EU membership.

After the referendum, public debates concerning accession issues resulted with significant decrease of support for EU membership. In the spring of 2004 only 42% of Poles supported the membership, which means a fall down by 19 percentage points.

Men and young people appeared to be much more enthusiastic with regard to EU membership than other socio-demographic groups in Poland (see graph). Among women most frequent attitude was indifferent one (EU membership is “neither good nor bad thing”), majority of men supported membership.

With regard to age differentiation – the most noticeable was the attitude of oldest respondents. They demonstrated very sceptical attitude – only 28% of them believed that EU membership was a good
thing, the rest were either indifferent (30% - “neither good nor bad”) or against the membership (27% believed this was a “bad thing”).

The support for EU membership was also connected with the level of education. Generally the higher education levels the more supporters in the group, but the relation was not linear. Those respondents who completed the university education were the most frequently for the EU membership (57%). In other categories that percentage was below 50%.

**Expected benefit from EU membership**

With regard to expected benefit from EU membership, Poles belong to the group of rather sceptical nations, together with Latvians, Czechs and Estonians. In all of these countries the percentages of those who expected benefit were lower than the average for 10 accession countries.

Similarly to the situation with support for membership, the shape of five years trend in Poland is very similar to the one for 10 accession countries taken together. Again one can notice the impact of referendum campaign in the spring of 2003 that rose up the percentage of “optimists” (those, who expected benefit) and then the influence of public debates that took place after the referenda and resulted with fall down of the percentage of “optimists”.

Expected benefit from being a member of EU can be the reason for supporting or not the membership itself. Our survey shows that in the case of Poland these expectations are not the only reason why people thing that belonging to EU is a good or bad thing. Among those respondents who did not expect any benefit from accession, 41% thought that being an EU member is neither good nor bad thing and 4% were even for the membership (50% said it was a “bad thing”). Those who expected benefit, 77% believed that it is a good thing to belong to EU, 2% was against it and 20% demonstrated indifferent attitude (“neither good nor bad thing”).

The attitude towards EU membership was connected with the level of knowledge our respondents had about European Union. Those who felt well informed about the issues of accession were also more likely to support membership or expect benefits from membership.

**Support for key European Union policies**

Despite the recent set-back in how much the Polish citizens are attracted by the EU membership of their country, they remain supportive to the most important policy initiatives of the European Union.

Since the sharp decrease in support for the common currency from Spring to Autumn 2003, the unfavourable trend seems to have stopped too. With a slight increase (+3 points), now almost 6 in 10 citizens in Poland support the idea of the common currency, and 29% (-1) are opposed.

Despite the “cooling” perception of their own membership, Polish support for common European diplomatic and military initiatives remains extraordinarily high and even increases. Like in most new member states, the common foreign and defence policy initiatives regained some of their lost support since summer 2003 in Poland too. Currently, support for a common European foreign policy is at 70% (+4 percentage points since last autumn), and support for a joint defence policy stands at 79%. The European common defence and security policy is one of the most widely supported core policies of the EU in Poland as well. While recent trends in the other new member states are mixed, support has increased in Poland (+6), which is the member state with the most active involvement in the Iraqi occupation that has been fiercely debated by several European and EU leaders over the past almost two years.

The idea of European enlargement remains to be evaluated very positively in Poland, even if opinions are now more lukewarm about Poland’s own membership. The support towards enlargement (measured with a slightly modified question, now specifically asking about “The enlargement of the European Union to include 10 new countries this May” instead of just enlargement in general) changed only insignificantly in the past half year, however we also see a drop of 10 percentage points if we compare current data with the enthusiastic results of Spring 2003.
Meanings of Europe and image of the European Union

The EU associates mostly with freedom to travel, work and study (63%), for some people EU means also common European currency – Euro (40%). Other associations are not so widespread.

Comparison the Polish image of EU with the one presented by all the NMS taken together shows that Poles generally had tendency to attach all the characteristics less often than all inhabitants of NMS as a whole. There were two exceptions from this general rule – freedom to travel, work and study – mentioned in Poland by 63% and in NMS by 62% and bureaucracy (29% and 27% respectively).

Generally speaking on the top of lists of associations (sorted by the frequency of mentioning) there are mostly positive characteristics. The only one negative feature that appears among the top five is bureaucracy, mentioned by 29%.

The images of EU are different depending on general attitude towards EU. Those who think that EU membership is a good thing for Poland tend to see rather positive elements of EU image. The opponents of Poland in the EU most frequently mentioned unemployment (45% of those who believe joining EU is a bad thing) and bureaucracy (43%), but even in this group of sceptical respondents quite a big group (40%) admitted that EU means freedom to travel, work and study (40%).

Understanding the EU and the benefits of the membership

Majority of Poles interviewed declared that they understood how the EU works (58% agreed and 25% disagreed with the statement “I understand how the EU works”). This percentage was the highest among all the New Member States.

The share of those who believe they understood how the EU works was significantly higher among EU supporters1 (74% among them say they understand the modus operandi of the Union).

Great majority was also convinced that in the EU biggest countries have the most power (76% agreed with this statement and 13% disagreed). In this issue there were no differences between supporters and opponents of Poland’s membership in the EU.

Majority of respondents expected that Poland would get more stability – both economic and political – and influence when joining the European Union. The percentages of people thinking so were higher among those who supported Poland’s membership in the EU than among those who opposed integration.

Young people (15-39 years old) and those with university education more often agreed that Poland will get the benefits listed in a graph. Also men more often than women tended to agree to all of these statements, however the differences were not big. They resulted from the fact, already pointed out, that women had less knowledge concerning the EU then men.

The role of the European Union

The role of European Union is most frequently perceived as positive one in the issues of the international scale – such as protecting environment or all the issues connected with foreign policy or collective security. The issues that could be of the primary interest of average citizen, such as health care system, rising prices, taxation, pensions are not among those, where the role of the EU is the most frequently perceived as a positive one.

This may mean that people in Poland still think about the EU in quite abstractive and general categories and simply they do not imagine that the EU can help solving their everyday problems. The last years of economic recession in Poland brought to Polish families the serious fears about the future as it is highlighted by the findings presented in the first chapter of this report. Under these

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1 EU supporters are those who thought that joining EU was a good thing for Poland
circumstances the European integration started to be associated with economic threat to Poland. Probably this could be an explanation why in such areas – closely connected with economy – as prices, taxation, pensions, housing the role of European Union is the most frequently perceived as negative rather than positive.

**Fears related to the EU membership**

Despite of the fact that the parties opposing Poland's accession to EU presented mostly argument of cultural and ideological character, the most common fears connected with accession were strongly economic. 72% of respondents were afraid that joining EU will bring difficulties for Polish farmers, 65% thought that Poland will be forced to pay more and more to the common budget. These fears were for sure connected with not very good economic situation in Poland at the time of survey. The high unemployment together with problems with health care system (caused by just implemented reform of the system) make difficult for respondents to notice the first signs of the end of recession.

The third fear mentioned by 63% of respondents concerned the organized international crime. These three issues were also mentioned the most frequently by those respondents, who believed that joining the EU would be a good thing for Poland.

**Budget of the European Union**

In the perception of Poles, most of the EU budget is spent on agriculture and administration (each mentioned by 23%). Very similar view is shared also by the inhabitants of all the New Member States. At the same time old EU members have different image of the structure of EU budget. They suspect most of it is spent to cover administrative costs (24%), on the second position by frequency of mentioning there were agriculture and aid to countries outside of the EU (both mentioned by 14% of respondents from EU countries).

The socio-demographic differences in views on the EU budget were not very significant. All categories of respondents mentioned agriculture very frequently – on first or second position. Women as well as youngest respondents mentioned employment and social affairs more likely than other categories. People with university education tended to mention the scientific research significantly less than others.

**European identity**

The 2004 Spring Eurobarometer recorded a dramatic change in identities all over Europe. If there were any expectations whether the “re-unification” of Europe would enhance attachment to the values and identity of the continent as a whole, they were – at least in the short term – wrong. In 17 of the 25 EU member states, the proportion of those who only identify themselves with their national identity increased beyond the margin of error. Citizens might have learnt from the recent debates on future budgets and majority rules that the Union is not so much a family of the nations of Europe, but rather a group of countries competing for resources, jobs and other gains.

This shift is the most apparent in the new member countries, where, on average, the increase in national identity amounts to 11 points. In Poland we witness a 12 percentage points increase in the proportion of those with exclusive national identity since 2003 Autumn, which is the highest among the all EU member states.

Still, despite this development, some old European nations, and not those in the new member countries, display the highest level of exclusivist national identity (Finland and the UK, followed closely by Hungary), and Poland is in the middle of the ranking.

In Poland, the most frequent attitude was the combined identity, i.e. national identity was more important than European one, but European was also present, but nearly the same percentage of respondents declared themselves as having only one – national – identity.
The identity was connected with education, but the correlation was rather weak. In all the age categories but the oldest one the most popular identity was national-European. The oldest respondents in majority had only one, national, identity. The impact of education and gender were even less noticeable.

**Institutional reform of the European Union**

First and foremost, as we have seen in the case of other important EU policies, the Polish support is firm behind the most important recent initiatives of the EU: citizens believe that the EU should have a Constitution. However the public support for Constitutions has fallen down from the previous Eurobarometer. Maybe this was a result of the reluctance from most member states to include references to Christianity in the Preamble of the Constitution, but more likely as a result of the failed talks at the Intergovernmental Conference in Rome last October, where the Poland and Spain were blocking the deal on the issue of double majority voting. This might had a negative effect in the public perceptions regarding how “good” the planned Constitution can possible be for Poland.

But even after the recent drop of 9 percentage point drop in support, the Poles are still at the fourth place among the new members to support the Constitution, and only 12% are explicitly against it.

The Poles are not nearly as aligned with the EU propositions regarding some key institutional matters as we see it in the general issue of the need for a Constitution. Opinions about the right of veto in Poland (and in the new member states) are firm: the vast majority believes that it has to be retained to preserve essential national interests. Socio-demographic differences in this issue are rather insignificant. Those differences that appeared concerned mainly the percentage of those who did not have the opinion on this issue.

With regard to the reform of the voting system in the European Union Council of Ministers, the structure of attitudes in Poland was not significantly different from the one in all new members taken together. The majority of the Polish citizens do not support for the proportional voting system and support for the one-county-one-vote rule. This can be explained as public support for the position of Polish government (shown also by other public opinion polls) that supported strongly the voting system established by the Treaty of Nice.

Similarly to the attitudes towards the right of veto also the ideas regarding the voting system in European Constitution were not much different depending on the socio-demographic categories of respondents. Those respondents who support Poland’s membership in the European Union were more likely to speak for the voting system giving votes proportionally to the country’s population. Others tended to support the one-country-one-vote solution.

In the political sphere there is an extensive acceptance of the idea to abolish the six-month rotating presidency of the Council of Ministers. The rotating presidency could be replaced by a more permanent presidency of each individual Council formation. Britain and France have proposed a permanent president for the European Council. This idea is supported primarily by Spain and Italy. Germany might also support it, but insists that the Commission should also be strengthened to protect the interests of the small Member States. The Polish public is increasingly in favour of the extended presidency: support for this idea stands at 47% percent after a 5 percentage points increase since last autumn.