



**INSTYTUT SPRAW PUBLICZNYCH**  
**THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

# Polish public opinion on the European Union and the Constitutional Treaty

Survey Report

Warsaw, May 2006

# Introduction

The period of reflection over the future of the European Union, announced in June 2005 after the “No” vote in the referenda in France and the Netherlands, was expected to begin a new phase in the construction of the Common Europe. In most European countries debates started on how to find a way out of the present crisis. The discussions focused on what the 21st century European Union is and what it should be. In Poland the European issues played hardly any role at all in the last year’s electoral campaigns and the Constitutional Treaty has for a long time been treated as something not worthy of any deeper reflection.

The current situation in Poland is paradoxical. On one hand, opinion polls show that the percentage of Poles supporting European integration is very high and reaches as much as 80%<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the same Poles have elected the most Euroskeptical parliament in post 1989 history. The present coalition government is perceived abroad as a opposed to closer European integration.

Politicians responsible for integration of Poland with the EU should take into consideration the positive attitudes towards further EU integration in the development of the official Polish position on the Future of the Constitutional Treaty and the role of Poland in Europe.

The present study has been commissioned by the European Union Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). The fieldwork was carried out by TNS-OBOP, on a sample of 1005 people over the age of 15, between 6–10 April 2006. The survey was conducted in the form of face-to-face questionnaire interviews, on a randomly selected sample, representative on the national scale.

## Key conclusions:

- The Polish public opinion perceives EU membership as good for Poland (64%) and as positive influence on the situation within the country (48%). In their view, joining the EU has strengthened Poland's position in the world (54%). At the same time, the assessment of influence of the EU membership on the personal situation of the respondents is modest: a great majority of the public believe that Polish accession to the EU has had no effect on their lives (77%).

- Poles highly trust European institutions as compared to the national government institutions. At the same time they are becoming increasingly critical of the way the EU institutions operate.
- Most Poles favour highly integrated EU with strong institutions and closer cooperation among all Member States (69%). Consequently, they support the common EU government (49%), common armed forces (51%) and the office of a minister for common foreign policy (52%).
- The idea of EU constitution enjoys a strong support – 68% of respondents believe that the European Union needs a constitution.
- Positive opinions prevail in regard to the present Constitutional Treaty: it is seen as necessary to make the EU more efficient (59%) and orderly (51%). The Treaty is also thought to be in the interest of ordinary EU citizens (49%).
- Only 13% of those surveyed think that after the rejection of the Treaty in France and in the Netherlands, the work on European Constitution should be abandoned. In view of 22% of the respondents efforts leading to the ratification of the current Treaty should be continued, and in view of 44% – a new constitutional treaty should be drafted.
- According to public opinion in Poland, the highest priority for the Polish government within the EU should be to achieve the abolition of restrictions in employment and services throughout the EU (56%). Further priorities include: ensuring EU assistance for the development of the poorer Member States (34%), scientific research, energy security and the strengthening of the common foreign policy (24% each).
- Among the Poles with a positive attitude towards the process of European integration, the majority are young people from big cities, with higher education. A new phenomenon is a very positive view of the EU and support for closer integration shared by people coming from towns up to 20 thousand inhabitants. It seems that the EU is perceived as a unique opportunity to improve their job situation.

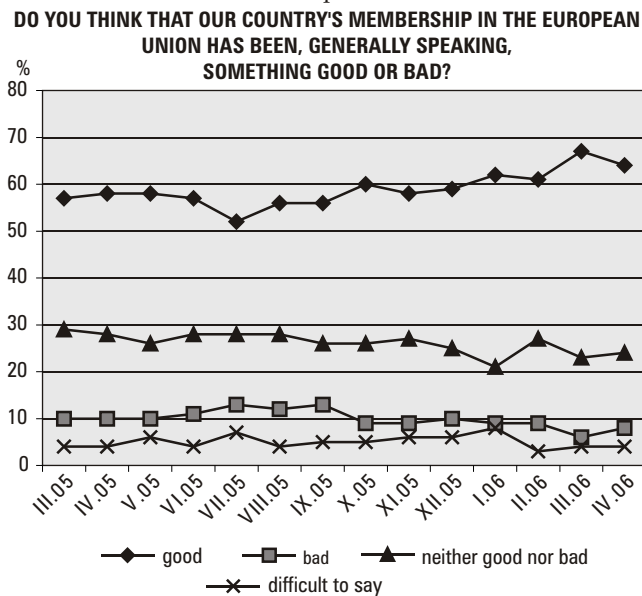
## Poland’s membership in the European Union

For a few years now support for Poland’s membership in the European Union has remained at the same, high level – a significant percentage of Poles express positive views about Polish presence in the EU.

<sup>1</sup> See CBOS, *Assessment of two years of EU membership*, Study report, prepared by Beata Roguska, April 2006.

In a study by the Institute of Public Affairs, 64% of respondents regarded Polish membership in the EU as a positive development. This result seems to confirm a steadily growing trend which has been evident since July 2005 (see Fig. 1). It was then that a slight fall in support for the EU was noted, caused probably by its institutional problems. In May and June last year the Constitutional Treaty was rejected in referenda in France and the Netherlands, and soon after that, the summit in Brussels failed to bring about an agreement on the EU budget for the years 2007 – 2013.

**Fig. 1.** Support for Poland's membership in the European Union



Source: Data TNS-OBOP and Institute of Public Affairs (April '06).

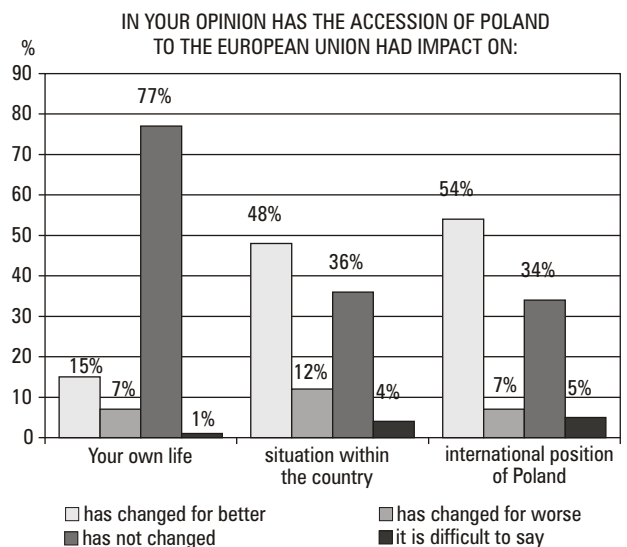
People who positively assess Poland's membership in the EU are usually young, well educated, interested in politics and most often come from big cities. Among teenagers (15–19 years of age) as much as 83% of those surveyed thought that Poland's membership in the EU had been something good. The higher the level of education, the stronger was their support for integration. Among people with elementary education, only 55% of respondents were satisfied with Poland's presence in the EU, with secondary and post-secondary education – 70%, and with higher education – as much as 79%.

The percentage of Poles expressing positive views on EU membership increases together with the level of satisfaction with their own financial standing: approval for the EU membership is expressed by 55% of those who assess their own financial standing as bad, 63% of those who perceive their own situation as average and 74% of those who are happy with their financial standing. This shows that even among people of a low social status, the majority support European integration.

A correlation between the interest in politics and expressed support for Poland's membership in the EU can be seen. The percentage of positive responses towards the EU was significantly higher among those interested in politics (71%) than among those who did not report such interest (56%). The greatest percentage of people supporting Polish membership in the EU can be found among the supporters of the PO (Civic Platform) (81%) and the SLD (Democratic Left Alliance) (72%), the least – among those who vote for LPR (League of Polish Families) and Samoobrona (45% each). Those who are glad that Poland is a member of the EU are mainly of centre-right and centre-left political views (75% each), more rarely – those who place themselves on the right of the political spectrum (62%).

Poles can see more positive effects of the EU membership for Poland and its position in the world than for their own lives (see Fig. 2). The best assessment is given to the influence of EU integration on the international position of Poland (54%). Equally high rating is granted to the positive influence of integration on the situation in the country (48%), whereas the lowest rating is given to the impact of integration on the personal situation of the respondents (15%). As far as the latter is concerned, Poles usually do not see any major changes (for better or for worse) caused by Polish membership in the EU (77%).

**Fig. 2.** Impact of Poland's membership in the EU on the personal situation, situation within the country and the international position of Poland



Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

The inhabitants of the dolnośląskie, wielkopolskie and małopolskie voivodships are much more likely to notice positive effects of EU membership on their

personal situation than those who live in eastern, northern and central regions of Poland. For instance, every fifth inhabitant of Lower Silesia is convinced that his life has changed for the better (20%), whereas in the Pomeranian region approximately one in ten is of the same opinion (11%).

There is a close link between the age of the respondents and the opinion they express, that Polish accession to the EU has changed their lives for the better. A positive impact of the EU membership is perceived mainly by young people – such opinion is expressed by one fourth of teenagers and those in their twenties, and approximately 10% of those in their forties and fifties (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Perception of the impact of Poland's EU membership on the personal situation of the respondents in different age groups (in %)

In your opinion, has Poland's accession to the EU had any impact on your life?				
Age	has changed for better	has changed for worse	has not changed	it is difficult to say
15–19	26	0	74	0
20–29	24	3	72	1
30–39	17	8	74	1
40–49	12	9	78	1
50–59	11	9	79	1
60 and over	5	9	84	2

Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

People who can see positive aspects of Poland's EU membership in their own lives are usually of centre-right political views. The greatest number of those who report a positive change in their own situation and in the situation within the country thanks to EU membership, can be found among the PO voters (respectively 21% and 61%), whereas those who can see an improvement in the international position of Poland are most numerous among the PiS (Law and Justice) supporters (64%).

## Priorities of the Polish government within the European Union

The tasks most often indicated as priorities for the Polish government in the EU are to obtain abolition of restrictions in undertaking work and providing services in the whole EU territory (56%), and to support the development of poorer EU countries (34%) (see Table 2).

Apart from the above mentioned tasks, stressing particular Polish interests in the EU, the respondents have also indicated other challenges which may be beneficial for a greater number of EU Member States: development of scientific research (24%), energy security (24%) or strengthening of common security and foreign policy (24%).

**Table 2.** Areas of special activity of the Polish government on the EU forum

On what issues should Polish government be particularly active in the EU? (the respondents could indicate no more than 3 answers)	%
Abolition of restrictions in undertaking work and providing services in the territory of the whole European Union	56
Supporting the development of the poorer EU Member States	34
Development of scientific research and modern technology	24
Energy security in Europe	24
Strengthening of common EU foreign and security policy	24
Support for human rights and democracy in EU neighbouring countries, e.g. in Belarus	19
Support for Christian values	11
Creating strong EU institutions	10
Further enlargement of the EU	8
Something else	2
<i>It is difficult to say</i>	8

Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

People who are most interested in abolition of restrictions in undertaking work and providing services in the territory of the whole EU come mainly from localities of up to 20 thousand inhabitants (62%), often from the Małopolska (64%) and Wielkopolska (60%) regions. They most often work in administration and services (74%). Their political views are very often left-wing (67%) and centre-left (64%) rather than centre-right (58%) and right-wing (52%).

Their openness and positive perception of the EU may be connected with the hopes for getting a steady and better job there. Those people are in favour of closer integration, are willing to reach a compromise and can already see some positive aspects of Polish membership in the EU, mainly because of the uncertain current labour market situation in Poland. For them, the EU is a chance for a stable and normal life, similar to that led by members of the western societies.

In spite of a common belief that EU membership has strengthened the international position of Poland, Poles are not quite convinced that the very presence of Poland in the EU is enough to ensure the prosperity and development of their country. They seem to be very

pragmatic about it, treating the EU as an opportunity or a field where a lot of interests compete, with no room for sentiments and where one has to fight resolutely for one's own benefits. Over a half of Poles (60%) agreed with a statement that in its relations with the European Union and other Member States Poland should focus on a firm defence of its interests, whereas only one third (34%) was of an opinion that our country should focus on reaching compromise.

Poles feel that compromise is more desirable than fighting and strong defence of our own interests if a particular country is concerned. When a study of social perception of the current Polish-German relations was carried out, most Poles thought that, first of all, we should cooperate with the Germans and reach a compromise (72%), rather than firmly stand behind our own interests (20%)<sup>2</sup>. The fact that when the same question is asked about the EU the answer is just the opposite, may suggest that the European Union is still not perceived by Poles as "our common home" but rather as a "bag full of money" and great opportunities which every state is trying to use to their own advantage. It may also mean that the EU is perceived in terms of an impersonal institution, which can be exploited at will, without any consequences. In case of individual countries with which they come to cooperate, Poles seem to have a much more personal attitude, taking into consideration their point of view and their interests.

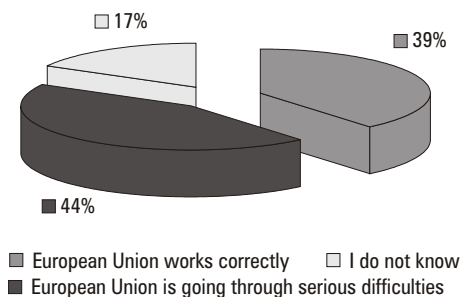
The determination to cooperate and to reach compromise in the EU is characteristic mainly of young people – teenagers (49%) and those in their twenties (39%), with higher education (42%), interested in politics (40%), with left-wing or centre-left political views (45% and 47% respectively), and also, which is a little surprising, people who live in towns up to 20 thousand inhabitants (44%). A conciliatory attitude is characteristic of those who vote for SLD (57%) and PO (44%), whereas the proposition to defend our on interests is most often expressed by LPR (88%) and Samoobrona (87%) voters.

## Assessment of the condition of the European Union

Poles show quite a significant interest in European affairs. Only 17% of the public have no views on the current condition of the European Union. However, the

opinion on the EU condition is divided: a similar number of those surveyed think that the EU works very well (39%) as well as that it is going through great difficulties (44%). The lack of one prevailing opinion on that subject may be caused by a relatively short time during which Poland has been present within the EU structures. Poles have no standards for comparison and they do not know whether the current condition of the EU is a usual one, something that has occurred many times before, or whether the EU has never before been in such a deep crisis. On the other hand, the assessment of the current EU condition varies also in European opinion-making circles.

**Fig. 3.** Assessment of the current condition of the European Union  
WHICH OF THE OPINIONS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION APPEALS TO YOU MOST:



Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

The conviction that the EU is in serious trouble can be noticed among people for whom Poland's membership in the EU is something disadvantageous (69%). The crisis in the EU is also noted by most people of right-wing and centre-right political views (52% and 58%), although among the two most numerous electorates, those of PO and PiS, the opinions on the condition of the EU are distributed evenly (between 43% and 45%).

The conviction of the good condition or serious difficulties of the EU does not differ depending on the place of residence or the level of education. There is, however, a strong correlation between the interest in politics and the conviction of difficulties existing within the EU. The greater the interest in what is going on in politics, the more often the replies are given that the EU is going through serious difficulties.

The greatest problems faced by the European Union listed by Poles included too much bureaucracy (47%) and egoism of the Member States (42%). They also pointed out limited economic growth (21%) and problems with the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty (16%).

<sup>2</sup> See Mateusz Falkowski. *Together in the EU. The Germans in the eyes of Poles*, IPA Report, April 2006 ([www.isp.org.pl](http://www.isp.org.pl)).

**Table 3.** The greatest problems faced by the EU

What, in your opinion, is the greatest problem faced by the European Union? ( <i>the respondents could indicate not more than 2 answers</i> )	%
Too much bureaucracy	47
Egoism of the Member States	42
Poor economic growth	21
Problems with the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty	16
Too many Member States	7
<i>It is difficult to say</i>	10

Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

There is no doubt that different social groups have had something different in mind when they pointed to egoism of the Member States as one of the main problems faced by the EU. For some it meant the desire of richer countries to exploit the poorer ones, others were aware of the danger posed by growing national egoisms of all Member States. The greatest number of people who found the Member States egoism a serious problem, can be found among the inhabitants of large cities (51%), in the group of people with higher education (46%), interested in politics (44%) and also those who negatively assess Polish membership in the EU (52%). Also, a number of unemployed (49%), farmers (48%) pupils and students (47%) point to Member States egoism as the problem faced by the EU. Many of them expect the Polish government to be active in the EU in supporting the development of the poorer EU states (40%).

Those who complain about the EU bureaucracy are middle-aged people (56%), workers (54%), those who receive disability pensions (59%), people who negatively assess their own financial situation (57%). It is therefore not surprising that so many of them could be found among the Samoobrona electorate (63%). Among people who point to excessive bureaucracy as the main problem faced by the EU, many expect the Polish government to undertake actions leading to abolition of restrictions in undertaking work and providing services in the EU (59%). The ones who see bureaucracy as a problem are mainly highly educated (50%) and interested in politics (52%).

Poor economic growth is noticed mainly by people in their thirties (24%), private business owners (30%), and those interested in politics (25%). People who indicated problems with the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty are usually young (19%), have higher education (25%) and strong interest in politics (23%). Many of them expect the Polish government to be active in strengthening the

common EU security and foreign policy (28%) and to ensure energy security in Europe (36%).

## Assessment of EU institutions and support for closer integration

A number of studies carried out in recent years show that, unlike the citizens of other Member States, Poles place more trust in EU institutions than in their own government<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, the assessment of certain aspects of the operation of those institutions is also favourable for the EU. At the same time, it is also clear that the EU institutions receive significantly worse assessment now than before accession. Compared to the year 2003, now, Poles much more often see the EU institutions as bureaucratic (see also Table 3) or working for the benefit of the authorities and their officials. It is possible that such a change in perception has been connected with the experience gained during application for EU subsidies and various formal requirements and procedures related to that (for their arduousness Polish administration is partly to blame).

In spite of a more critical attitude towards the way EU institutions operate as seen over the last three years, the assessment given by Poles is mostly positive and still far better than their assessment of the operation of the national institutions (see Table 4). The latter were assessed by Poles last year as generally corrupt, inefficient and dealing with unimportant matters.

The trust and the generally good perception of the EU institutions are the reason why Poles are not afraid of a closer cooperation of states within the EU and in their majority support such cooperation (69%). Only 15% of the respondents were in favour of a rather loose cooperation, and 8% in favour of forming a group of a few Member States that would integrate within the EU faster than the rest of the members (see Fig. 4). It seems that Poles can clearly see the greater EU integration as a source of and a chance for Poland's development. They also oppose the ideas, appearing in some countries, to create the so called hard core, made up of a few states that would integrate more closely and impose the general trends on the other EU members.

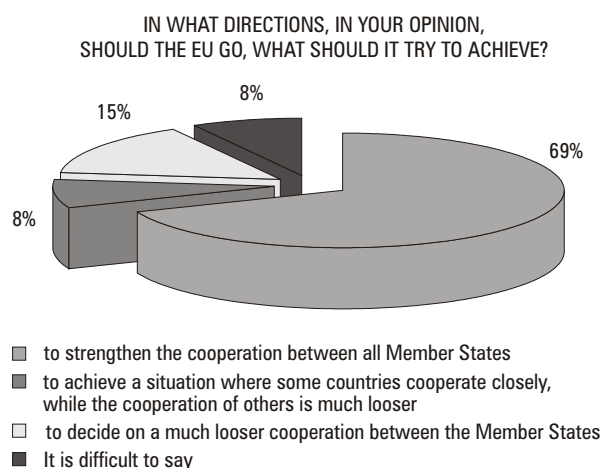
<sup>3</sup> Compare Krzysztof Pankowski, *The European Parliament and Polish and EU institutions in the opinion of Poles*, Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw 2003; Beata Roguska, *Worsening of the opinion on how the EU institutions operate*, Study Report, CBOS, Warsaw November 2005, „Reader's Digest”, Most Trusted Brands 2006, Attitude towards the European Union ([www.rdrusted-brands.com](http://www.rdrusted-brands.com)).

**Table 4.** Assessment of the operation of the EU and national institutions

Do in your opinion:	Institutions of the European Union		existing national institutions in Poland	
	III '03	IX '05	III '03	IX '05
– serve mainly the interests of ordinary citizens	39	30	4	7
– serve mainly the interests of those holding power and the officials	32	44	89	83
It is difficult to say	29	26	7	10
– operate efficiently	50	45	7	8
– do not operate efficiently	15	23	80	78
It is difficult to say	35	32	13	14
– are generally honest	51	43	8	8
– are rather corrupt	18	28	78	78
It is difficult to say	31	29	14	14
– usually deal with important matters	66	52	17	17
– usually deal with unimportant matters	10	22	65	65
It is difficult to say	24	26	18	18

Source: data from March 2003 – Institute of Public Affairs, data from September 2005 – CBOS and Institute of Public Affairs.

**Fig. 4.** Desirable directions for EU development



Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

The percentage of Poles expressing positive views on strengthening the cooperation of all Member States increases together with their interest in politics: from 67% among those who are not interested in public life at all, to 74% among those revealing high interest in politics. The same is true about people positively assessing Poland's membership in the EU. Almost three fourths of such people (74%) are in favour of strengthening the cooperation, whereas among those who assess our EU accession negatively, only a half (53%) support closer integration.

The declared political affiliation does not affect the opinion of the respondents on the nature of cooperation and integration within the EU in any significant way: regardless of their political outlook, most of the Poles are in favour of closer cooperation of all Member States within the EU. A similar percentage of those with left-wing (75%) and centre-left views (68%) favours closer integration as is the percentage of its supporters among those with right-wing (73%) and centre-right (63%) political views. Closer cooperation is favoured mainly by members of the electorate of SLD (79%), PO (77%), Samoobrona (73%), more rarely PiS (63%).

The strongest supporters of closer cooperation and integration of the Member States can be found among those who work in administration and services (81%) and, what is interesting, those living in towns up to 20 thousand inhabitants (79%). They are also numerous not only among those who pointed to the need for involvement in strengthening common security and foreign policy and for ensuring the energy security in Europe (77% each), but also among those who advocated abolition of restrictions in undertaking work in the territory of the whole EU (75%).

**Table 5.** Support for common EU political institutions (%)

In your opinion should the following institutions be created within the EU:	Responses according to the dates of survey					
	VII '03	IV '06	VII '03	IV '06	VII '03	IV '06
	Yes		No		It is difficult to say	
– an institution playing the role of the common EU government	47	49	29	39	24	12
– the office of the EU president	32	33	41	53	26	14
– armed forces under joint command	52	51	26	37	22	12
– office of a minister conducting common foreign policy	45	52	29	35	26	13

Source: data from July 2003 – CBOS, data from April 2006 – Institute of Public Affairs.

The views held by Poles on the shape of the possible integration within the EU have been more and more established. People favouring the closer cooperation usually also favoured creation of common EU political institutions in future. Poles expressed the strongest support for the office of the common EU foreign minister (52%), the armed forces (51%) and the common government (49%). They were less enthusiastic about

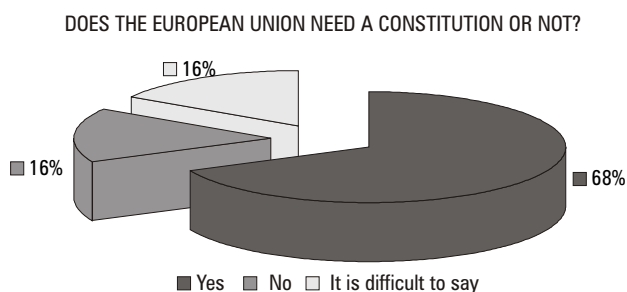
creating the post of the EU president (33%). The support for the office of the EU foreign minister has been growing together with the length of our EU membership (from 45% to 52%). At the same time, it can be noted that the respondents' views on strengthening cooperation within the EU has been more and more polarised. In all categories fewer and fewer people refuse to give an answer, and the percentage of those opposing the proposed solutions is growing. That is probably a result of the fact that public discourse hostile towards strengthening of integration is more and more vocal.

Social or demographic differences do not play any role in the opinions of Poles on the shape of future political institutions of the EU. It seems that the clarification and polarisation of views on the future institutional shape of the EU, that could be noticed over the last three years, provides a chance for an interesting and lively debate on EU issues, which in Poland is still waiting to begin.

## Views on the European Constitution

In the Polish debate on the Constitutional Treaty, a view could be heard that it had been a mistake to name the new treaty "the constitution", as it suggested that the Treaty was a step towards transforming the EU into a federal state, whereas in fact the new Treaty would only give the Union a new form of an international institution. However, our survey shows that Poles respond positively to the notion of "European Constitution". Most of the Poles surveyed (68%) think that the EU needs a constitution. (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. A need for an EU constitution



Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

Public support for a European constitution is, to a great extent, caused by the significance that the Polish public attach to the very idea of a constitution. Poles see

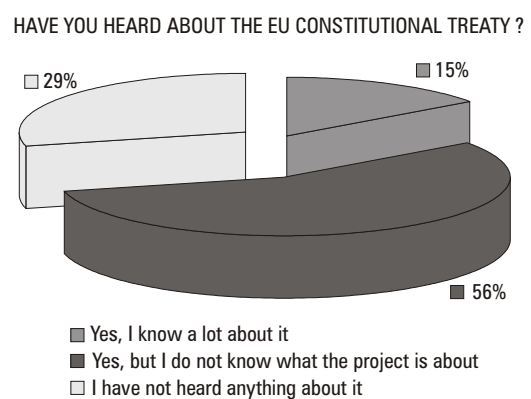
a constitution as something important, good and superior, something that introduces order into the legal space in which the citizens have to live.

At the same time, the views on the Treaty depend on the attitude towards the EU membership: three fourths (75%) of those who are positive about the EU membership can see the need for adopting the EU constitution, the same view is shared by 40% of those with a negative opinion of the effects of Polish accession to the EU.

The relatively greatest number of supporters of an EU constitution are people with secondary and post-secondary education (77%), aged between 50–59 (76%), managers and specialists (78%), employed in administration and services sector (74%), pupils and students (76%), and people who live in towns up to 20 thousand of inhabitants (81%). Those in favour of establishing a constitution for the EU can be found in the electorates of most of the political parties: PO (77%), Samoobrona (76%), SLD (75%), PiS (73%), and both among those who place themselves on the left (75%) or the right (71%) of the political spectrum.

Poles not only support the idea of Euro-constitution, but most of them have heard about the Constitutional Treaty (71%). At the same time, only few people assess their knowledge of the Treaty as good (15%), whereas half of the respondents (56%) admit that they lack the basic information, and almost one third (29%) have not heard anything about it (see Fig. 6).

Fig. 6. Knowledge about the Constitutional Treaty



Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

Among those who have never heard about the Constitutional Treaty or who do not know what the project is about, over a half (56%) would like to find out more about the subject. The percentage of Poles who express such willingness increases together with the level of education: the need to find out more about the Constitutional Treaty is declared by 43% people with elementary education, 52% of respondents with basic



vocational education, 63% with secondary education and 77% of university graduates. A relatively large number of those who want to increase their knowledge can be found among: people employed in administration and services (75%), managers and specialists (74%), inhabitants of the eastern regions of Poland (64%) and towns of up to 20 thousand inhabitants (60%).

Having knowledge about a particular project of the European Constitution – the Constitutional Treaty – has a positive effect on the conviction that an EU constitution should be adopted (see Table 6). However, the majority of those who have not heard about the Constitutional Treaty also believe that the EU needs a common constitution.

**Table 6.** Support for a European constitution according to the level of knowledge about the Constitutional Treaty

		Does the EU need a constitution or not? (in %)		
		Yes	No	It is difficult to say
Have you heard about the EU Constitutional Treaty?	Yes, I know a lot about it	78	19	3
	Yes, but I do not know what the project is about	72	16	12
	I have not heard anything about it	55	16	29

Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

The EU constitutional crisis, caused by the lost referenda in France and in the Netherlands in spring 2005, has turned into an almost year long stagnation and lack of a wider public debate on the future of the European Union and the role of Poland in its development. Even though the debate on the EU Constitutional Treaty has been gaining momentum in Europe, Polish politicians are reluctant to raise this subject. Poles do not have any established views on what should be done in a situation when the Treaty has been rejected by the citizens of those two countries: whether efforts should be made to have the current Treaty adopted, or whether a new constitution should be drafted (see Table 7). However, only 13% of those surveyed suggested giving up the idea of Euro-constitution altogether. Among the proposed solutions, the one suggesting drafting a new Treaty gained the most supporters (44%). The second popular choice was to make efforts to have the current document adopted in the countries who have not ratified it yet

(22%). Such a distribution of responses does not indicate, however, to what extent the new constitution should include solutions agreed and placed in the Constitutional Treaty. Lack of an in-depth public debate on that subject makes it impossible to determine more precisely what are the preferences of the public in that respect. All that we know is that Poles are in favour of such solutions that could lead to closer cooperation among the EU Member States (Fig. 4).

A relatively higher percentage of those in favour of drafting a new constitution can be found among people with centre-right (54%) and centre-left (51%) political views, among private business owners (59%), and, paradoxically, among those who vote for SLD (57%). The leaders of that party, unlike the PiS politicians, expressed their support for adoption of the current Treaty rather than for drafting a new text. It may therefore suggest, that the support for a new constitution is rather an expression of a pragmatic approach of the respondents (we have not succeeded with that one, let us try anew) than an assessment of chances that the current Treaty would come into force.

**Table 7.** Future of the EU constitution

The Constitutional Treaty will come into force if it is ratified by all 25 EU Member States. So far the Treaty has been adopted by 14 EU Member States. A year ago France and the Netherlands have rejected the Treaty in national referenda. What should be done in such a situation:	%
– efforts should be made to have the current Treaty adopted by the countries who have not done it yet	22
– a new Constitutional Treaty should be drafted	44
– the work on a European constitution should be abandoned	13
It is difficult to say	21

Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

Even though the Treaty ratification process has been “frozen” for about a year now, the Poles' assessment of that document has been improving. In a survey carried out in July 2005, over a half of the respondents (51%) said that it was necessary for improving the efficiency of the EU<sup>4</sup>. Now, as much as 59% of Poles share that opinion, and the percentage of people convinced that the EU can do without the Treaty has dropped from 40% to 28%. The positive answers about the Treaty currently prevail: it is seen as necessary for improving the efficiency of the EU (59%), it is in the interest of ordinary

<sup>4</sup> „Pentor”, *Poles on the EU Constitutional Treaty*, a study for the Office of the Committee for European Integration, July 2005.

EU citizens (49%) and it introduces order into EU regulations (51%).

\* \* \*

**Table 8.** Views on the Constitutional Treaty

I will present to you a few contradictory opinions about the Constitutional Treaty, asking you to decide which of them and to what extent is closest to you. Response 1 means that the opinion on the left is closer to your views, and Response 4, that you agree with the opinion on the right.					
	1	2	3	4	
It is not needed, the EU can do without it	13	15	28	31	It is necessary for improving the efficiency of the EU
	28		59		
It strengthens EU bureaucracy	17	19	27	22	It is in the interest of ordinary EU citizens
	36		49		
It multiplies unnecessary regulations	15	18	24	27	It introduces order into EU regulations
	33		51		

Source: Institute of Public Affairs.

Positive opinions about the Constitutional Treaty prevail among people with the best knowledge about it, who have a more favourable opinion about the current condition of the EU and who support closer integration of all EU Member States.

Positive attitude of Poles towards our country's presence in the European Union translates into increasing openness and readiness for closer cooperation. That applies to most social groups, regardless of their education and place of residence. One of the main factors that may explain such a situation is the deepening distrust towards the Polish national institutions and concerns related to the uncertain situation on the Polish labour market, combined with the perception of the EU integration as an opportunity for improvement in this respect.

The Poles support the idea of an EU constitution and are in favour of establishing common EU institutions in the future (foreign affairs minister, government, common armed forces). They can also see a need for creating a common constitution. Polish opinions about the Constitutional Treaty are very positive, in spite of the lack of public debate on that subject and – what follows – relatively low declared levels of knowledge about the Treaty. Most Poles see the Constitutional Treaty as a solution to EU problems (bureaucracy) rather than a source of new problems or threats.

Prepared by: Jarosław Cwiek-Karpowicz