



## **Ukrainians positively about Poles and Poland**

### **Press release from a study of the Institute of Public Affairs**

Ukrainians express positive opinions about Poles and Poland. They have positive associations with Poland and attribute positive characteristics to the Polish. Also Polish-Ukrainian relations are estimated as being good or very good. A serious barrier against the intensification of Ukrainian relations with Poland is the visa requirement for Ukrainians to enter Poland - shows a recent study of the Institute of Public Affairs.

The 2010 project is the second edition of research on the perception of Poles and Poland in Ukraine carried out by the IPA. The comparison of the newest study with the corresponding study from the year 2000/01 allows us to follow the evolution of Polish-Ukrainian relations. In view of the upcoming Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union in 2011, the European Football Championship 2012 organised together with Ukraine, as well as the ongoing debate about visa abolition for the Ukrainians – the question of how Poland is perceived by its eastern neighbour takes on greater significance.

Main conclusions from the research:

- Ukrainians have **positive associations with Poles and Poland:**
  - a **friendly** country, similar to Ukraine; the Polish - a brotherly nation; friendly, kind people sympathising with Ukraine (**26%**);
  - neutral, geographical associations (**23%**);
  - a **symbol of economic success** and a better life than in Ukraine (**19%**);
  - a **European country**, member of the European Union (**9%**);
  - **Historical associations were less common than in 2000;**
  - **Relatively few Ukrainians mention the common organisation of EURO 2012 (3%)**
- Main source of knowledge about Poland remains television. 52% gained their knowledge from this source within one month prior to the study. 44% claimed they didn't have any information about Poland within this period of time.
- Only one in ten Ukraine residents (10%) declare that they visited Poland after 1991. In 2000 this amount accounted for **15%**. The fewest people visiting Poland are

situated among the youngest respondents. Persons who have been to Poland, visited it mostly more than twice. The decrease of interest in visiting Poland is directly related to visa requirement for Ukrainians visiting Poland, but also to the fact that very few Ukrainians have passports. The most common reasons for travelling to Poland are tourism and relaxation (35%), temporary or permanent work (29%) and visiting friends (21%).

- **One in five Ukrainians claims to know Polish up to a certain extent:** they understand simple sentences (13%), participate in simple conversations (5%) or use the language fluently in a conversation (3%).
- With regard to **Polish culture**, Ukrainians believe the most familiar to them are Polish cinema (53%), history (47%) and literature (34%).
- Ukrainians have a positive perception of the presence of Polish companies in the Ukraine (52%), cooperation between Ukrainian organisations and Polish institutions (64%) and cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian cities (69%).
- **For 10 years the evaluation of Polish-Ukrainian relations has not changed. At present, they are perceived as very good or good by 84% of the Ukrainians** (77% in 2000). Residents of Western Ukraine tend to have more positive opinions, as well as more often believe that relations with Poland are a priority for Ukraine.
- **40% share the opinion that Poland helps Ukraine cooperate with the European Union. The same share of respondents think that Poland neither help nor hinder these relations.**
- Almost half of the respondents (**48%**) believe that **Ukraine should join the European Union. Whereas 33% believes that Ukraine should simultaneously join the EU and create an alliance with Belarus and Russia.**
- **Ukrainians consider Poles and Ukrainians to be similar.** During the last ten years the share of people who think so has increased.
- **There is very small social distance between Ukrainians and Poles, the respondents accept them in most social roles.** They wouldn't mind if a Pole acquired a Ukrainian citizenship, became permanent resident, worked together with Ukrainians or was a neighbour. Slightly more Ukrainians are reluctant to see a Pole as a member of a city council.
- **Ukrainians perceive Poles to be more enterprising, modern and reliable. At the same time they believe that Ukrainians themselves are better in the context of human relations. They see themselves as more hospitable, friendlier and more honest.**

- Journalists from the main Ukrainian central and regional media (television, radio, newspapers, internet portals) express positive opinions about Poland. However, their personal positive perceptions do not always transfer into a positive image of Poland in the media. This doesn't mean that this image is negative either, simply there is very little information about Poland in Ukrainian media. This is mostly the result of the Ukrainian media being much more focused on domestic rather than foreign affairs.
- **Content analysis of Ukrainian newspapers** shows that pro-western media convey a very positive image of Poland. In the media of "multivector" orientation (trying to be simultaneously pro-western and pro-Russian) the perception of Poland is not uniform and also there is less information about Poland. There is no anti-Polish newspaper or journal among the main Ukrainian press titles. Articles concerning Poland rarely contain deeper information or commentaries. The news about Poland within the past 6 months were dominated by presidential elections in Poland, the Smolensk plane crash, accidents and natural disasters. On the whole, Poland is more often discussed in the context of Ukrainian affairs, for example, the consequences of Polish presidential elections for the future Polish-Ukrainian relations. Polish presidency in the Council of the EU is perceived as a chance for Ukraine. Articles often draw upon Polish media sources.

*An electronic publication presenting the results of the study will be released on the IPA's webpage: [www.isp.org.pl](http://www.isp.org.pl) in January 2011.*

*The study of the Institute of Public Affairs was conducted on a representative group of 2.000 Ukrainians above the age of 18 in September and October 2010.*

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