

POLISH-RUSSIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS

A public opinion survey
for the Centre for Polish-Russian
Dialogue and Understanding



Warsaw 2020



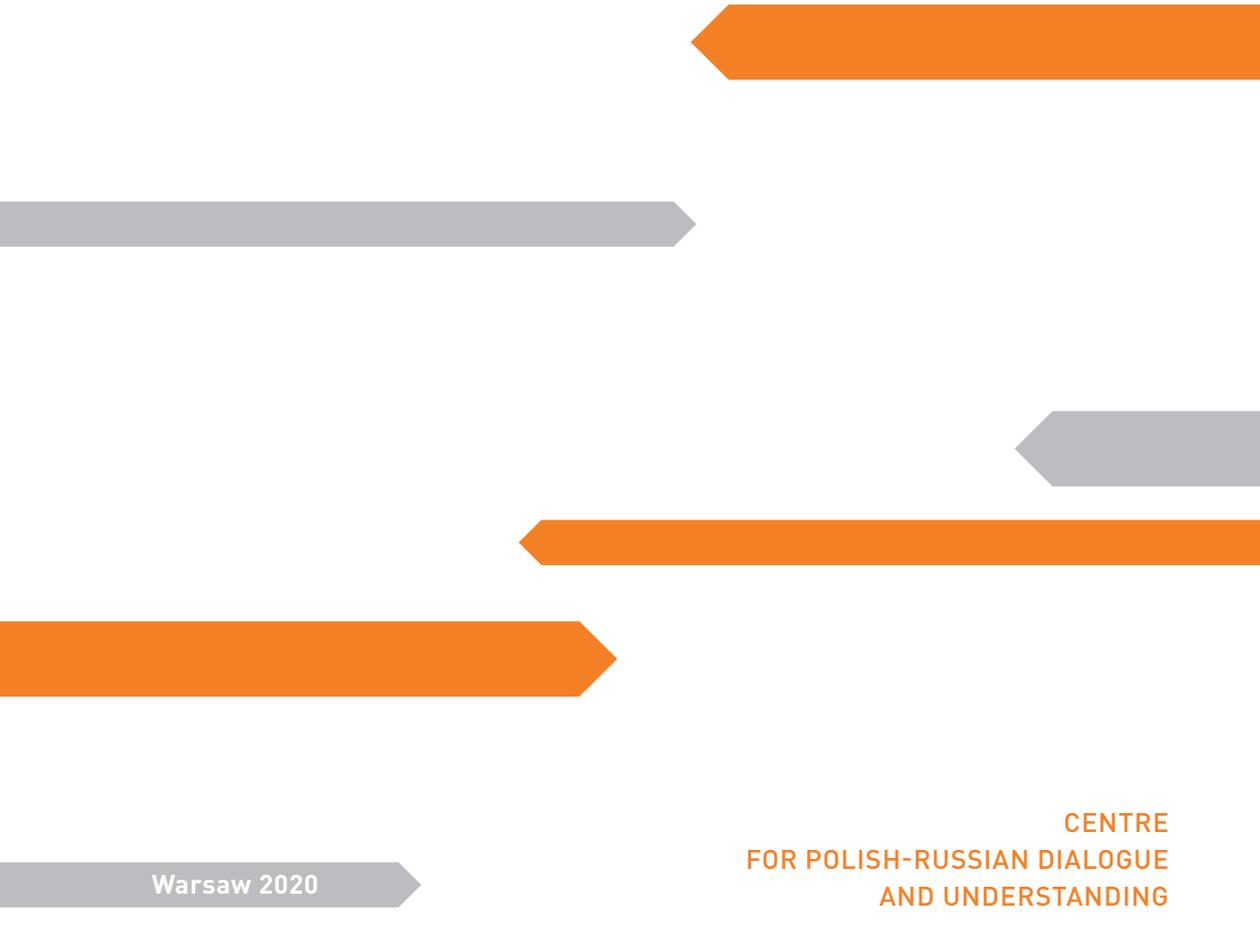
THE CENTRE
FOR POLISH-RUSSIAN
DIALOGUE AND UNDERSTANDING

Report on public opinion research



POLISH-RUSSIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS

A public opinion survey
for the Centre for Polish-Russian
Dialogue and Understanding



Warsaw 2020

CENTRE
FOR POLISH-RUSSIAN DIALOGUE
AND UNDERSTANDING

Report on public opinion research

Survey: ARC Rynek i Opinia

Analyses and report: Małgorzata Milczarczyk, Krzysztof Szczerbacz, Łukasz Mazurkiewicz

© Copyright by Centrum Polsko-Rosyjskiego Dialogu i Porozumienia 2020

Translation: Danuta Przepiórkowska

Graphic design and typesetting: Studio 27 (www.studio27.pl)

Cover photo: aerogondo / Adobe Stock

ISBN 978-83-64486-85-2

Publisher

The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding

14/16A Jasna Street, 00-041 Warsaw, Poland

tel. + 48 22 295 00 30

fax + 48 22 295 00 31

e-mail: cprdip@cprdip.pl

www.cprdip.pl

Contents

■ Introduction – context and research objective	4
■ Information on the survey	6
▶ Attractiveness of and attitude towards the Russian culture	9
▶ Knowledge of Russian culture	14
▶ Cooperation in the field of culture	25
■ Summary	30

Introduction – context and research objective

Great hopes have been pinned upon cultural cooperation between Poland and Russia. The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding that commissioned this research includes in its mission promoting knowledge about the culture and heritage of both nations. Activities in this area can be an opportunity for dialogue and for reducing the tensions in Polish-Russian relations of recent years.

In the study *Poland-Russia: Social Diagnosis 2020* conducted for the Centre in June 2020, 33% of Poles favoured unrestricted cultural and social cooperation with Russia as “the best way to explain one’s own perspective to the Russians and learn about our neighbour’s perspective.” 52% of respondents were more cautious, favouring limits on of such cooperation as it might feature manipulation and disinformation by the Russian authorities. But all in all, the great majority of Poles do favour cultural cooperation with Russia; they see political / geostrategic issues as separate from the social and human dimensions of culture and the arts.

In view of the considerable potential of cultural cooperation for developing common ground with the Russians, the Centre decided to commission a public opinion survey in Poland on this topic. Its objective was to explore the current knowledge of Russian culture among Poles and Polish people’s awareness and interest in different cultural fields, and to identify the ways Poles come into contact with shared cultural activities.

What, then, is the place of Russian culture in Polish minds? How does Russian culture make

its way to Polish audiences? Which attributes of Russian culture do Poles find especially attractive? What do respondents think about events promoting Russian culture in Poland and Polish culture in Russia? How does the current political situation affect Polish-Russian cultural cooperation? These are some questions answered by the respondents in this survey.

The findings should be seen in the context of today’s communication options.

With new technologies, access to content of all shapes and sizes has never been so easy. After decades of the imposed “official” presence of Russian culture in Poland during the Cold War, Poles understandably have inclined towards exploring the cultures of countries other than Russia. After 1989 the Polish public have had much reduced opportunities to come into contact with Russian culture, especially contemporary culture, as it has almost disappeared from the mainstream media. Russian has not been widely taught in schools as was the case during communism.

Stronger ties between Poland and other Western countries are reflected in the new cultural landscape of the last thirty years. In today’s Poland ‘Western’ mass culture tends to dominate: Poles who want Russian culture need to make some effort to find it.

The same considerations apply in Russia. Russian audiences who had good access to Polish films, TV series or songs during the communist period are now largely detached from contemporary Polish culture.

This is the background for the results discussed in this report. The findings confirm the idea that culture and cultural cooperation does offer hopes for Polish / Russian dialogue and understanding that are much less likely in other areas of modern life.

Information on the survey

Methodology

The study was carried out using computer-aided telephone interviews (CATI) on a sample of 1,007 adult Poles, representative for the Polish population structure in terms of gender, age, community-size and region.

The survey was conducted from 24 September to 8 October 2020.

Data presented do not always add up to 100%. For multiple-choice questions more than one answer was accepted. For single-answer questions minor deviations from 100% are caused by rounding up percentages.

The sample structure is presented in Figures 1 – 6.

Figure 1. Gender

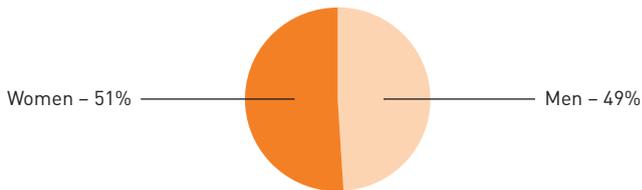


Figure 2. Age

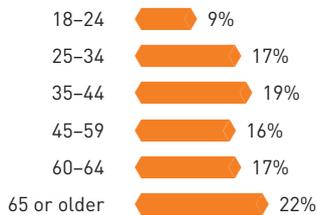


Figure 3. Education



Figure 4. Region

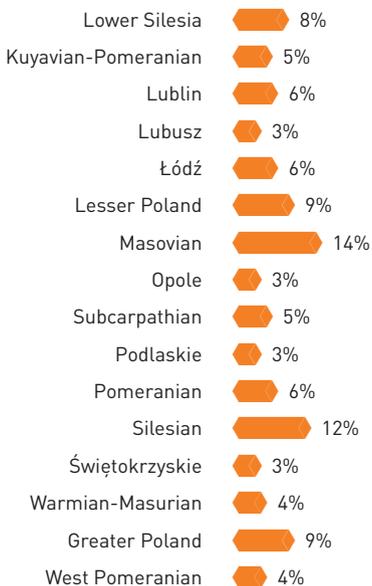


Figure 5. Community-size

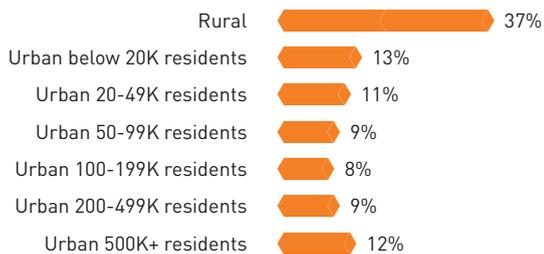
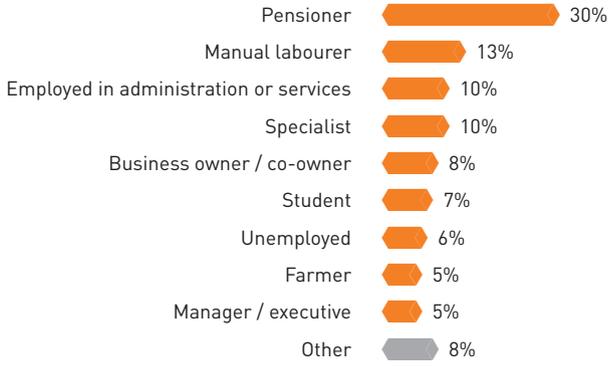


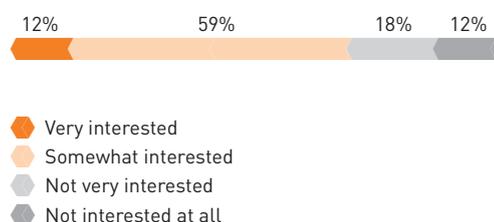
Figure 6. Work status

Attractiveness of and attitude towards the Russian culture

The first questions asked in general terms about respondents' participation in cultural activities, without any indication that later questions would focus on Russia.

The great majority of Poles declare an interest in culture and arts. 71% of respondents claim to be looking for information about in culture and the arts. Only 12% of the respondents report no interest in such topics, while another 18% are "not very interested".

Figure 7. Interest in culture and art among Poles



How interested are you in culture and arts? This question is about cultural events such as new book releases, concerts, film screenings, exhibitions, performances and festivals.

Percentage base: all respondents.

Reading books is Poles' most popular cultural activity. 43% of respondents reached for a non-fiction book over the last month, and as many as 80% did so in the past two years¹. These positive figures may have been influenced by the

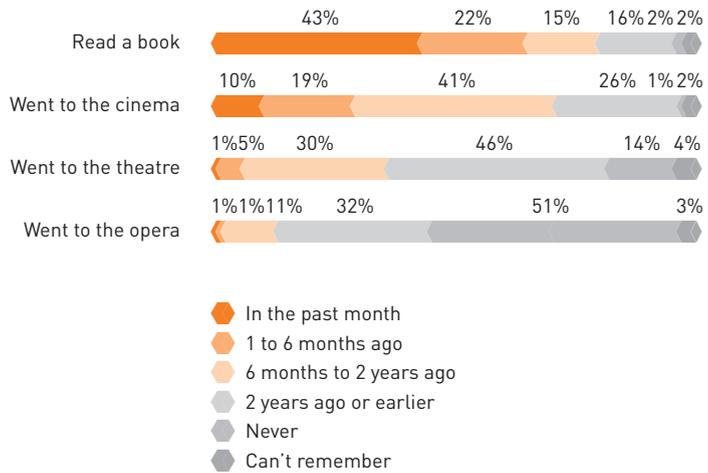
COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation (Poles may have had more time for reading or other cultural activities). Some respondents may have been unwilling to admit that they had not read any books.

¹ According to a 2019 Reading Studies survey (Badania Czytelnictwa) carried out by the Polish National Library, some 40% of Poles had read at least one book during the year: <https://kultura.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1471648,badanie-czytelnictwa-2020-biblioteka-narodowa.html>, accessed: 13 October 2020.

Going to the cinema is popular. 70% of those surveyed had visited cinema theatres in the past two years. Again, the low figure going to the cinema (and the theatre or opera) for the last month may be due to COVID-19 restrictions and health concerns.

Over the last two years only 36% of Poles have been to the theatre and 13% to the opera. Many people never went to a live performance. More than a half of those surveyed had never been to an opera, while 14% had not visited a theatre. This in part reflects the fact that in smaller towns such cultural facilities are not available.

Figure 8. Different cultural activities



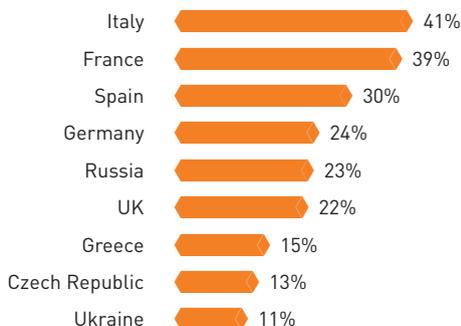
When was the last time you read a book? Went to the cinema? Went to the theatre? Went to the opera?
Percentage base: all respondents. The chart presents aggregated categories.

Subsequent questions measured the cultural appeal of European countries and their cultural 'closeness' to Polish culture. Again, respondents were not aware that later questions would focus on Russian culture.

The cultures of Italy (41%), France (39%) and Spain (30%) are seen by Poles as the most attractive. Among neighbouring countries, respondents also mention the culture of

Germany (24%) and Russia (23%); other neighbours (Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia and Lithuania) are less attractive. Russian culture is mentioned most often by people aged over 65: 32% of people in this older age group believe that Russian culture is attractive and worth exploring. This view is rarely shared by the youngest respondents aged 18–24 (15% respectively).

Figure 9. Attractiveness of the cultures of European countries

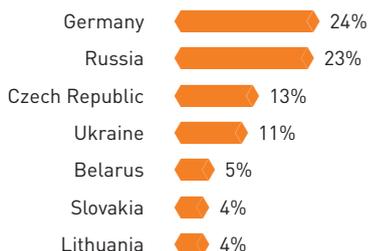


Thinking of other European countries and their culture, which European countries do you find particularly attractive and worth exploring in terms of culture? Please indicate three countries.

NOTE: Respondents mentioned European countries spontaneously (without the interviewer reading a possible response list). The results present the 9 most commonly mentioned countries.

Percentage base: all respondents.

Figure 10. Attractiveness of the cultures of Poland's neighbours



Thinking of other European countries and their culture, which European countries do you find particularly attractive and worth exploring in terms of culture? Please indicate no more than three countries.

NOTE: Respondents mentioned European countries spontaneously (without the interviewer reading a possible response list). The results present mentions of countries with a land border with Poland.

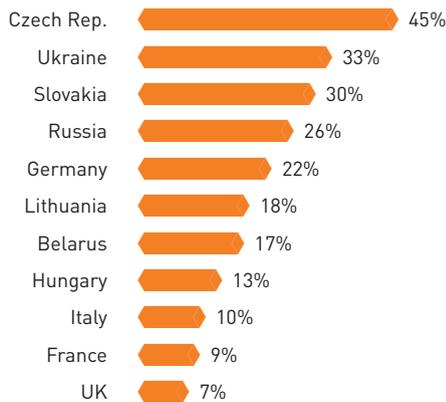
Percentage base: all respondents.

Poles seem generally more attracted to the cultures of countries further from Poland, but a sense of cultural 'proximity' is noted more often with neighbouring countries. In answers about countries with a culture closest to that of Poland the highest scores were recorded for Czech Republic (45%), Ukraine (33%) and Slovakia (30%): countries with a culture seen

as most attractive and worth exploring (Italy, France, Spain) are mentioned less frequently.

The proximity of Russian culture is mentioned by 24% of the respondents, predominantly by people with tertiary education in large cities (over 500,000 inhabitants).

Figure 11. Sense of cultural proximity with European countries



Which European countries do you think are closest to Poland and Poles in terms of culture? Please mention no more than five countries.

NOTE: Respondents mentioned European countries spontaneously (without the interviewer reading a possible response list). The scores for other countries are in the range of 0–3%.

Percentage base: all respondents.

The survey asked the respondents to react to statements concerning Russian culture and cultural cooperation with Russia.

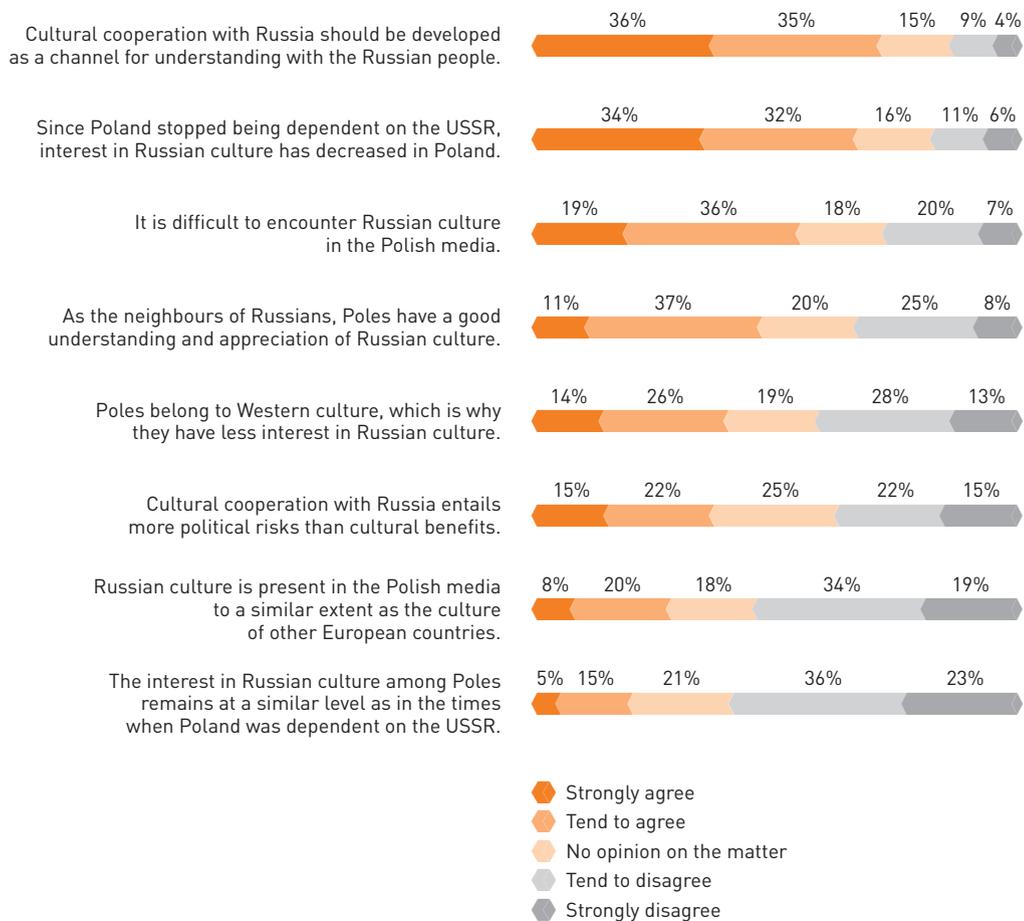
Poles are open to greater cultural cooperation with Russia: 71% of respondents agree. However, 55% of respondents believe that it's difficult to come across Russian culture in the Polish media, and 66% agree that this leads to lower interest.

Poland's geographical location, its membership in the European Union and its former

dependence on the USSR leave Poles with ambiguous opinions about Russian culture. They think they understand Russian culture well and appreciate it (48%), but they feel closer to Western culture (40%).

Poles' understanding of Russian culture is associated with knowledge of Russian literature classics (works by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Chekhov or Mikhail Bulgakov) or films (eg those directed by Nikita Mikhalkov). The characters and problems presented in these works feel close to Polish audiences.

Figure 12. Attitude towards Russian culture and its presence in Poland



I will now read out some statements concerning the presence of Russian culture in Poland. Respondents expressed agreement / disagreement on each statement.
Percentage base: all respondents.

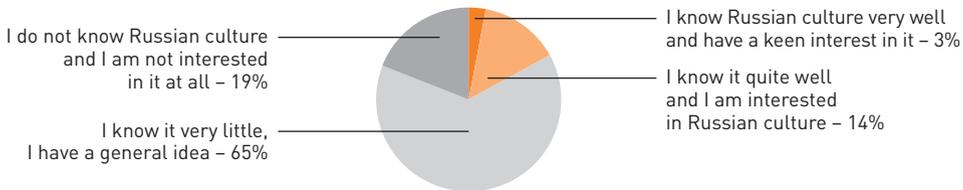
Other findings show that Poles do not reject Russian culture, or topics related to Russia or the Soviet Union. Interest in these topics seems to depend on availability: 'Western' culture is

now easily accessible, whereas Poles interested in Russian culture may need to make an effort to find it.

Knowledge of Russian culture

Most Poles believe that they have a general idea of and interest in Russian culture (65%). However, few (17%) profess any deep knowledge. Ignorance and lack of interest are acknowledged by 19% of respondents.

Figure 13. Knowledge of and interest in Russian culture



How would you assess your knowledge of Russian culture?

Percentage base: all respondents.

The survey suggests that respondents learn about Russian culture mainly from Polish websites (46%) and TV channels (43%). School and school textbooks are the third important source of knowledge (29%). This seems natural: during school literature lessons works by Russian authors are mentioned and some are

mandatory reading. Russian can be taught in schools as a modern language. During lessons in cultural studies students can familiarise themselves with Russian authors and artists.

Some 20% of Poles obtain information on Russian culture from the Polish press.

Figure 14. Sources of knowledge about Russian culture



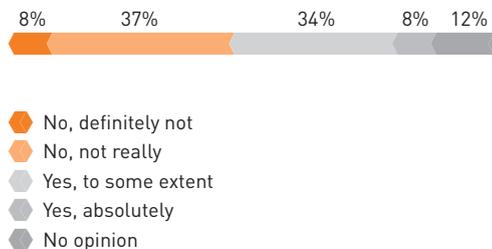
*How do you learn about Russian culture? Multiple answers possible.
Percentage base: all respondents.*

The family (16%) plays a role in sharing knowledge about Russian culture, just as knowledge comes from friends or relatives living in Russia (16%) and through stories told by older generations or contemporary accounts of travel and social media contacts. Some respondents mention trips to Russia, contact with Russian colleagues at work, or books by Polish or Russian authors.

12% of respondents say that they use Russian sources (television, websites or other electronic media).

Overall, 42% of respondents believe that access to Russian culture in Poland is easy and common, but a rather higher proportion think that in Poland it's difficult to gain ready access to Russian culture.

Figure 15. Is Russian culture accessible in Poland?



*Do you think that Russian culture is easily and universally accessible in Poland?
Percentage base: all respondents.*

Participation in Russian cultural events in Poland is not widespread among Poles. Only 9% of people said that they had participated in such an event in the last three years.

Figure 16. Participation in Russian cultural events



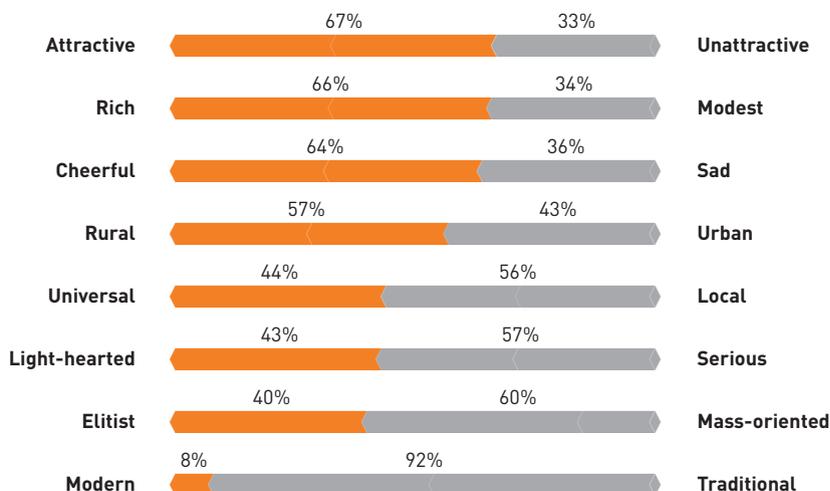
Over the last three years, have you taken part in any cultural events related to Russia? If so, where?
Multiple-response question: for each location, the respondents could answer Yes or No.
The percentages of affirmative answers (Yes) are presented.
Percentage base: all respondents.

The survey asked respondents about different features of Russian culture, using eight 'dimensions'.

Many more Poles see Russian culture as traditional (92%) rather than modern (8%). Respondents are much more familiar with classic works of Russian culture and famous Russian authors.

The majority of respondents see Russian culture as attractive (67%), rich (66%) and cheerful (64%). It is more often seen as mass culture (60%) than elite culture, and associated with rural areas (57%) and local character (56%). It is also seen as more serious (57%) than light (43%): again, perhaps, reflecting Polish familiarity with the Russian classics.

Figure 17. Image of Russian culture



*I will now mention a few pairs of opposites to describe Russian culture. For each pair, please indicate the word or phrase that you think describes Russian culture better.
Percentage base: all respondents.*

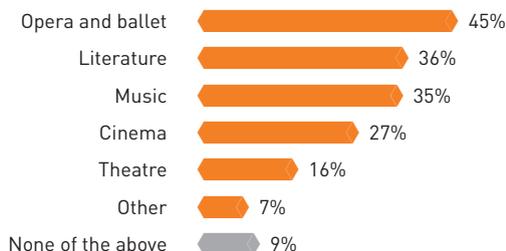
Poles most appreciate Russian opera and ballet (45%), probably reflecting patchy knowledge of world-famous Russian composers such as Tchaikovsky or Shostakovich, and with general awareness of the global reputation of Russian ballet.

The respondents appreciate Russian literature (36%). Students in Polish schools read excerpts

from or whole works of eminent Russian writers and poets. Poles are familiar with names such as Mikhail Bulgakov, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov.

Other fields of Russian culture liked by Poles include music and cinema (27%). Poles also point to painting and fine arts.

Figure 18. Which areas of Russian culture are most valued by Poles?



*Which areas of Russian culture do you value most? Multiple answers possible.
Percentage base: all respondents.*

Poles mainly associate Russian culture with the great writers and composers from the 19th century: Leo Tolstoy (24%), Fyodor Dostoyevsky (18%) and Pyotr Tchaikovsky (11%). Fewer respondents (8%) are familiar with Mikhail Bulgakov, a 20th century writer and playwright. Respondents spontaneously also mentioned Vladimir Putin (7%), an “escape response” stemming from lack of knowledge of Russian cultural figures.

Some Poles claim familiarity with other names they associate with Russian culture: Alla Pugacheva, Bulat Okudzhava, Nikolai Gogol, Vladimir Vysotsky, Anton Chekhov and even Joseph Stalin (all at 3% of mentions). Respondents did not mention anyone from contemporary Russian culture.

Figure 19. What names do you associate with Russian culture?



What kind of figures / names do you associate with Russian culture? Open-end question.

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they know Russian culture at least a little, N=869

NOTE: Results are presented for those names mentioned by at least 3% of the respondents.

The respondents professed exposure to different areas of Russian culture. A strong majority of respondents have listened to Russian music (71%). As many as 70% say that they sometimes watch Russian films (in the cinema, on TV or online). Russian literature is chosen by 34%.

Performances of Russian playwrights (watched live or via streaming) are rarely mentioned (as previously noted, watching live theatre performances is generally not popular in Poland).

Figure 20. Russian culture touchpoints



Do you ever watch Russian films, whether in the cinema, on television or over the Internet?

Do you ever read Russian literature?

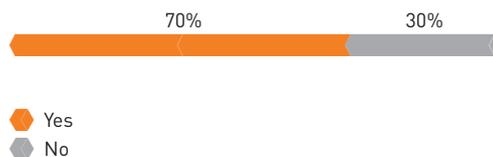
Do you ever listen to Russian music?

Do you ever watch the performances of Russian directors or playwrights, whether live in the theatre, on television or over the Internet?

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they know Russian culture at least a little, N=869

NOTE: Percentages of affirmative answers are shown for each question.

Figure 21. Exposure to Russian cinema

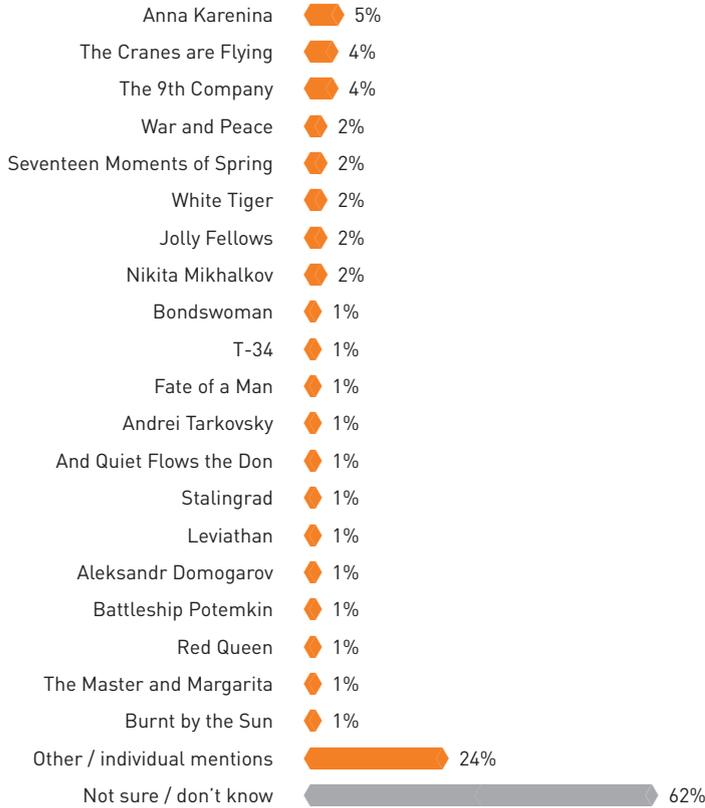


Do you ever watch Russian films, whether in the cinema, on television or over the Internet?

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they know Russian culture at least a little, N=869

A great majority of Poles (70%) who claim to know Russian culture at least a little say they watch Russian films from time to time. The popularity of Russian cinema increases with

age: half of younger people (aged 18–34) sometimes watch Russian films, while some 80% of older Poles (aged 45+) do so.

Figure 22. Knowledge of Russian films and directors

Please provide the names of Russian film artists (directors, actors) or titles of Russian films that you recognise.
Percentage base: respondents who declared that they sometimes watch Russian films, N=598

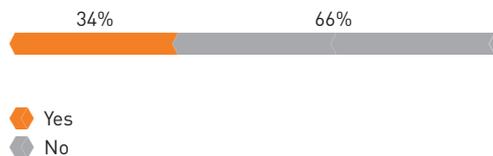
Knowledge of Russian cinema among Poles is superficial. Most of those claiming exposure to it could not mention titles of Russian films they had watched or their directors / actors.

The best-known Russian works include the period TV series “Anna Karenina” (recently re-run on public Polish television); the 1950s Soviet war drama “The Cranes are Flying”;

and the contemporary high budget war film “The 9th Company” about conscripts during the Afghanistan war.

Knowledge of Russian films is largely limited to titles aired many years ago. In the case of “Bondswoman” a Ukrainian series was associated with Russia.

Figure 23. Exposure to Russian literature



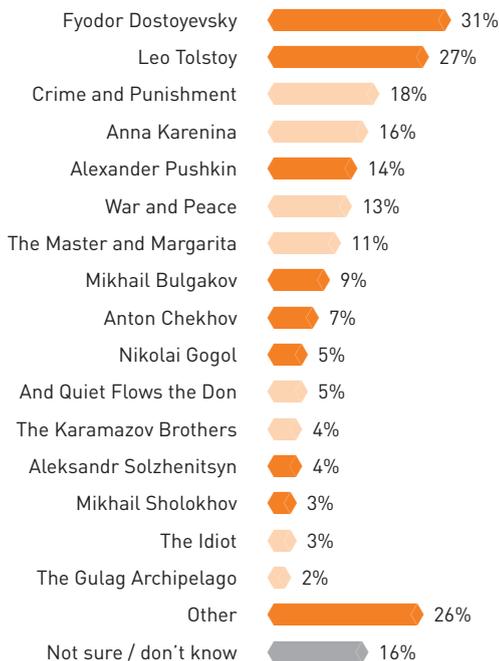
Do you ever read Russian literature?

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they know Russian culture at least a little, N=869

Exposure to Russian literature is much less widespread among Poles. Only some 30% of Poles who know Russian culture at least to a small extent say that they sometimes read Russian literature.

Lowest interest in reading Russian literature is among students (aged 18–24) while their slightly older peers (aged 25–34) are most interested in it: declared willingness in reading books was similar in both groups.

Figure 24. Which Russian literary works and writers are best known?



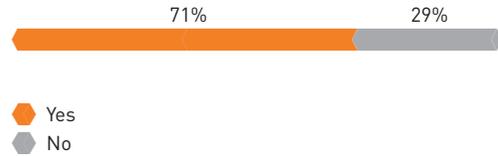
Please provide the names of Russian writers / poets or the titles of Russian books that you have encountered.

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they sometimes read Russian literature, N=361, dark colour was used to mark writers and poets mentioned while light colour was used for titles.

The responses given spontaneously include classic titles and authors from Russian literature: "Crime and Punishment" and "The Karamazov Brothers" by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, "Anna Karenina" and "War and Peace" by Leo Tolstoy; and "The Master and Margarita" by

Mikhail Bulgakov. Alexander Pushkin was towards the top of the rankings. Some of these titles are or have been mandatory school reading. Respondents did not mention any contemporary Russian writers published by Polish publishers in good numbers of copies.

Figure 25. Exposure to Russian music



Do you ever listen to Russian music?

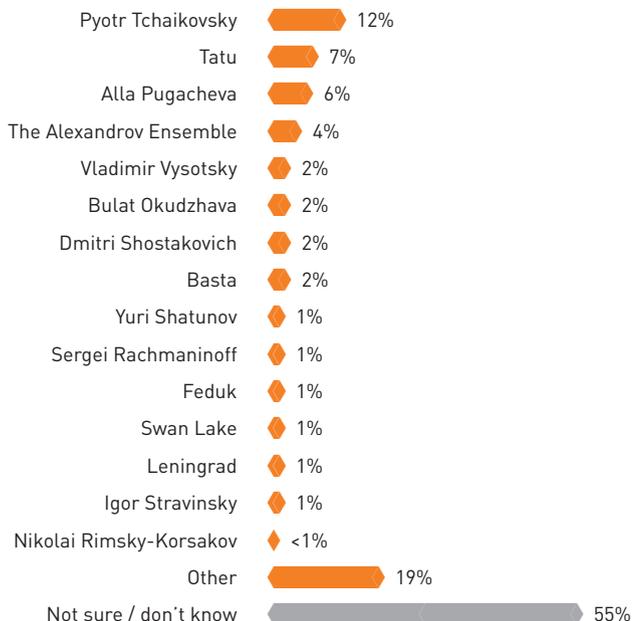
Percentage base: respondents who declared that they know Russian culture at least a little, N=869

As with cinema, the vast majority (71%) of Poles who say they know Russian culture at least a little declare some familiarity with Russian music. Again, older Poles demonstrate higher interest in Russian music than younger Poles. 81% of people aged 55–64 claim exposure to Russian music.

Poles' knowledge of Russian music nonetheless is superficial. More than half those

declaring exposure to Russian music can't mention any contemporary Russian artists or music performers. Composer Pyotr Tchaikovsky is the most frequently mentioned Russian artist, followed by the contemporary pop music duo Tatu and Russian pop icon Alla Pugacheva. Contemporary musicians (rappers Basta and Feduk or the Leningrad band) are almost unknown to Polish audiences.

Figure 26. Which music performers and Russian music works have Poles been exposed to?



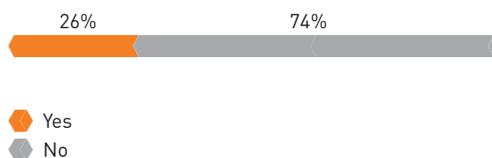
Please provide the names of Russian music creators (composers, performers) and/or names of Russian music bands that you have encountered

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they sometimes listen to Russian music, N=608

An even smaller number of Poles declare familiarity with Russian theatre. Willingness to watch Russian drama increases with age:

only some 12% of younger people ever watch Russian theatre, some 50% of the oldest respondents (aged 65+) might do so.

Figure 27. Exposure to Russian theatre



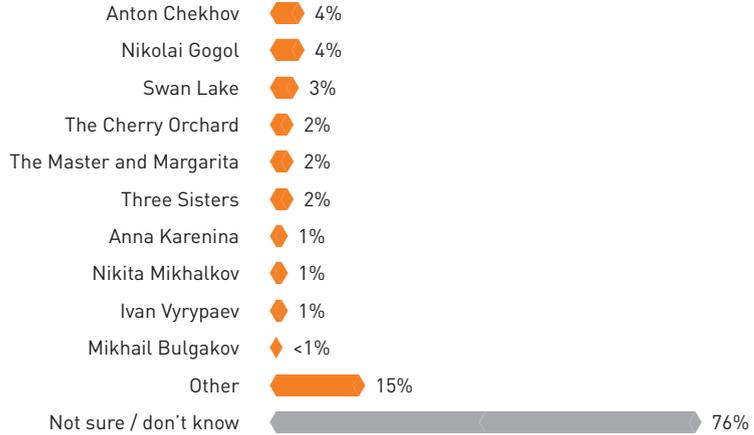
Do you ever watch the performances of Russian directors or playwrights, whether live in the theatre, on TV or over the Internet?

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they know Russian culture at least a little, N=869

Poles' knowledge of Russian theatre in Poland is limited. Some 75% of those who declared some familiarity with Russian theatre could not

name either any titles of Russian plays they had watched or their authors / actors.

Figure 28. Which Russian drama writers / artists and works do Poles recognise?



Please provide the names of Russian theatre artists (directors, playwrights) or the titles of dramas you have encountered.

Percentage base: respondents who declared that they sometimes watch dramas by Russian authors, N=224

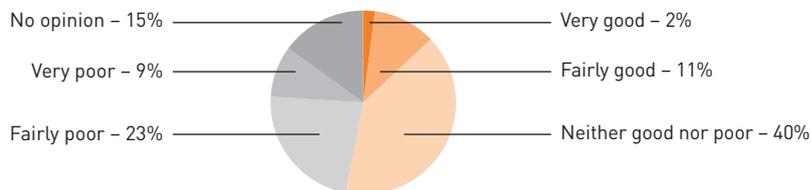
Poles associate Russian theatre with classic artists: Anton Chekhov or Nikolai Gogol. Ivan Vryypaev who lives in Poland and has had his

performances staged in many Polish theatres remains almost unknown.

Cooperation in the field of culture

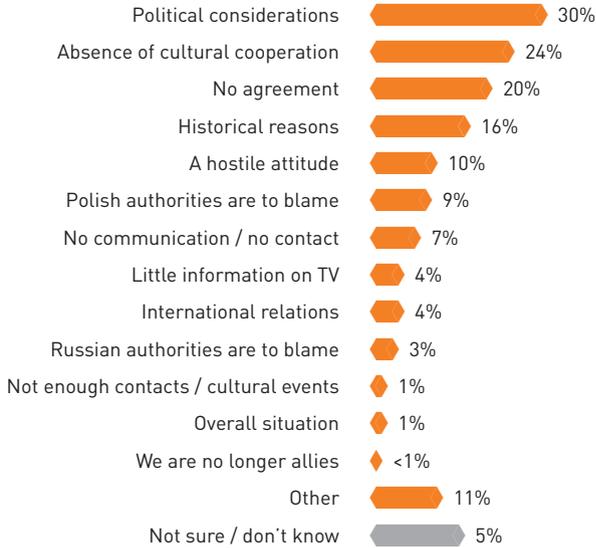
Most Poles think that cultural cooperation between Poland and Russia is not in a good state. 32% assess it as bad, 40% think it is neither good nor bad, and only 12% assess it as good.

Figure 29. Assessment of Polish-Russian cultural cooperation



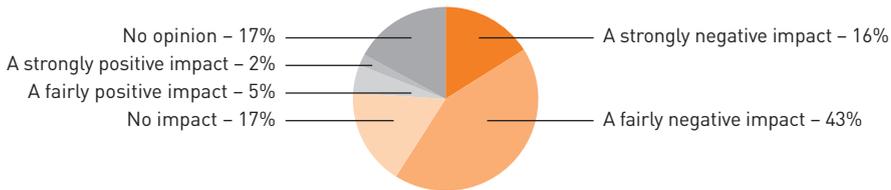
How would you assess the cultural cooperation between Poland and Russia both at the intergovernmental level and between non-governmental, local, cultural and academic institutions and organisations? One answer allowed.
Percentage base: all respondents.

Respondents think that Polish-Russian cultural cooperation faces difficult obstacles: political and historical barriers, lack of understanding and contact, and hostile attitudes.

Figure 30. Poles' negative assessment of Polish-Russian cultural cooperation

Why would you assess the cultural cooperation between Poland and Russia as poor? Open-end question.

Percentage base: respondents who assessed Polish-Russian cultural cooperation as fairly poor or poor, N=358

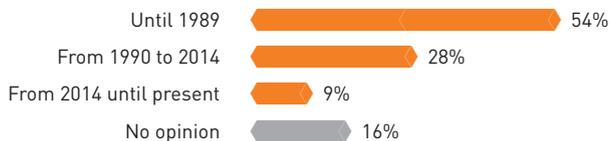
Figure 31. Impact of current politics on cultural relations between Poland and Russia

Does the current situation in political relations between Poland and Russia affect cultural cooperation between the countries? If so, how? One answer only.

Percentage base: all respondents.

Political considerations are seen as a major obstacle by some 60% of Poles.

Figure 32. When were cultural relations between Poland and Russia at their best?

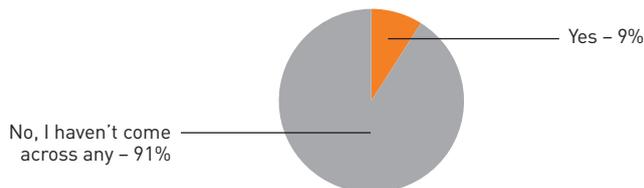


When was the cultural cooperation between Poland and Russia at its best? Please indicate no more than two periods. Two answers possible.
Percentage base: all respondents.

The question about good periods of Polish-Russian cultural relations offers interesting findings. The period of the People’s Republic of Poland came a clear first, reflecting the pronounced presence of Russian culture in Poland

under communism. 2014 (Russia’s aggression against Ukraine) saw a drastic change for the worse compared to the first 25 years after communism.

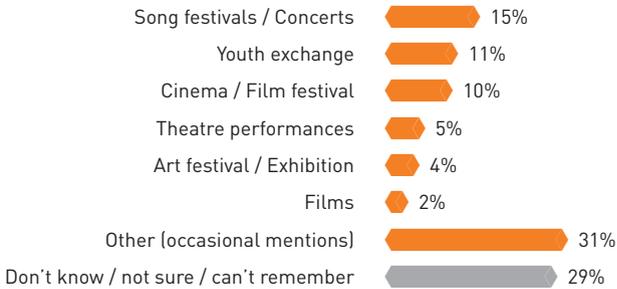
Figure 33. Exposure to joint Polish-Russian cultural projects



Have you come across any joint Polish-Russian cultural projects? If so, which ones?
Percentage base: all respondents.

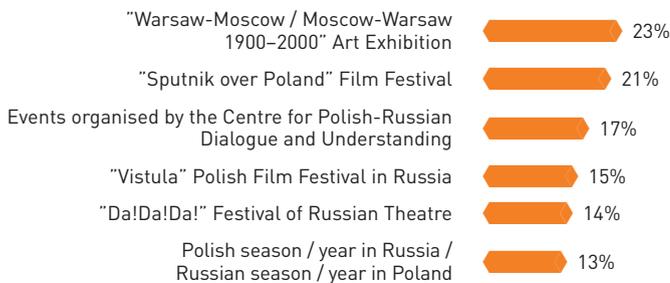
Only 9% of Poles have come across joint Polish-Russian cultural projects: young people aged

25–34 were slightly more likely to have this experience (14%) than Poles aged 65+.

Figure 34. Which joint Polish-Russian cultural projects were most frequently encountered?

Have you come across any joint Polish-Russian cultural projects? If so, which ones?
Percentage base: people who came across joint cultural projects, N=130.

Nearly one-third of Poles who declare some exposure to joint Polish-Russian cultural projects can not recall any of them. Music and film festivals are the most mentioned.

Figure 35. Exposure to selected cultural events

Have you heard of projects such as ...?

Percentage base: all respondents.

NOTE: The answers were read out by the interviewer. Each respondent was able to indicate more than one answer. The graph presents the percentages of affirmative answers.

Each respondent was asked about selected cultural events (from a list read out by the interviewer). Respondents were most familiar with the "Warsaw-Moscow / Moscow-Warsaw 1900-2000" Art Exhibition in 2004 (23% of answers) and the "Sputnik over Poland" Film

Festival (21%) organised since 2007. The score for the Polish-Russian Centre for Dialogue and Understanding is noteworthy: although based in Warsaw, the Centre and its activities seem to be reaching out to a wider Polish public.

Figure 36. Resumption of the Polish Year / Russian Year suspended after Russia's annexation of Crimea



In 2014 following the annexation of the Crimea by Russia, the Polish Year in Russia and the Russian Year in Poland were cancelled. This had been a cyclical event, previously organised as the Polish season in Russia / Russian season in Poland. Should such events, organised by the ministries of culture of Poland and Russia to present the most important cultural events of both countries, be resumed or not? One answer possible.

Percentage base: all respondents.

Nearly 40% of Poles would like the Polish Year in Russia / Russian Year in Poland to be resumed regardless of the state of bilateral political relations. This suggests a widespread willingness to separate cultural activities from politics. However, up to 44% of Poles expect

at least a slight (16%) or a significant (28%) change in political relations between the two countries as a condition for “thawing” cultural cooperation. 8% of respondents oppose restarting these events regardless of the state of bilateral political relations.

Summary

The results of the survey show that Poles are open to Russian culture. This is reflected in the high percentages of Poles interested in culture in general (71%), as well as open to the cultural cooperation with Russia (71%). Poles typically see Russian culture as attractive (67%) and rich and diverse (66%).

Respondents also think that Russian culture rarely appears in the Polish media (55%), which makes it more difficult to access (45%). It is far easier to enjoy the 'Western' culture strongly represented in media channels.

These general declarations of interest in Russian culture do not mean that knowledge of and exposure to Russian culture are much above basic. The image of Russian culture present in Polish is mainly based on what Poles learned at school, namely classic Russian authors and genres from the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, but nothing much thereafter. Two thirds of respondents can't name any Russian films; more than half can't name creators of Russian music or songs; and one in five respondents can't name any author or the name of a literary work. Knowledge of contemporary Russian culture is very limited.

This state of knowledge among mass Polish audiences may refer not only to Russian culture but also to culture in general. Poles' knowledge

would be expected to be broader for Anglo-Saxon culture with its far stronger media presence in Poland. Nevertheless, here too wide or detailed knowledge is unlikely.

One in ten Poles recalls joint Polish-Russian cultural projects such as music and film festivals ("Sputnik over Poland": 21%) or art exhibitions ("Warsaw-Moscow / Moscow-Warsaw 1900-2000": 23%) and activities undertaken by the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding.

Poles think that cultural cooperation between Poland and Russia is not developing well (32% assess it as poor; 40% claim it is neither good nor poor). The most important reasons include political and historical barriers (59% see these as having negative impact). Nearly 40% of Poles claim to favour Polish-Russian cultural cooperation regardless of the current political situation (ie a complete separation of 'cultural' and 'political' issues). 44% of Poles favour such cooperation if official relations between the two countries improve.

This survey suggests that there is a lot of potential for improving cultural contacts. Political tensions and historical pain are present in Poles' thinking about Russia, but they do not block Poles' general openness to Russian culture.

Notes

Notes

The great majority of Poles do favour cultural cooperation with Russia. They see political / geo-strategic issues as separate from the social and human dimensions of culture and the arts. In view of the considerable potential of cultural cooperation for developing common ground with the Russians, the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding decided to commission a public opinion survey in Poland on this topic. Its objective was to explore the current knowledge of Russian culture among Poles and Polish people's awareness and interest in different cultural

fields, and to identify the ways Poles come into contact with shared cultural activities. What, then, is the place of Russian culture in Polish minds? How does Russian culture make its way to Polish audiences? Which attributes of Russian culture do Poles find especially attractive? What do respondents think about events promoting Russian culture in Poland and Polish culture in Russia? How does the current political situation affect Polish-Russian cultural cooperation? These are some questions answered by the respondents in this survey.



THE CENTRE
FOR POLISH-RUSSIAN
DIALOGUE AND UNDERSTANDING

Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding

14/16A Jasna Street, 00-041 Warsaw

tel.: + 48 22 295 00 30, fax + 48 22 295 00 31

e-mail: cprdip@cprdip.pl, www.cprdip.pl