

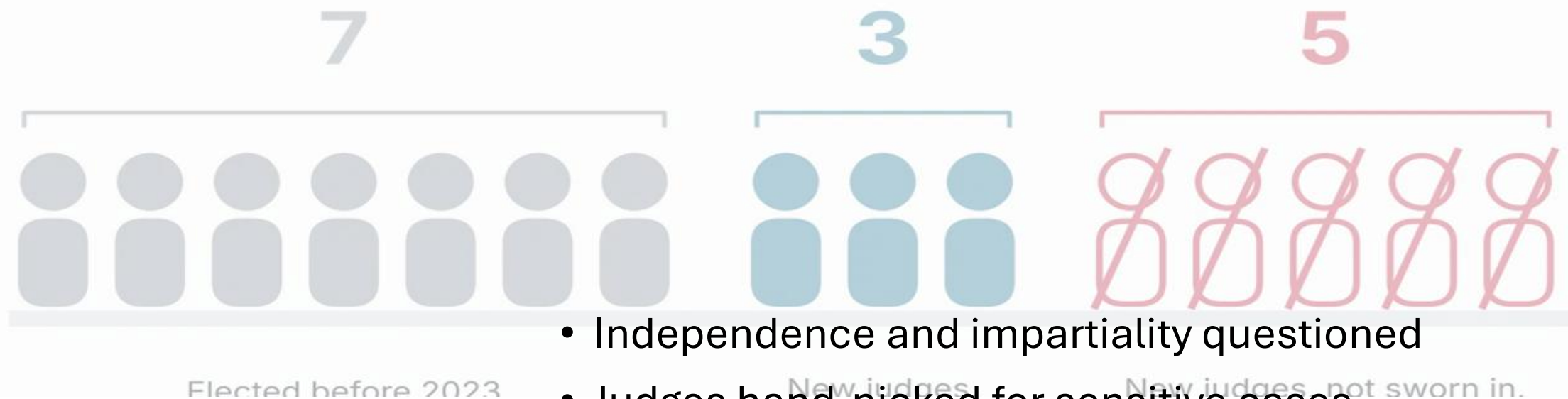
Current Human Rights Issues in Poland

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Poland in 2026

- A new government (since late 2023) promised to restore the rule of law
- Ruling coalition lost presidential elections in 2025
 - The president can veto laws;
 - Parliament needs a 3/5 majority to override, and the coalition does not have it
- Result:
 - Institutional deadlock
 - reforms stall,
 - institutions are disputed,
 - people's rights are caught in the middle





Constitutional Tribunal

- Independence and impartiality questioned
- Judges hand-picked for sensitive cases
- 8 new judges since 2026
 - President has not sworn in 5 of them
 - The court's president does not let them rule
- ECHR ordered Poland to stop obstructing them (*Dziurda and Others v. Poland, interim measure*)
- The government does not publish the court's rulings in the Journal of Laws, so they do not take effect



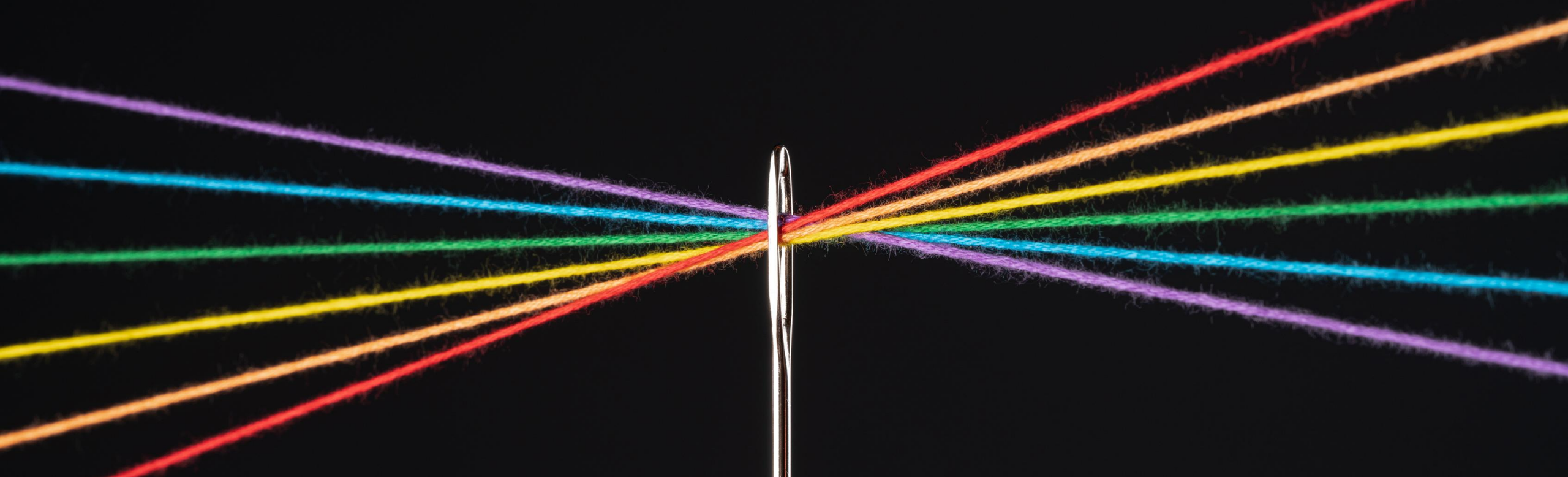
Status of common courts judges

- The problem
 - Since 2018, parliament has chosen the judges who sit on the National Council of the Judiciary (NCJ), the body that selects judges;
 - The ECtHR (*Wałęsa v. Poland*) and the CJEU (C-585/18 *A.K. and Others*) found that judges appointed through this body may not form an independent court established by law
 - Around 30% of judges were appointed this way; their verdicts can be challenged
- 2026
 - February: the president vetoed the reform
 - May: workaround, 13 of 15 new members were first chosen by judges and then confirmed by parliament; 2 were nominated by opposition parties
 - The legal mechanism itself has not changed
- Everyday effect:
 - Cases take longer; the courts are overloaded
 - Low public trust in courts; the political fight makes it worse

Polarisation and its consequences

- Poles disagree on issues less than they think, but dislike each other more than ever
- Poles see polarisation as the biggest threat to the country's stability (46%, CBOS 2026)
- Consequences:
 - Institutions become political trophies
 - Compromise looks like betrayal
 - Hate speech and disinformation spread easily
 - Human rights get labelled as one side's agenda





LGBT+ equality: one step forward, blocked again

- Poland still has no legal recognition of same-sex couples
- 2026: a “closest person” contract law passed both chambers but was vetoed
- ECtHR (*Przybylska and Others v. Poland*, 2023):
 - Poland violates the Convention by offering no legal framework for same-sex couples; the judgment remains unimplemented
- CJEU (C-713/23, 2025):
 - Poland must recognise same-sex marriages concluded in another EU country.

Migration: security vs. the right to asylum

- “Instrumentalisation” of migration by Russia and Belarus since 2021
- Since March 2025 Poland has suspended asylum applications at the Belarus border, renewed every 60 days
- Anti-migrant rhetoric across the political spectrum
- Can an absolute right be suspended “temporarily” for years?

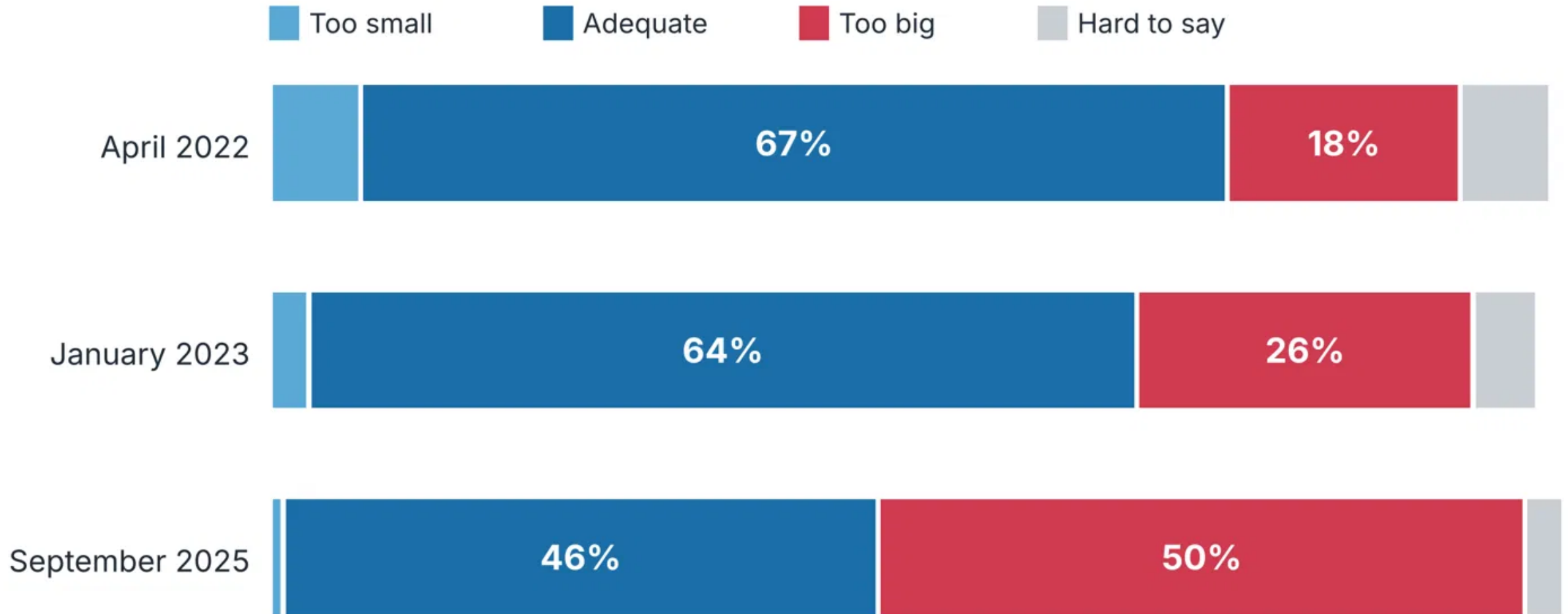




Anti-Ukrainian sentiment:

- 2022: unprecedented welcome for refugees
- 2026: for the first time, less than half of Poles supports accepting Ukrainian refugees
- Main drivers
 - Disputes over history (Volhynia)
 - Social benefits
 - Russian disinformation
- Effects
 - Cuts in support for vulnerable people
 - Hate speech
 - Scapegoating
 - Physical attacks

Is Poland doing too much for Ukrainian refugees?



Source: CBOS

Thank you!

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