

***Approving ACTA in Poland in the Opinion of Students – Research Results***

**KEY WORDS**

ACTA, Internet, students on ACTA, protests against ACTA, opinion polls, intellectual property

**ABSTRACT**

Signing the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) by the Polish government was one of the most important political issues in the early 2012. This announcement brought about a wave of protests, mainly among young people, who treated the agreement as a tool limiting freedom on the Internet. The article presents the research results of an opinion poll on Polish students concerning the ACTA case and the information campaign prepared by the Polish government. Discussed are the attitudes of young people towards social dialog, their expectations regarding the forms of social consultation on the ACTA, and the way they perceive the cases of copyright infringement on the Internet.

Signing the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) by the Polish government was one of the most important political issues in the early 2012. The aim of the article is to present an opinion poll on Polish students concerning approving the ACTA by Poland and the information policy of the government in this matter, as well as their expectations regarding the forms of social consultation on the ACTA.

**The ACTA and the consequences of approving this document in Poland**

The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement is an agreement between Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, and the USA, which the European Union was also expected to join. The Agreement is meant to increase the intellectual property law enforcement level, including respecting the ownership rights on the Internet. The decision to sign the Agreement was made by the Council of the European Union in December 2011. Poland signed the Agreement on 26 January 2012 in Tokyo<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> “Czym jest ACTA?” [What is ACTA?], [www.rp.pl/artykul/796088.html](http://www.rp.pl/artykul/796088.html) [accessed: 11.04.2012].

The announcement and the signing of the ACTA by the Polish government provoked mass protests in January 2012, in which participated mostly young people. They treated the Agreement as a tool to limit freedom on the Internet. The protests took different forms, more or less radical. One of them was shutting down the websites of government institutions by hackers. The Sejm website was blocked, there were attempts to deny access to the sites of the Prime Minister, President, and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage<sup>2</sup>. There were also street demonstrations against the signing of the ACTA, in Warsaw, Cracow, Sopot, Lublin, Dębica, Przemyśl, Kielce, and Gdynia<sup>3</sup>, among others. Some postulates were made as well, that the issue of approving the Agreement by Poland should be settled in a referendum. The scale of the protests against the provisions of the Document in Poland was so large that they were called a mutiny and a manifestation of what they think about power and politics<sup>4</sup>. Some even said that the protests and manifestations of young people against the ACTA, for whom the Internet is becoming the main living environment, could be compared, with all due proportion, as Professor Czapiński said, to the struggle to establish “Solidarity” in 1980<sup>5</sup>.

Arguments were heard among the protesters that under the pretext of fighting for the protection of ownership on the web, the ACTA are introduced as a tool for censoring and limiting freedom on the Internet<sup>6</sup>. The government was accused of not having held social consultations with non-governmental organizations on the subject of accepting the Agreement<sup>7</sup>.

The provisions of the Agreement gave rise to different opinions among the experts in intellectual property law, politicians, and members of NGOs as well. The experts, both those dealing in international law and the specialists in protection of IP property stressed the framework nature of the ACTA regulations, providing general recommendations on the means the states may use to counteract the violations of copyright. According to some experts, this generality could incur the risk of deriving other laws from the ACTA in ways which were then difficult to predict and provide administrators and internet service providers

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<sup>2</sup> “Bitwa o ACTA w sieci” [Battle of ACTA on the web], [www.tvn24.pl/bitwa-o-acta-w-sieci-22-01,198218,s.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/bitwa-o-acta-w-sieci-22-01,198218,s.html) [accessed: 12.04.2012].

<sup>3</sup> W. Cieśla, G. Łakomski, “Aktywiści kontra analogi” [Activists vs. Analogs], *Wprost* 2012, No. 5, pp. 24–29; *Bitwa o ACTA...*

<sup>4</sup> T. Lis, “Odrzuceni odrzucają” [The rejected reject], *Wprost* 2012, No. 5, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> “To początek chaotycznej rewolucji, rozmowa z prof. Januszem Czapińskim” [It’s a beginning of a chaotic revolution, a conversation with Professor Janusz Czapiński], *Wprost* 2012, No. 5, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> W. Cieśla, G. Łakomski, *Aktywiści...*, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> P. Chelchowski, “Jak nie doszło do konsultacji w sprawie ACTA [kalendarium]” [How the consultations on ACTA were not held; a timeline], [http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114873,11096007,Jak\\_nie\\_doszlo\\_do\\_konsultacji\\_w\\_sprawie\\_ACTA\\_\\_KALENDARIUM\\_\\_.html](http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114873,11096007,Jak_nie_doszlo_do_konsultacji_w_sprawie_ACTA__KALENDARIUM__.html) [accessed: 12.04.2012].

with an ability to impose preventive censorship. They challenged the way in which the Agreement was to protect intellectual goods. According to the General Inspector of Personal Data Protection (Pol. *Generalny Inspektor Ochrony Danych Osobowych – GIODO*), signing and ratification of the ACTA convention would be a threat to the rights and freedoms specified in the constitution<sup>8</sup>. There were also some very critical opinions about the ACTA. Professor Genowefa Grabowska from the University of Silesia emphasized that once the Agreement is accepted, “in the name of fighting piracy and counterfeits, it will be possible to censor the Internet, block the content which appears there, and initiate intellectual goods infringement proceedings *ex officio*”<sup>9</sup>. Some experts also formulated postulates to define, as a result of the discussion about the ACTA, “a legal boundary between the intellectual property protection and the broadly understood freedom on the internet”<sup>10</sup>.

Representatives of non-government organizations also spoke about the ACTA. In a statement prepared as a response to the government position on the Convention, the NGOs appealed, among others, for “not signing the ACTA and holding debates over the predictable economic and social consequences of the ACTA, persuading the European Parliament to reject the ACTA, and holding wide consultations which would serve to adapt the IP rights to the realities of the functioning of modern society and economy”<sup>11</sup>. Next, the President of the Stefan Batory Foundation judged that signing such an agreement as the ACTA may lead to censorship. He also admitted that there is no simple solution to reconcile the copyrights with the common access to the content on the internet. According to him, the introduction of such regulation is a complex issue which concerns the contemporary world and the change of rules governing it, owing to the fact that apart from the real world there is now a significant virtual dimension. According to the President of the Foundation, “the intention of the legislators is not censorship here but an agreement such as the ACTA ‘contains limitations of the virtual world, exchange of thoughts, ideas, and works, and may lead to abuse and censorship’”<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> W. Kazimierczak, “Unijne porozumienie ACTA ma być wnikliwie skonsultowane” [European ACTA is going to be thoroughly consulted], [www.lex.pl/czytaj/-/artykul/unijne-porozumienie-acta-ma-byc-wnikliwie-skonsultowane](http://www.lex.pl/czytaj/-/artykul/unijne-porozumienie-acta-ma-byc-wnikliwie-skonsultowane) [accessed: 3.09.2012].

<sup>9</sup> G. Grabowska, “Grozi nam zniewolenie Internetu?” [Is there a threat of enslaving the Internet?], <http://prawo.rp.pl/artykul/797323.html> [accessed: 3.09.2012].

<sup>10</sup> “Referendum w sprawie porozumienia ACTA?” [A referendum on ACTA?], <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport/internauci-przeciwko-acta/news/referendum-ws-porozumienia-acta,1750103,7907> [accessed: 4.09.2012].

<sup>11</sup> “Organizacje apelują: nie podpisujcie ACTA” [NGOs appeal, do not sign ACTA], [www.wiadomosci.ngo.pl](http://www.wiadomosci.ngo.pl) [accessed: 5.09.2012].

<sup>12</sup> “Prezes Fundacji Batorego Aleksander Smolar ostrzega: Przyjęcie ACTA może prowadzić do cenzury” [The President of Batory Foundation Aleksander Smolar warns: Accepting ACTA may lead to censorship], [http://prawo.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/586953.prezes\\_fundacji\\_batorego\\_aleksander\\_smolar\\_ostrzega\\_przyjecie\\_acta\\_moze\\_prowadzic\\_do\\_cenzury.html](http://prawo.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/586953.prezes_fundacji_batorego_aleksander_smolar_ostrzega_przyjecie_acta_moze_prowadzic_do_cenzury.html) [accessed: 3.09.2012].

It is worth to also refer to the opinions of political actors on the ACTA. President Bronisław Komorowski judged that he saw a few problems concerning the ACTA which require explanation, and demanded a clear statement from the Polish Ombudsman (Pol. *Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich – RPO*) if the provisions of the agreements may threaten the civic freedoms. According to the President, it was also necessary to “investigate if (...) coming into effect of this agreement will result in changing law in Poland to any extent”<sup>13</sup>. Opposition parties spoke against the ACTA. According to the Law and Justice (Pol. *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS*) the Agreement should not be ratified as it infringes upon civic freedoms. Members of this party said that they were against “piracy but it should not be fought against using such methods as the ACTA”<sup>14</sup>. PiS requested a referendum on accepting the Document. Also the Democratic Left Alliance (Pol. *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD*) and Palikot’s Movement (Pol. *Ruch Palikota*) were against the acceptance of the Agreement. Leszek Miller, the leader of SLD, appealed to the parliamentary groups so that they do not agree to the ratification of the ACTA. According to Palikot’s Movement, accepting the Agreement would carry the “risk of loss of the autonomy of the Internet”<sup>15</sup>.

In the ACTA case, it was possible to watch the evolution of the Prime Minister Donald Tusk’s standpoint. Even before the Agreement was signed, during the protests (denying access to websites, among others), the Prime Minister said that works on the Agreement did not proceed in secret, and that consultations were held, too. He warned that there would be no concessions under threat of such actions as shutting down the government websites by hackers. He also remarked that “signing the Document by Poland does not yet mean accepting the Agreement – (...) it still has to be accepted by the Parliament and signed by the President”<sup>16</sup>. The ratification request was to be submitted to the Sejm no sooner than when there would be a certainty that the Polish law guarantees freedom on the internet. However,

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<sup>13</sup> “Komorowski: widzę parę problemów w sprawie ACTA” [Komorowski: I see a few problems about ACTA], <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Komorowski-widze-pare-problemow-w-sprawie-ACTA,wid,14221991,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1fe69> [accessed: 6.09.2012].

<sup>14</sup> “PiS: ACTA ogranicza swobody obywatelskie” [PiS: ACTA limits civic freedoms], [www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/pis-acta-ogranicza-swobody-obywatelskie,198177.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/pis-acta-ogranicza-swobody-obywatelskie,198177.html) [accessed: 7.09.2012]; “PiS chce referendum w sprawie ACTA” [PiS wants a referendum on ACTA], [www.rp.pl/artykul/799066.html](http://www.rp.pl/artykul/799066.html) [accessed: 7.09.2012].

<sup>15</sup> “SLD: Nie dla ratyfikacji ACTA” [SLD: ‘no’ to the ratification of ACTA], [www.rp.pl/artykul/799384.html](http://www.rp.pl/artykul/799384.html) [accessed: 10.09.2012]; “Ruch Palikota nie chce ACTA” [Palikot’s Movement doesn’t want ACTA], <http://polska.newsweek.pl/ruch-palikota-nie-chce-acta,87553,1,1.html> [accessed: 10.09.2012].

<sup>16</sup> “Premier: podpiszemy ACTA, nie ugniemy się pod szantażem” [Prime Minister: We’ll sign the ACTA, we won’t give in to blackmail], [www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/premier-podpiszemy-acta-nie-ugniemy-sie-pod-szantazem,198325.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/premier-podpiszemy-acta-nie-ugniemy-sie-pod-szantazem,198325.html) [accessed: 11.09.2012].

the protests against the ACTA led to the change in the government standpoint, in spite of having formally signed the Agreement. The Prime Minister Donald Tusk stated on 3 February 2012 that the consultations on the ACTA were incomplete and that he saw the need to hold broader social consultations and analyze the provisions of the Document, and thus to “suspend” the ratification process of the Agreement. Then on 6 February he said that Poland will not rescind its signature from the ACTA, nor ratify the Document, as long as there are doubts about it. 17 February 2012 he informed that he suggested to the leaders of parties from the Group of the European People’s Party that they reject the Agreement in the form negotiated by the European Commission<sup>17</sup>.

The European Parliament International Trade Committee recommended on 21 June 2012 that the whole parliament should reject the ACTA<sup>18</sup>. The recommendation of the Committee was supported by 19 of its members, 12 voted against. In July 2012 the European Parliament did not agree to the signing of the ACTA by the European Union<sup>19</sup>.

### **Research assumptions, research group**

The young people’s reactions to the acceptance of the ACTA by Poland are an interesting phenomenon, and their scope and forms incline to ask questions about the actual reasons and attitudes towards problems revealed in connection with the Agreement; to investigate how young people judge the issue of accepting the ACTA, which benefits and threats they see resulting from that document, how they perceive the government policy in that matter, what meaning they attach to pursuing an efficient information policy. It also seems important to learn the attitude of young people towards the issue of property infringement on the Internet.

The survey using the method of anonymous questionnaire interviews (the respondents completed questionnaires prepared by the authors and given to them in print) was carried out in February and March 2012 on a sample of 318 students from 4 cities: Rzeszów, Warszawa, Kraków, and Wrocław. The research sample was deliberately constructed to facilitate polling the opinion of students from different parts of Poland who study at significant higher education institutions in their cities. As a result, the participants were students of the University of Warsaw, Rzeszów University, University of Wrocław, Cracow University of

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<sup>17</sup> “Bitwa o...”.

<sup>18</sup> “Komisja handlu w PE odrzuciła umowę ACTA” [European Parliament Trade Committee rejected ACTA], [http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,Komisja-handlu-w-PE-odrzucila-umowe-ACTA,wid,14666163,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1fe69&\\_ticrsn=5](http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,Komisja-handlu-w-PE-odrzucila-umowe-ACTA,wid,14666163,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1fe69&_ticrsn=5) [accessed: 25.08.2012].

<sup>19</sup> A. Kamińska, “Parlament Europejski odrzucił ACTA” [The European Parliament rejected ACTA], [www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/639049,Parlament-Europejski-odrzucil-ACTA](http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/639049,Parlament-Europejski-odrzucil-ACTA) [accessed: 26.08.2012].

Economics, and the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów. Answers to some questions reveal fewer answers than the number of participants of the study. This results from the fact that not all respondents answered all the questions in the questionnaire. The authors realize that the size of the sample does not permit drawing conclusions about the students of all the universities in Poland. However, with reserve based on methodology, it is enough to conduct an analysis comprising the students' attitude towards the issue of accepting the ACTA by Poland and the ways of communicating about that fact.

The largest part of the respondents was students from Rzeszów (51%), then students from Wrocław (24.38%). Students from Warsaw and Cracow constituted 15% and 10% of respondents, respectively. The sample included 62% of women and 38% of men.

The participants of the survey showed political preferences and sympathies. It is worth to stress that in answer to the question to which they would give their votes if the parliamentary elections were held the following day, the largest proportion of them (32.9%) declared that they would not take part in the voting at all. Among those who would participate in the elections, the largest group supported Palikot's Movement. Party sympathies of the remaining respondents were distributed as follows: Civic Platform (Pol. *Platforma Obywatelska – PO*) – 14.4%, Law and Justice – 11.2%, Democratic Left Alliance – 5.6%, United Poland (Pol. *Solidarna Polska – SP*) – 3.95%, Polish People's Party (Pol. *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL*) – 2.7%.

### **Research results**

The research results confirm the high degree of young people's interest in the issue of accepting the ACTA by Poland. Almost 60% of respondents declared interest in the fact of acceptance the provisions of the Document by Poland (21% were keenly interested, 38.7% rather interested). At the same time, the ACTA did not pique the curiosity, in a more or less strong fashion, of one third (33.2%) of respondents (Chart 1).

In spite of the declarations of keen interest in the possibility of Poland accepting the ACTA regulations, almost half of the polled students did not take part in any form of protest against signing that Document by Poland. Among those who actively protested, the largest group (29% of respondents) signed a petition against the ACTA, 14% wrote critical texts on the Internet, and 10% participated in a demonstration against the ACTA.

Simultaneously it is worth to stress that high levels of interest in the ACTA are not reflected in a similar knowledge of the Document among the participants. Only a little more

than 3% read it in full, 53.2% declared having read its fragments, and 43.7% of polled students did not read the Agreement at all.

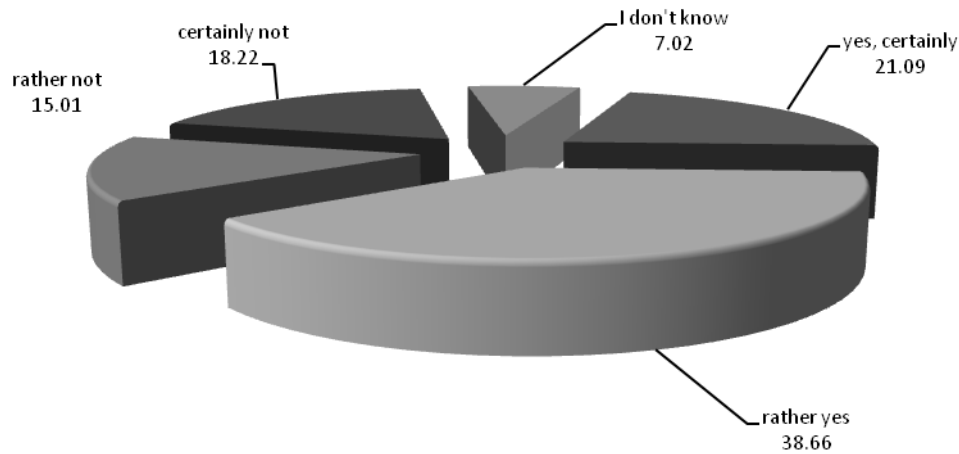


Chart 1. Are you interested in the issue of acceptance of the ACTA by Poland? (N=313)

In this situation it was important to investigate what were the sources from which the respondents acquired knowledge of the regulations provided by the ACTA. The study showed that the most popular source of information on that matter among the students was journalistic materials, published both in the traditional media and the Internet (67.2%). Another popular source of knowledge is the Internet itself, discussion forums, blogs, community portals (51.8% of respondents). It is worth to stress that, for a large group of polled students, an important source of knowledge about the ACTA were direct conversations with friends and statements of politicians (20.7%). What was written in official documents was of lesser importance; however, it is worth to notice that every seventh respondent declared to have gained their knowledge directly from there (14.5%).

Table 1. Sources of information about the ACTA (percentages)

Journalistic texts (traditional media and the Internet)	Statements of politicians	The Internet (discussion forums, blogs, community portals)	Direct conversations with friends	Official documents	Other	I'm not interested in information on this subject
67.29	20.75	51.88	27.04	14.46	0.62	3.46

Source: Data for all tables within the article was prepared by the authors based on own research.

The research confirms the negative attitude of respondents to the regulations contained within the ACTA. The survey reveals that if there was a referendum in Poland concerning the acceptance of the Document in the form signed by the government, a vast majority of the polled students would vote for its rejection (83.2%). Only 2.6% of respondents would support the acceptance of the Agreement. At the same time, 14.15% of them would not take part in a referendum.

The prevalent view in the group of opponents of the ACTA was that the Document constitutes a limitation of broadly understood freedom, including the freedom of speech. Such a position was expressed by 44.5% of respondents who would vote to reject the ACTA in a referendum. According to 12.9% of the surveyed, accepting the Document would incur the risk of limited access to opinions and information. A somewhat smaller group (10.15%) of the ACTA's opponents judged that the Agreement is a form of surveillance, monitoring, and control. The objectors offered other arguments as well for which they would oppose the acceptance of the Agreement in a referendum: implementation of the agreement would prevent them from downloading necessary files from the internet (10.15%), it contains unclear regulations (8.2%), the Document is a form of censorship (6.25%), it will block the Internet and stop its development (2.7%), there were no social consultations (2.7%).

In the small group of respondents who would vote for accepting the ACTA in a referendum, there were individual indications of the reasons for such a decision. The following arguments were used: the ACTA protects copyrights and makes it more difficult for the hackers, it is necessary to raise the importance of copyright and change the habits in using copyrighted works.

The results of the survey make the efficiency of the government information policy about the ACTA questionable. A significant majority of the respondents felt, more or less strongly, that they were not well informed by the government about the issues related to the regulations implemented by the Agreement (Chart 2). The total proportion of such answers amounted to 87.5%, whereas 12.2% of polled students saw themselves as "rather informed" about the ACTA regulations, less than 1% as "fully informed".



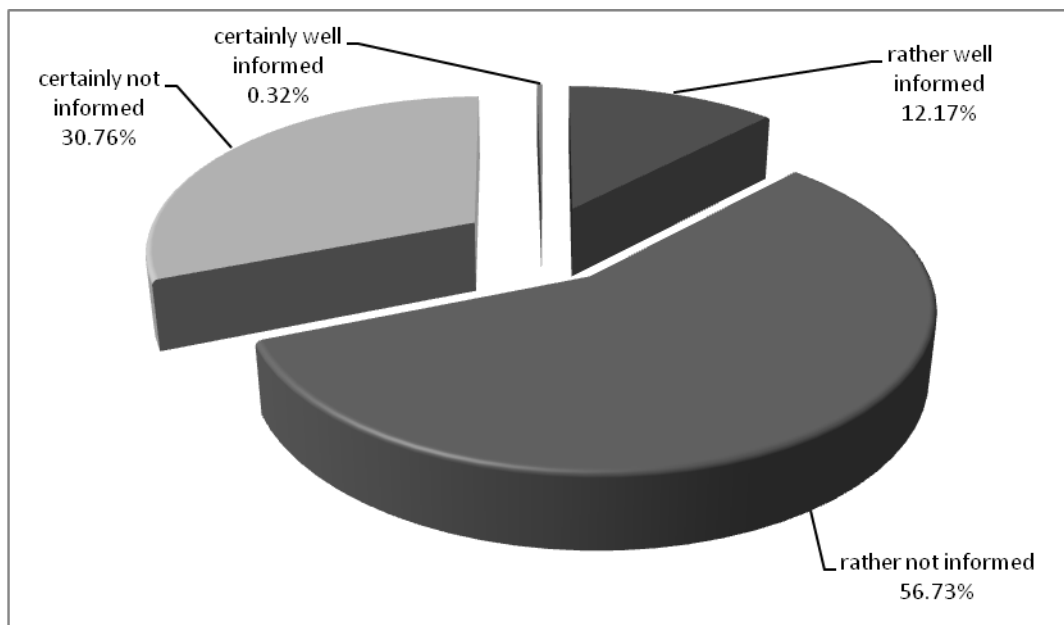


Chart 2. To what extent do you feel informed by the government about the issues related to the regulations implemented by the ACTA Agreement?

The issue of acceptance of the ACTA by Poland provoked heated discussions. The debate was joined by politicians, experts, and journalists. The survey revealed, however, that the arguments presented by individual participants of the discussion were judged as reliable to various extent (Table 2). The arguments given by the experts, both the detractors of the ACTA (67.3% of positive marks) and its advocates (41.2%), were considered the most reliable. Relatively many respondents deemed reliable the arguments presented by the journalists who were against the ACTA. It is worth to notice the low assessment of reliability of the arguments coming from politicians, both opponents and proponents of the ACTA. Only less than 13% of respondents accepted the arguments given by the politicians who were against the acceptance of the ACTA, while as few as 4% saw the theses of the politicians who supported the Agreement as the most reliable.

Table 2. Assessment of reliability of arguments concerning the ACTA (percentages)

Who, in your opinion, presents the most reliable information (arguments) about the ACTA?								
Journalists advocating the ACTA	Journalists opposing the ACTA	Politicians advocating the ACTA	Politicians opposing the ACTA	Experts advocating the ACTA	Experts opposing the ACTA	Your friends advocating the ACTA	Your friends opposing the ACTA	Others

16.35	38.36	4.08	12.89	41.19	67.29	3.46	11.63	8.17
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One of the allegations against the government in the discussion about the ACTA was the lack of prior social consultations on that matter (Michał Boni, the Minister of Administration and Digitization in Donald Tusk’s cabinet apologized for insufficient consultations)<sup>20</sup>. The results have shown that young people see such consultations as an important element of decision-making in the case of the ACTA. Almost 98% of respondents said that they should have preceded the signing of the Agreement by Poland, and more than 78% of the polled “certainly” believed that such consultations were necessary. At the same time, 55% of participants would be interested in taking part personally in social consultations that would concern accepting the ACTA by Poland. Thus almost all the polled students stressed the need of dialogue, while more than a half declared a desire of being personally involved in its various forms.

The greatest proportion of the participants (63.8%) considered debates between the representatives of the authorities, media, and audience as the best form of social consultations concerning the ACTA (Chart 3). Other preferred forms of consultations were direct meetings between the representatives of both NGOs and authorities (43%), surveys via the Internet (34%), and discussion forums on government websites (17%).

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<sup>20</sup> “Przeprasza za brak konsultacji ws. ACTA. ‘Przeprowadzimy je’” [Apologizes for the lack of consultations on the ACTA. ‘We will hold them’], [www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/przeprasza-za-brak-konsultacji-ws-acta-przeprowadzimy-je,198172.html](http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/przeprasza-za-brak-konsultacji-ws-acta-przeprowadzimy-je,198172.html) [accessed: 15.04.2012].

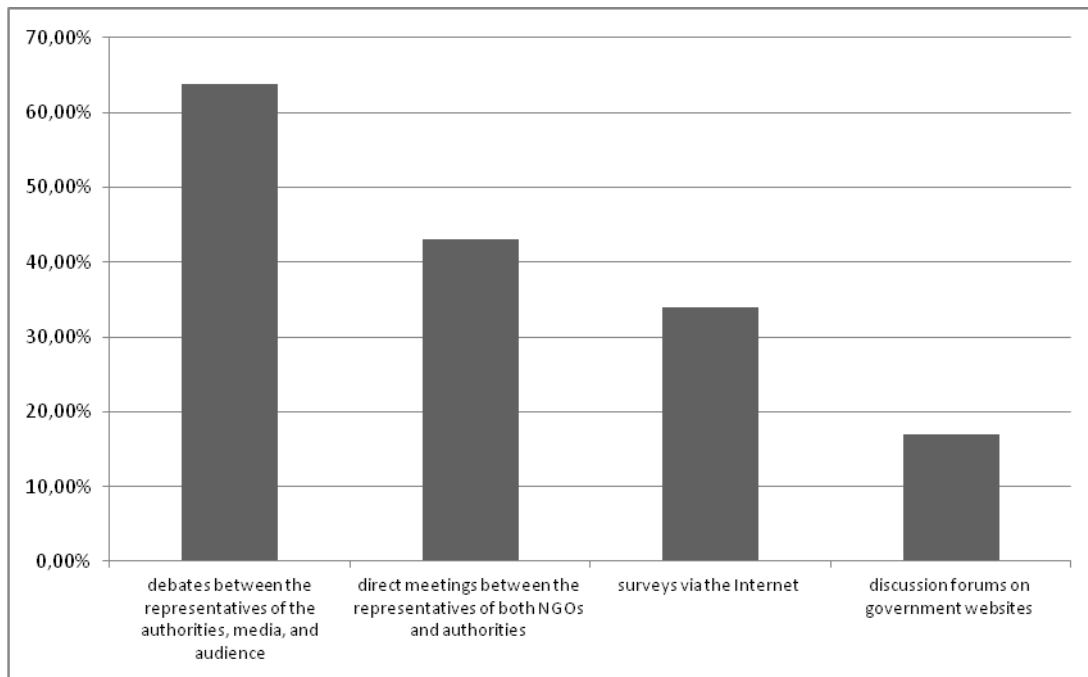


Chart 3. Preferred forms of social consultations concerning the ACTA (percentages)

In the discussion provoked by the signing of the ACTA by Poland, there was a recurring thread related to the possibility of using freely the resources of the web and respecting the ownership rights on the Internet. It also appeared in the respondents' opinions, who explained why they would vote for or against the acceptance of the ACTA in the referendum. The opponents of the Agreement argued that its provisions led to limitations in the access to information, and its implementation would make it impossible to freely use the virtual resources. Some of the advocates of the ACTA contended in turn, that the Agreement protects the copyrights and that we should strive to change our habits concerning the use of other people's works.

Thus it seems interesting to investigate how the students participating in the survey would act if they were to decide whether, in order to better enforce the intellectual property rights, personal freedom on the internet should be limited, e.g., in terms of access to goods placed there. It turns out that the greatest proportion of the participants (37.7%) see no connection between the property rights on the Internet and the availability of web goods. 30% of respondents would not limit the individual freedom on the Internet because the right to access is more important than ownership rights. Only the smallest group of the surveyed (11.9%) would limit individual freedoms on the Internet to tighten the adherence to the IP rights. According to that group of students, the ownership right is more important than the right to access.

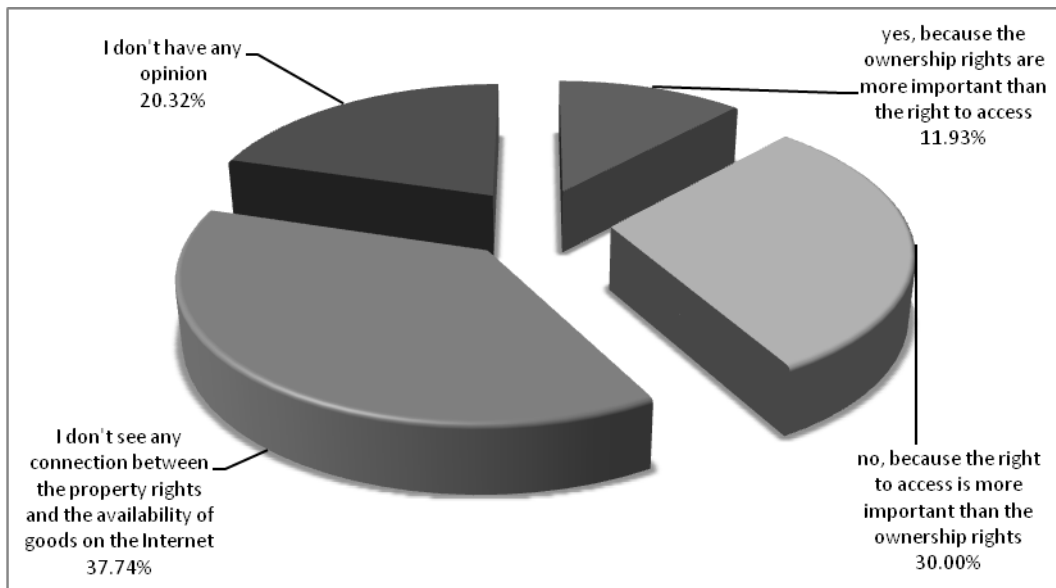


Chart 4. If it was up to your decision, would you limit the freedom of an individual on the Internet to better protect the intellectual property rights? (N=310)

### The correlation of research questions

The analysis of interrelationships between the individual questions studied as parts of the survey yields interesting results. One of them is the relation between being interested in the ACTA and the extent of being informed about it (Chart 5). The respondents' tendency to feeling uninformed while simultaneously declaring interest in the case of ACTA is clearly visible. The majority of the respondents who were keenly interested in the Agreement (66.67%) believed that they were certainly not informed about it. The respondents who were completely uninterested and those who did not have any opinion, also felt in a large part (42–43%) certainly uninformed.

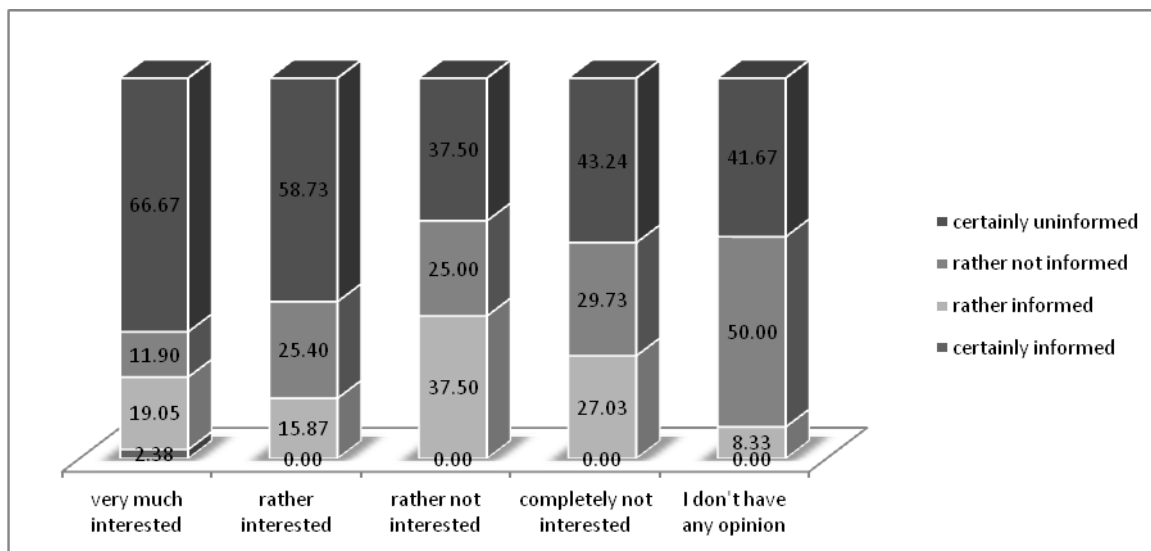


Chart 5. The level of the respondents' interest in the issue of the ACTA Document and their feeling of being informed about that matter (percentages)

The results of the comparison between the political sympathies of the respondents and their tendency to support the Agreement in the referendum show, in turn, that only those respondents who declared support for either the Civic Platform (11.9%) or Palikot's Movement (almost 3%) would vote for the acceptance of the Document (Chart 6). Yet such persons were a distinct minority among the sympathizers of these parties (71.4% of the PO partisans and 80% of followers of Palikot's Movement would vote against the ACTA in the referendum). The followers of other political groups would either vote, in most cases, against the Document, or not vote at all. The greatest reluctance to participate in the referendum was reported by the sympathizers of PSL: 25% of them would not vote. The followers of SP were the only group to unanimously stand against accepting the ACTA and they would vote so in the referendum.

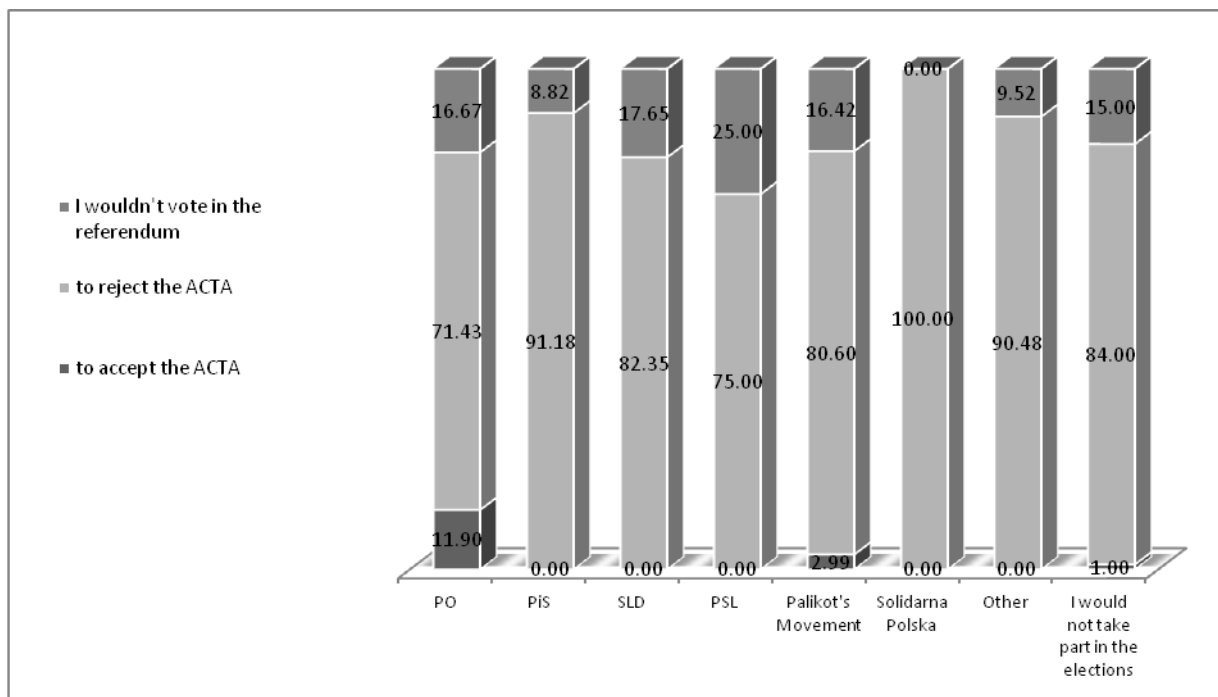


Chart 6. Political preferences of the students and their declared attitude towards the ACTA in a possible referendum (percentages)

Regardless of their political preferences, an overwhelming majority of respondents were either certainly or rather convinced that accepting the ACTA should be preceded by social consultations (Chart 7). The conviction that such consultations should be held was most strongly expressed by the PSL electorate: 100% of them certainly saw such a need. Only a small percentage of the supporters of SLD (5.88%) and Palikot's Movement (2.9%), and of those respondents who would not vote in the elections (2%) had no opinion on holding consultations concerning the ACTA.

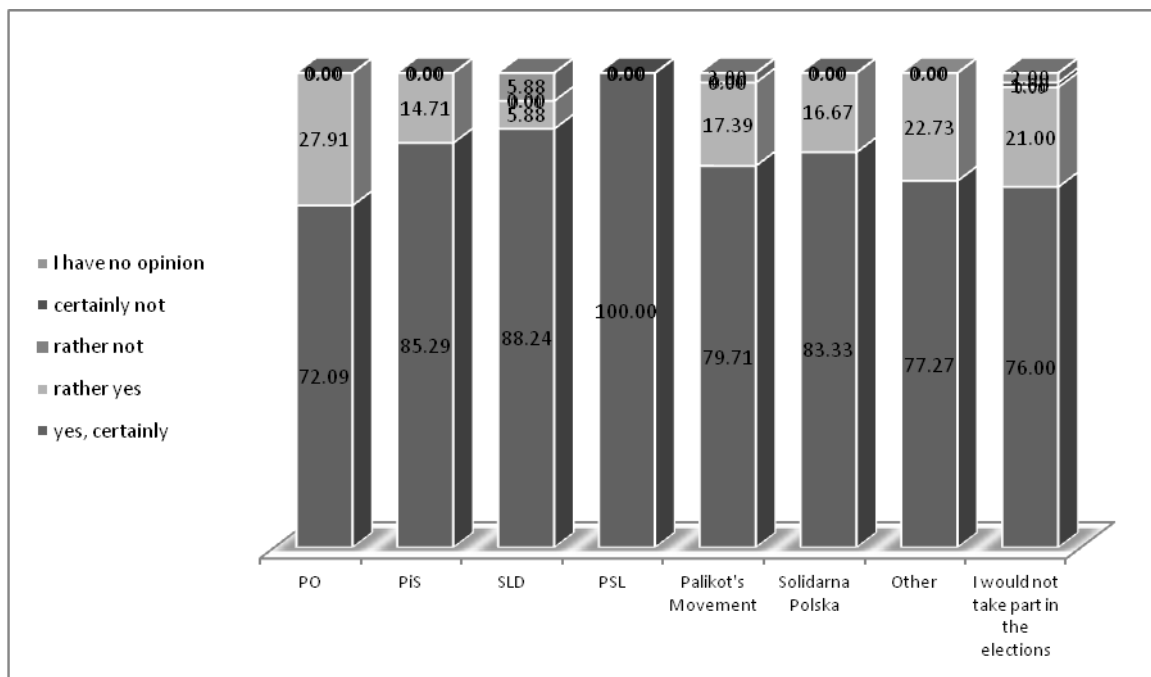


Chart 7. Political preferences vs. the opinion on the need of social consultations concerning the ACTA (percentages)

The preferred forms of public consultations clearly include direct meetings and debates between the representatives of the authorities, media, and the audience (Chart 8). The former was desired most by the followers of the United Poland (50%) and PO (31.88%), then by those of SLD and Palikot's Movement (29.63% and 27.97%, respectively). Whereas debates were most desirable for the partisans of PSL (53.33%). They are also popular among those respondents who would not participate in the elections (43.92%), as well as the sympathizers of SLD (40.74%). The Internet as the place for holding social consultations appealed most to the students who voted for PiS (25%), and least to those who support SP (11.11%).

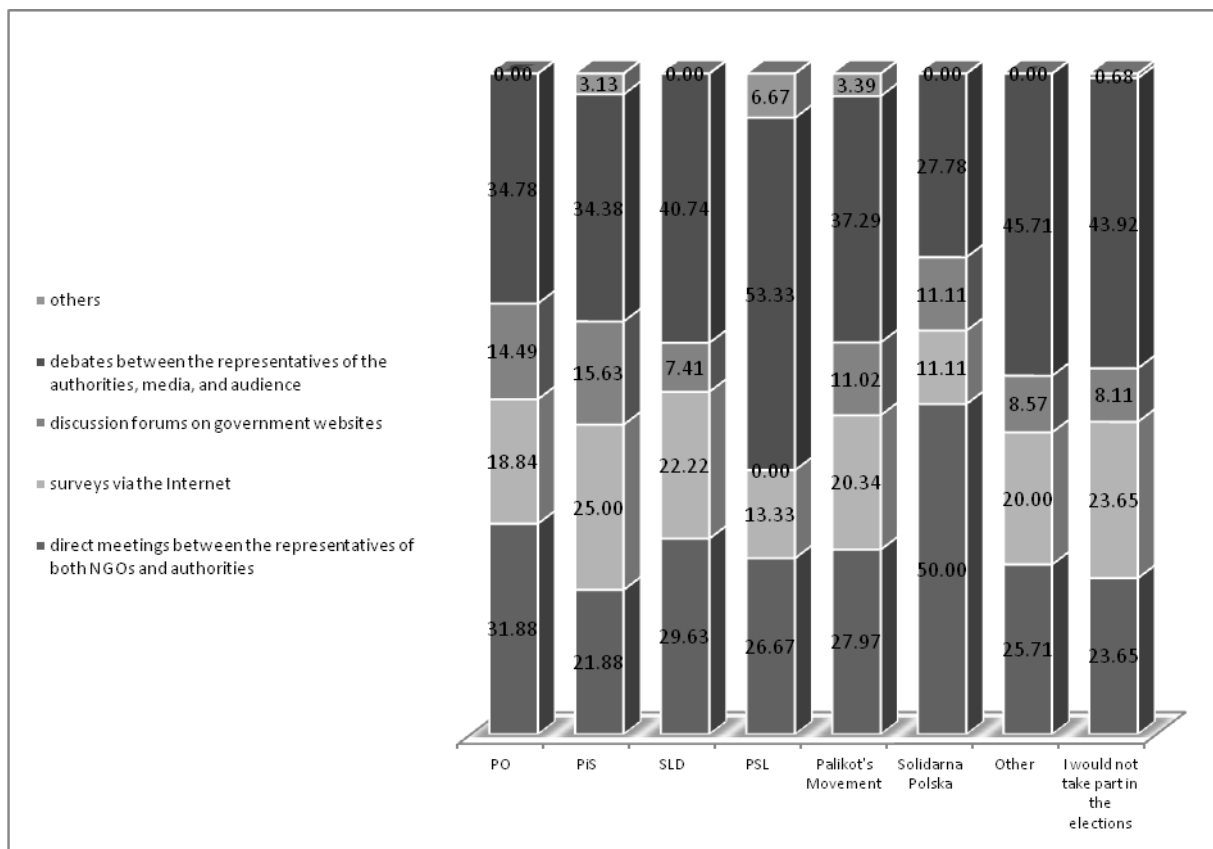


Chart 8. Political sympathies vs. the preferred form of social consultations (percentages)

The comparison of the question of abiding by the ownership rights on the Internet and access to goods on the internet with the political preferences of the participants (Chart 9). The ownership rights and its protection, even at the cost of limited access to goods, is to the largest extent cherished by the electorate of SP and PiS (25% and 20.59%, respectively), next by PO (18.18%) and Palikot's Movement (17.39%). The young voters of either SLD or PSL would make the decision to limit the access to goods on the web for the protection of ownership. The overwhelming majority of the followers of SP (41.67%) and PiS (38.24%) would do so either.

The largest proportion of respondents who did not see the connection between the ownership rights and the availability of goods on the Internet can be found among the followers of SLD (47%) and Palikot's Movement (42.03%), as well as PO (38.64%) and PSL (37.50%). It was also high among those who do not want to vote for any party. The voters who expressed more right-wing sympathies noticed the relation between the ownership rights and access to goods on the internet to a greater extent. Those same respondents admit, however, in a large proportion, that the right to access is more important than the ownership rights (41.67% and 38.24% of the followers of SP and PiS, respectively). 26.80% of those respondents who do not plan to vote in elections were of the same opinion. It is clear,



therefore, that regardless of their political sympathies, young people are not inclined to limit the right to access the goods on the Internet for the sake of ownership protection. Simultaneously, there was a strongly marked attitude of not seeing the connection between those elements, which also was not clearly correlated with political preferences.

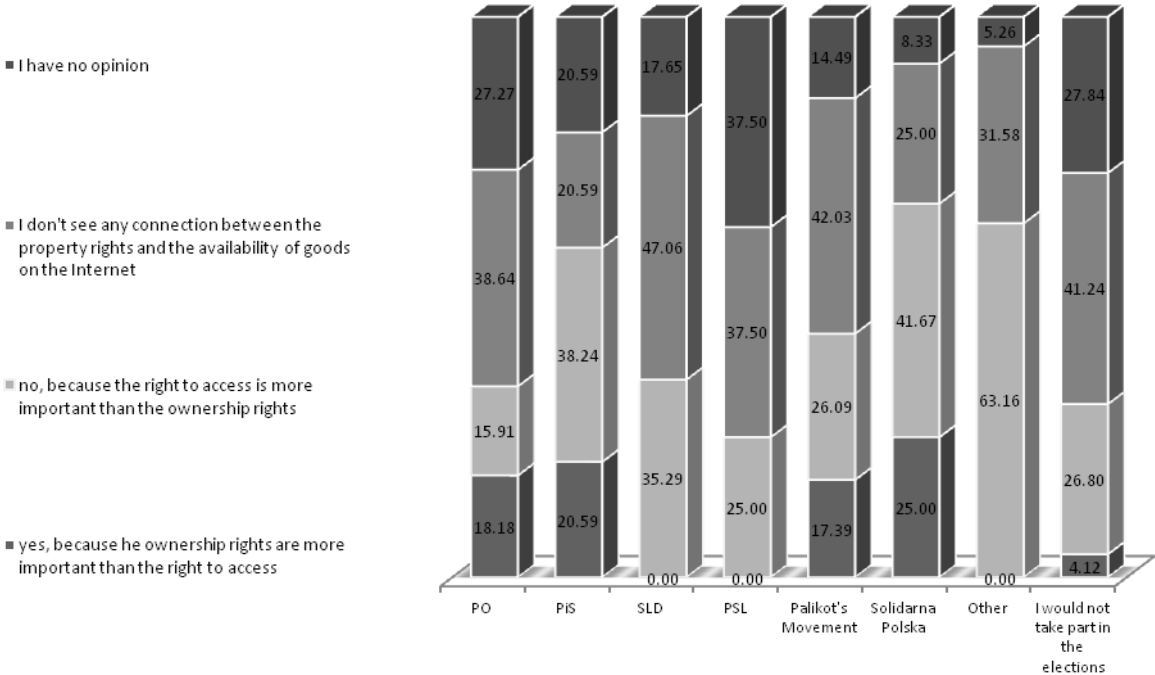


Chart 9. Political preferences vs. the opinion on the question: If it was up to your decision, would you limit the freedom of an individual on the Internet to better protect the intellectual property rights? (percentages)

Similar conclusions can be drawn by analyzing the relationships between the ownership rights on the internet, access to goods, and what was the main source of information about the ACTA for the polled students. The percentage saying that the right to access goods is more important than the ownership rights than the percentage of respondents of the opposite opinion, regardless of from where that particular respondent group acquired most of their information about the ACTA. What is particularly interesting is that again, regardless of the source of information on the ACTA, one third of the surveyed students see no connection between the right to access goods on the internet and the question of the intellectual property rights.

As it was already mentioned, the protests against the signing of the ACTA were numerous and took various forms, from collecting signatures under demands that the

government should withdraw from any further action, do posting negative comments on the Internet, to street manifestations. It is interesting how the participants of particular forms of protest felt the extent of being informed concerning the ACTA (Chart 10). The shortage of information was most strongly accentuated by those who wrote critical commentaries on the Internet (51.16% of these respondents felt that they were certainly uninformed). The lack of information was also declared by those of the surveyed who took part in the street manifestations and signed the petitions against the ACTA (about 36% were certainly uninformed). It should be noted, however, that regardless of the organized forms of protest, a majority of respondents believed they were uninformed, from almost 85% (protesters in the streets) to almost 89% (non-participants of protests).

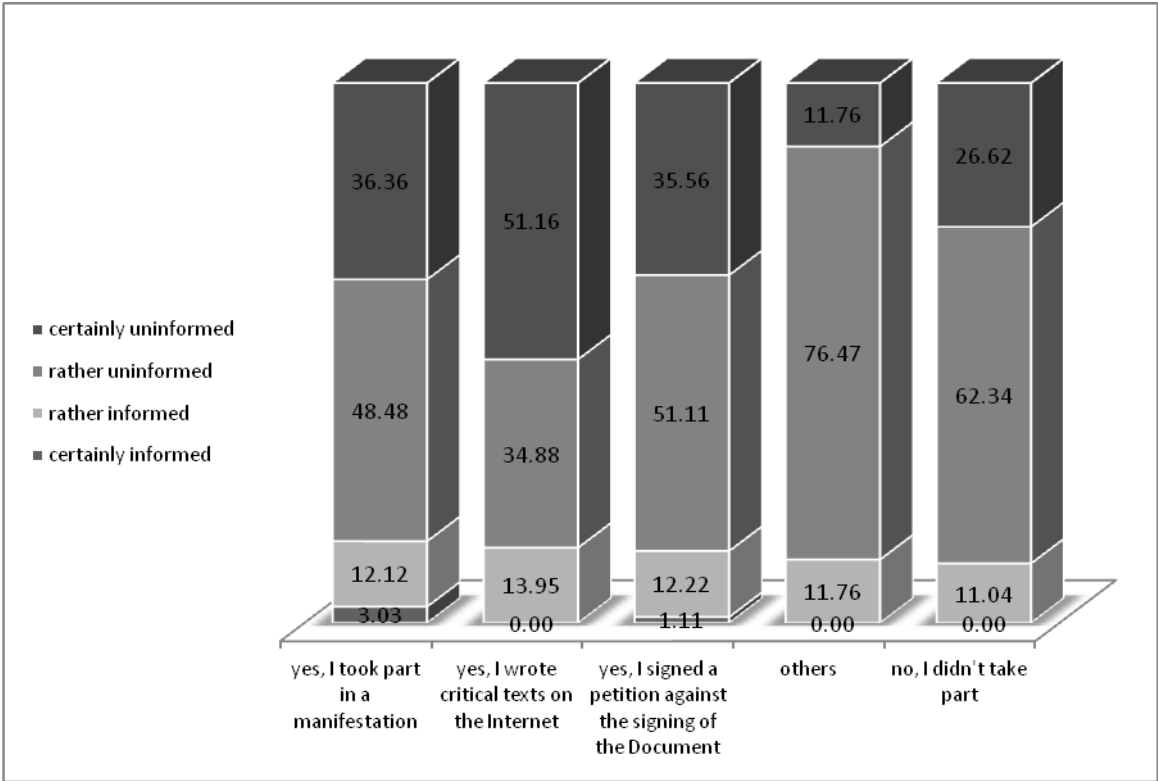


Chart 10. Attitude towards the protest vs. the feeling of being informed (percentages)

Data analysis according to the criterion of gender reveals that men declared greater knowledge of the ACTA Document. They comprised some 70% of the group who had read it. Among those students who read parts of the Agreement, however, almost 60% were women. The latter also made up 65.22% of the group who did not read the Document.

The individual forms of holding consultations were regarded similarly by both sexes. Even though women more often indicated the surveys via the government websites and a slightly greater number of men were in favour of direct meetings, yet the differences were very small and it is not possible to discuss any tendency based on statistical correlations here.

Women more often indicated their friends as reliable sources of information about the ACTA: as many as 72% of all indications of this group came from women (Chart 11). Next, women more often than men listed experts, both those in favour and against the Document. On the other hand, politicians and journalists (especially those who supported the ACTA) were more reliable for men than other sources of information.

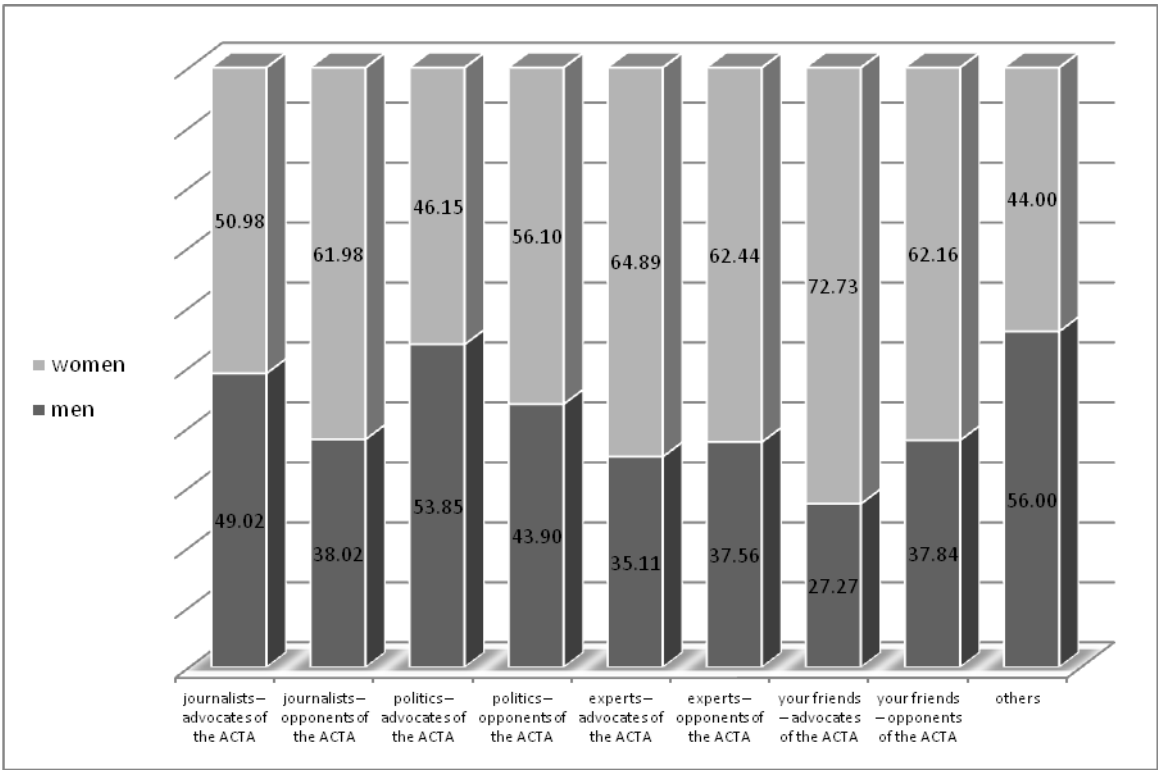


Chart 11. Who, in your opinion, presents the most reliable information (arguments) about the ACTA? Answers according to the gender of respondents (percentages)

The more radical forms of protest against the signing of the ACTA attracted a greater participation of men (Chart 12). The gentler was the form of the protest, the more the participation of women in it grew. Among the respondents who took part in street manifestations, 63.64% were men and 36.36% were women. This proportion becomes more equal in the group who declared that they posted critical texts on the Internet (47.73% of this

group were women). The group who signed a petition against the ACTA already comprised more than 67% of women.

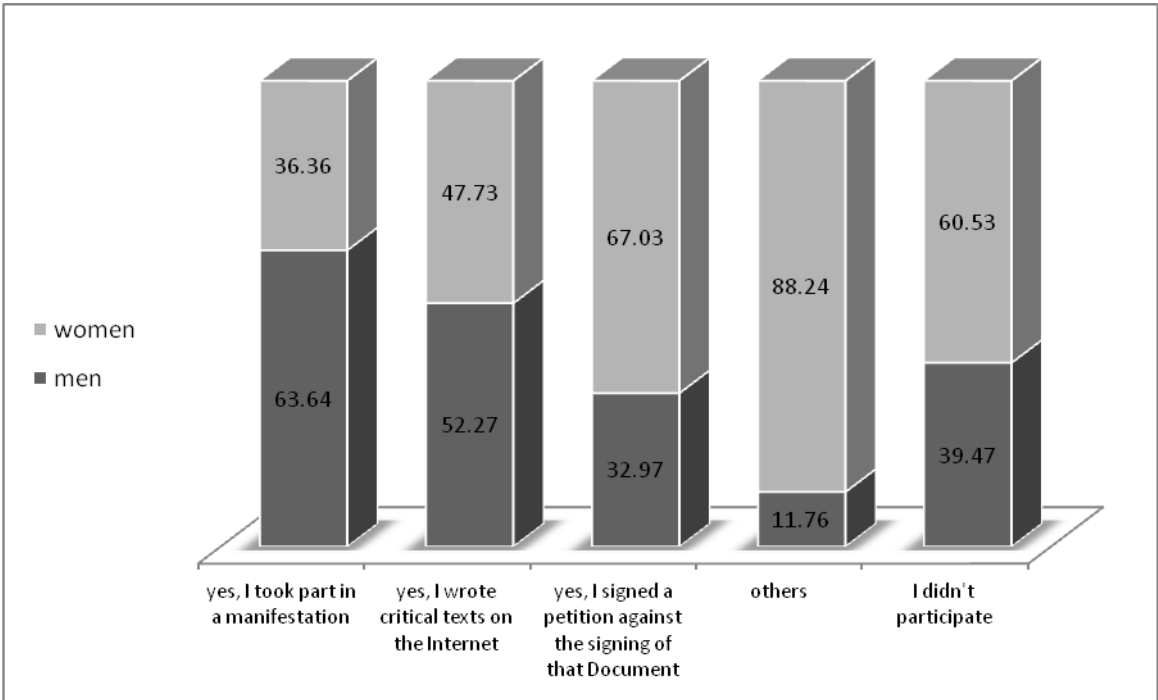


Chart 12. Did you take part in any form of protest against the signing of the ACTA Agreement by Poland? (percentages)

**Conclusion**

The results of the conducted research give grounds for a presentation of several conclusions. First, they reveal how important the Internet is as an element of the reality for young people, since they treat it as the space of their freedom. This may explain the mass protest against the ACTA, perceived by a large proportion of students as a document which limits the freedom and liberty to use the resources of the Internet, as well as a threat of surveillance and a tool of control.

The great importance that young people attach to the Internet is also visible in other results of the research carried out. One of them is the expectation, expressed by almost all the participants, that social consultations concerning the ACTA should be held and the willingness to take part in them personally, declared by the majority of the respondents. It can be interpreted as the readiness to engage in personal activity and the activities of a large group of young people for a cause which they see as immediately relevant. The active protests, therefore, which the announcement of signing of the ACTA by Poland provoked, as well as the attitudes towards participation in a social discussion, reported by the polled students,

reveal a large potential for activity and involvement in causes which are important for young people, and which take place in the public space.

One may only wish that the results of research related to the ACTA should be thoroughly analyzed by politicians. On the one hand, the example of the ACTA case attests how significant it is for the authorities to conduct informational activities; on the other hand, that an efficient way of preparing these activities and suggesting the right forms is also important. A situation where almost 90% of surveyed students did not feel informed enough by the government about the regulations the ACTA Agreement was about to introduce proves that either there was no communication strategy concerning that matter, or it was inefficiently conducted. The question would not be disturbing if it did not refer to the issues which are interesting to the given group. However, the same students declared that in most part they were interested in the matter of the Document. More than half of them read its fragments, and a certain group of them read it all. Thus the government could expect a matter-of-fact dialog on this subject, all it had to do was to open it skilfully. Moreover, the research confirmed a relatively low trust level in the politicians. Respondents declared that they believed only to a small extent in the arguments about the ACTA presented by the politicians, both the advocates and opponents of the Document. Part of this phenomenon can certainly be associated with the insufficient (or ineptly conducted) dialog the polled students pointed out.

What is also interesting are the research results which show how students approached the question of property of goods published on the Internet and their attitude to the common availability of such materials. It turns out that the greatest proportion of participants do not see the connection between these two issues, and almost one in three is of the opinion that the right to access goods on the Internet is more important than ownership rights. A conclusion comes to mind here that the web and the materials available there are perceived by a significant part of the student group as a world where there are other rules in force than in the real world. The ownership rights are not obvious in that world, and their protection should give way to the freedom of users' access to virtual resources. It is worth to mention that in the next several to a dozen or so years, it is this generation that is going to decide on the form of social life, laws, freedoms, and limitations.

The observations presented in the article pertain only to a fragment of the studied reality and point out certain phenomena. They can also become a contribution to further research and analyses devoted to the questions of communicating on important subjects and of

the freedom of using goods and abiding by the intellectual property rights on the Internet, which inevitably becomes a less and less virtual world.