

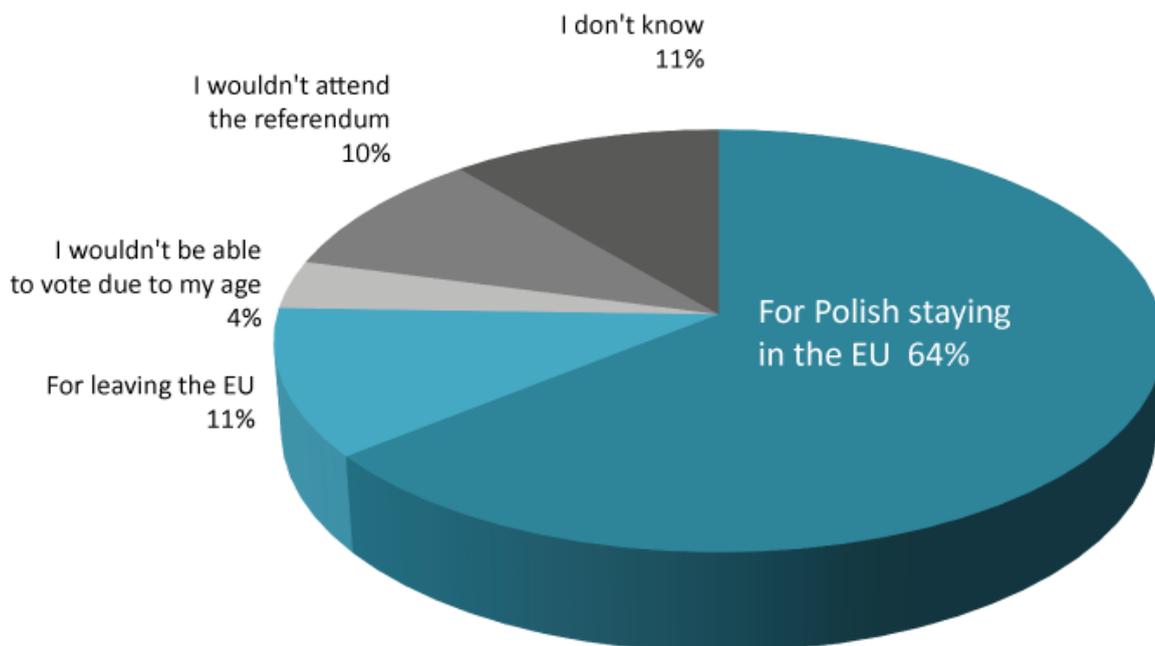
Poles strongly support EU-membership

The Poles are strong supporters of Poland's remaining in the European Union. If a referendum on that issue were to take place today, 85% of those voting would opt for staying in the community.

In June, Britons voted to leave the EU. Poles, traditionally in favor of EU-integration, would not follow this step. If a referendum took place today, the majority of Poles would vote for remaining in the EU (64%) and 11% would be for leaving it. Every tenth respondent would not take part in the referendum, while 11% don't know how they would vote. The survey was conducted among a group of Poles ages 15 years and older, thus 4% of those asked wouldn't be eligible to vote.

If we count only those respondents who would vote (i.e., those who would ultimately decide the referendum's result), a high majority - 85% - would support Poland's staying in the EU.

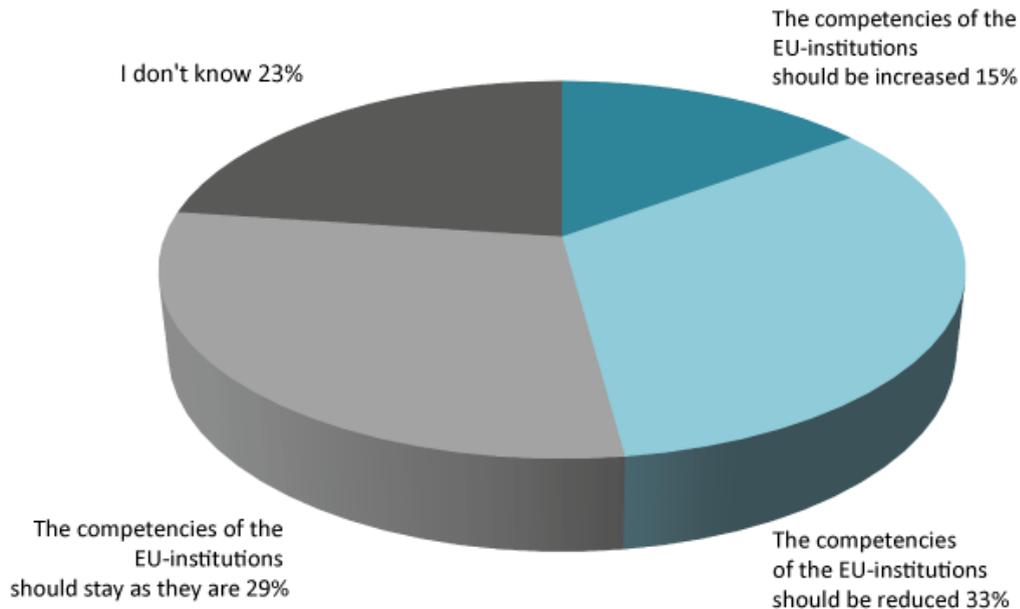
Picture 1: If a referendum on Poland's remaining or leaving the EU were to take place next Sunday, how would you vote?



After the Brexit referendum, there has been much discussion on reforms of the EU. The Polish government opts for reducing the competencies of EU-institutions. This opinion is shared by every third Pole (33%). The second largest group of respondents (29%) thinks the competencies should stay

they are, while 15% are for increasing their competencies. Nearly every fourth Pole has no opinion on this issue (23%).

Picture 2: There is currently discussion in the EU as to whether EU-institutions should have greater or lesser competencies in deciding on issues concerning Europe and Europeans. What should be done?



Commentary

Poles are traditionally supporters of Polish membership in the EU as is clearly stated by the percentage of those who want to remain in the European Union, especially among those who declare that they would take part in a hypothetical referendum.

The current Polish government, in view of the results of the British referendum, wants to reduce the competencies of EU-institutions and shift them to the national states. This approach, however, one that could be called moderately Eurosceptic, is not supported by the majority of society. As the survey shows, the percentage of those who are against reducing the competencies of the EU-institutions (44%) is higher than those supporting such a step (33%).

At the same time, support for increasing EU-institutions' competencies is relatively low. In these current uncertain times and in view of the situation of the European Union, a part of society might be afraid of any changes. We also need to take into consideration that the question of EU-competencies is a difficult one. The majority of society does not deal with EU-integration issues, and they could have difficulty assessing what kind of results such reductions or increases in competencies would mean for the EU and Poland. This is also the reason why the Poles are so divided in their opinions,

and why the percentage of those who cannot answer this question is so high. So, we cannot be just happy and proud of the results and of the high support for EU-membership. We need to ensure a European education, especially among the younger generations who don't remember the times before 1989. The upcoming generations of youth will know Poland only as an EU-member state. In these generations, a process of the "naturalisation" of the advantages brought about by EU membership has taken place, and so, they cannot really assess what has changed due to EU integration and what a high value it has. The task for all authorities, teachers, NGOs and the media is, thus, educating, informing and initiating a thorough discussion on the European Union, Poland's role in it and its future.

The TNS Polska (Kantar Public) survey was conducted on 7-12 October 2016 on a representative group of Poles from 15 years old.

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