

**The Problem of Child Abuse:**  
**Attitudes and Experiences**  
**in Seven Countries of Central and Eastern Europe**

*Comparative report 2005-2009*

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## 1. Introduction

The democratization of public life, which is an integral part of the processes of systemic transformation in East European countries, has led to a recognition of many social problems which were previously unnoticed, hidden, or underestimated.

One such problem is broadly understood child abuse. The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period when the problem became a major focus of attention for the media, NGOs, and authorities in all the countries of Eastern Europe. However, the intensity of this attention and its effects – the range of available help services, the scale of educational activities, etc. – differ from country to country. In order to explain this variety we would have to analyze a range of factors, from cultural conditions to the stage of the democratization process. Such an analysis should include catalysts such as the presence and reach of projects supporting the development of the civil society and offering both access to West European and American experience in assessing and solving social problems and financial support for such undertakings.

This report presents selected findings from a comparative research programme carried out in seven East European countries in 2009 and compare it with results from an analogous research from 2005 within the *Childhood without Abuse - Toward a Better Child Protection System in Eastern Europe* project. The project, coordinated by the Nobody's Children Foundation and financed by the OAK Foundation, was carried out in 2005 – 2009. Further information about the programme are available at [www.fdn.pl](http://www.fdn.pl) and [www.canee.net](http://www.canee.net).

## 2. Methodology

The studies were conducted in 2009 in seven East European countries: Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, and Ukraine.

Their main objective was to assess public attitudes, especially those held by professionals working with children, toward the problem of child abuse, as well as professionals' experience in undertaking interventions in such cases and their evaluation of the effectiveness of the child protection system in their countries.

The studies sought answers to the following research questions:

- How do the respondents estimate the scale of a wide range of abusive behaviours towards children in the countries participating in the project?
- How do they evaluate the dynamics of various aspects of child abuse?
- What is the level of social acceptance of controlling parents' behaviours toward their children?

- What are the respondents' self-reported attitudes toward parental use of corporal punishment of children?
- How do they evaluate various professional groups' sensitivity and competence in the area of child protection?

Answers to the research questions were sought in two groups of respondents:

**I.** In each of the seven countries a nationwide, representative sample of adult citizens provided answers to two questions: (1) a question concerning their attitudes toward parental use of corporal punishment of children, and (2) a question concerning their perceptions of the scale of such behaviours among parents. The respondents provided answers to these two questions within Omnibus studies conducted in the participating countries by various research agencies. Table 1 presents the sample size, the selection criteria, and the research technique applied in each of the countries. Unfortunately, the fact that the studies had to be commissioned to local research companies and the resulting differences in the methodology applied by these agencies, made it impossible to fully unify the sample characteristics and the ways of data collection.

**Table 1. Characteristics of nationwide studies.**

Country	Population	Sampling method	Sample size	Research methodology
Poland	Polish citizens over 15	Representative, random sample	1000	CAPI (computer assisted personal interview) in respondents' homes
Latvia	Latvian citizens, ages 18–74	Representative, random sample	1010	Face-to-face questionnaire-based interviews in respondents' homes
Lithuania	Lithuanian citizens, ages 15–74	Representative, random sample	500	CAPI (computer assisted personal interview) in respondents' homes
Bulgaria	Bulgarian citizens, over 15	Representative, random sample	1000	Face-to-face questionnaire-based interviews in respondents' homes
Macedonia	Macedonian citizens over 18	Representative, random sample	662	CATI (computer assisted telephone interview)
Moldova	Moldovan citizens, over 18	Representative, random sample		Face-to-face questionnaire-based interviews in respondents' homes
Ukraine	Ukrainian citizens over 25 having children	Representative, random sample	1501	Face-to-face questionnaire-based interviews in respondents' homes

**II.** The other group of studies concerned the full range of the research questions. In each of the participating countries the respondents were teachers working at capital-city primary schools. In each capital city ten schools were selected from different districts, using the layered random sampling method. The respondents were teachers working at each of the selected schools. They filled self-administered questionnaires individually and then returned the set of completed questionnaires from their school to the programme coordinator. Developed by Monika Sajkowska, the questionnaire consisted of 87 items which had been previously used in Polish research

programmes concerning child abuse (Sajkowska, Siemaszko, 1998; Fluderska, Sajkowska, 2001).

Here are the sample sizes in the countries participating in the project: Poland – 189, Lithuania – 123, Latvia – 214, Bulgaria – 202, Ukraine – 213, Macedonia – 208, and Moldova – 206: total 1355 respondents.

In each of the countries a vast majority of the respondents (90%, on average) were women.

The teachers participating in the study represented various age groups. As shown in Table 2, the categories of young, middle-aged, and elderly respondents were comparable in terms of size, and their proportions were similar in all the countries included in the study.

**Table 2. Respondents by age (%).**

Country	25-35	36-45	46-55	>55	No data
Poland	44	32	17	4	3
Ukraine	25	35	27	12	1
Macedonia	30	31	26	12	1
Lithuania	22	34	31	12	2
Moldova	42	21	25	12	1
Bulgaria	4	32	47	18	0,0
Latvia	38	27	24	11	0,0
Total	30	30	28	12	0,8

### 3. Corporal punishment

#### 3.1. How many children, in the respondents' opinions, experience corporal punishment? Is the scale of the problem changing?

This section of the report focuses on the analysis of research findings pertaining to the use of corporal punishment of children. This aspect of the child abuse problem continues to stir up controversies, and a significant proportion of the studied societies accept parental use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. The legislation concerning corporal punishment of children varies from country to country. So far fourteen European countries have imposed a statutory ban on using this form of punishment. Among them there are countries participating in the *Childhood without Abuse* project; in 1998 the group of countries, in which beating children is legally banned, was joined by Latvia, in 2000 – by Bulgaria, and in 2004 – by Ukraine.

**Subjective ratings of the prevalence of corporal punishment of children** in a country is a major component of attitudes toward this phenomenon.

Questions addressed to teachers concerned two forms of corporal punishment: spanking and severe beating, which may result in injuries. The respondents provided their opinions on the prevalence of such disciplinary measures in the country in general and in the families of children

attending their schools. Consequently, the analysis of teachers' responses to this set of questions provided information on the diversity in the respondents' opinions in four perspectives: spanking vs. severe beating, students attending the respondent's school vs. the general child population, differences among the seven countries and differences between results in 2005 and in 2009.

As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the respondents' ratings of the prevalence of spanking in the general national population of children differ significantly from their ratings concerning students attending the schools they work at. Many respondents believe that getting a spank is a common experience of children in their country. In a majority of countries these ratings exceeded 50% in 2005. Research results from 2009 show that during the period of 4 years, teachers' opinions of prevalence of corporal punishment changed significantly. According to respondents' self-reported attitudes the per cent of spanked children is lower in each country. The biggest difference is in Macedonia: from 82% till 30%.

The respondents' opinions on the prevalence of corporal punishment were significantly different when the question concerned students attending the schools they worked at. The participants' personal experience, their knowledge (rather than popular notions) made them estimate the percentage of children punished by parents with spanking significantly lower than for the general population. In each country these opinions differ within 4 years – in teachers' opinion the average per cent of children experiencing corporal punishment diminished by several per cent (in Macedonia by 24%!).

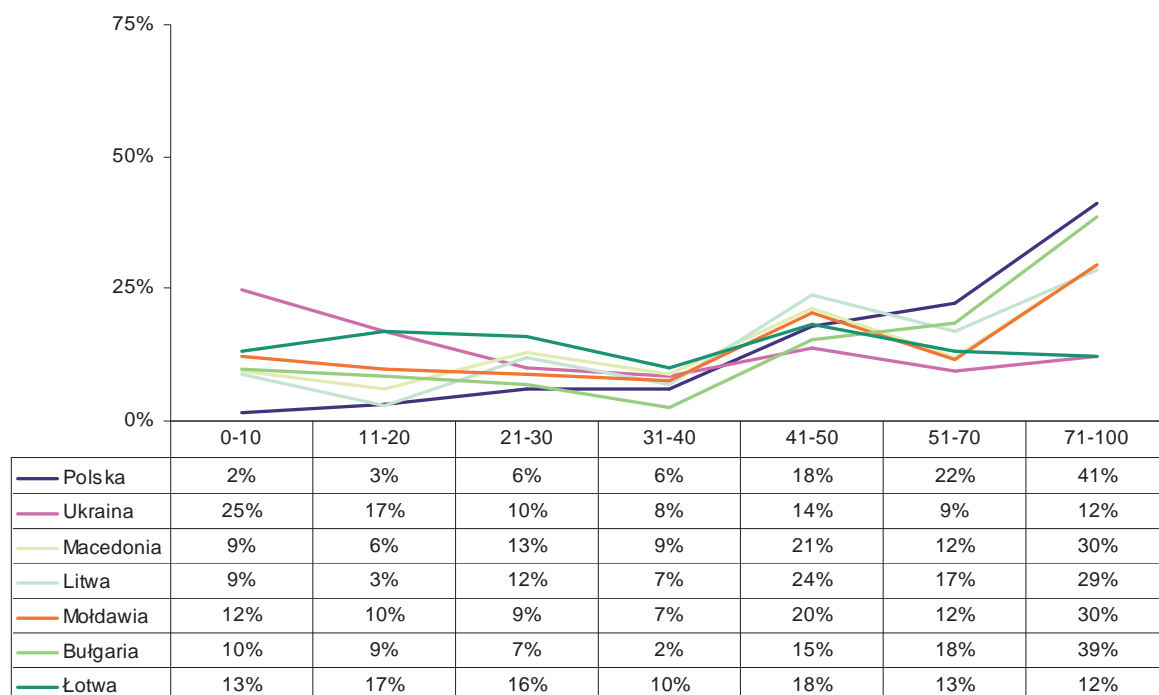
**Table 3. Ratings of the prevalence of corporal punishment on a national scale and at schools where the respondents teach.**

*If all the children in our country/your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience...? (mean ratings, %)*

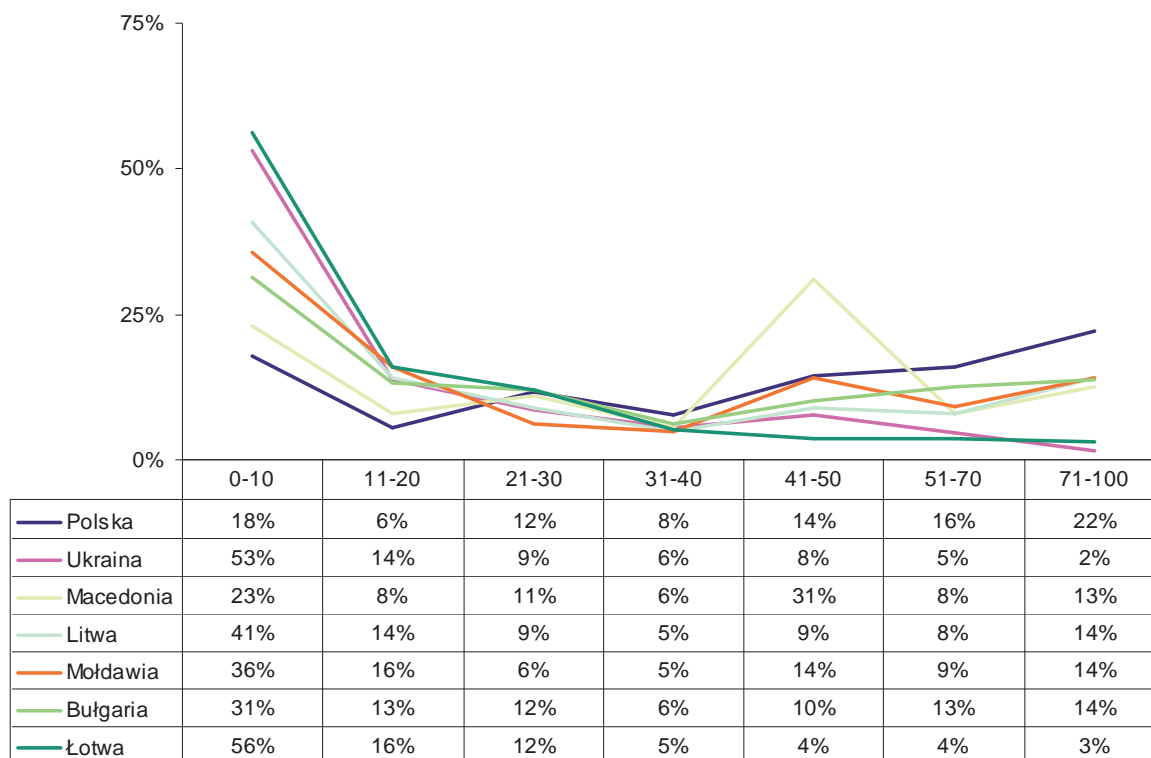
Country	Spanking by parents				Severe corporal punishment			
	Country population		School population		Country population		School population	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Poland	72	61	55	40	26	21	12	9
Lithuania	62	42	35	24	23	13	6	5
Latvia	53	31	29	13	26	14	10	5
Bulgaria	58	44	43	26	12	13	7	6
Ukraine	44	29	24	15	22	13	10	7
Macedonia	82	30	43	19	20	12	13	5
Moldova	56	38	41	25	27	18	16	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>

The mean ratings were significantly lower when the respondents evaluated the experiences

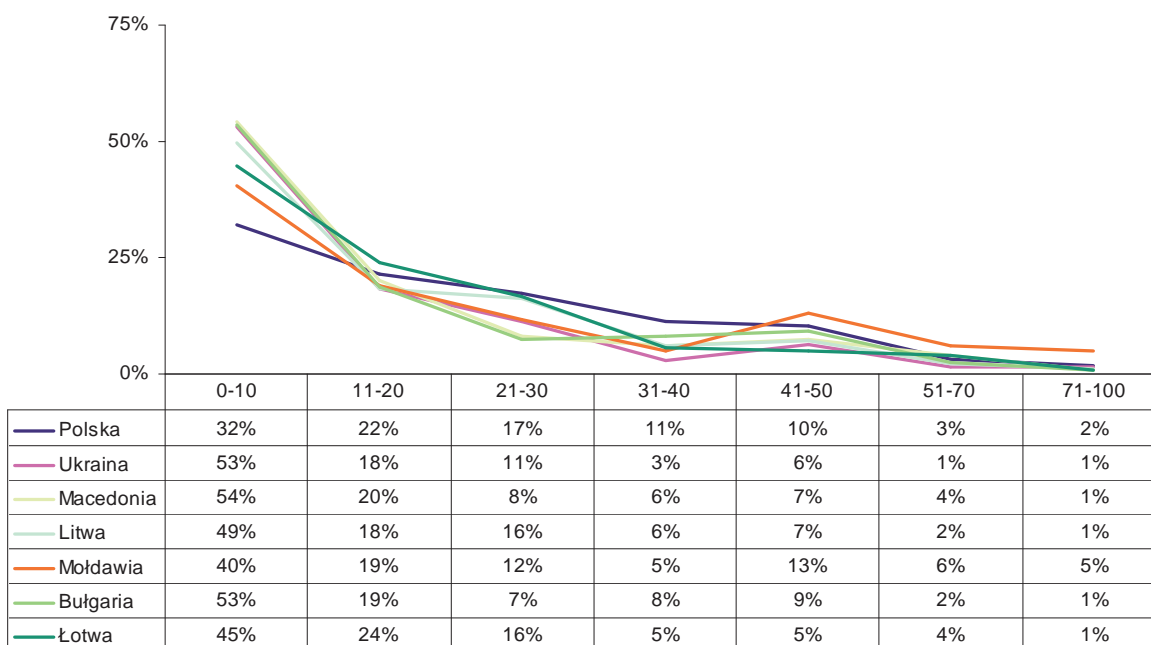
of children they knew personally, with the decrease being smaller for spanking; according to the participants, spanking was experienced by 39% (2005 - 63%) of all the children in the researched countries and by 23% (2005 - 40%) of the students attending their schools (on average). The rating of the prevalence of severe corporal punishment in national populations of children is twice as high as for the respondents' schools (mean values of 15% and 7%, respectively). We should bear in mind that the participants' students live in capital cities and the socio-economic status of their families is likely to be above the average country level, just as their parents' access to psychological support. In this case the tendency to idealize one's own situation and the situation of one's closest environment – well documented by sociological studies – seems to be based on rational premises.



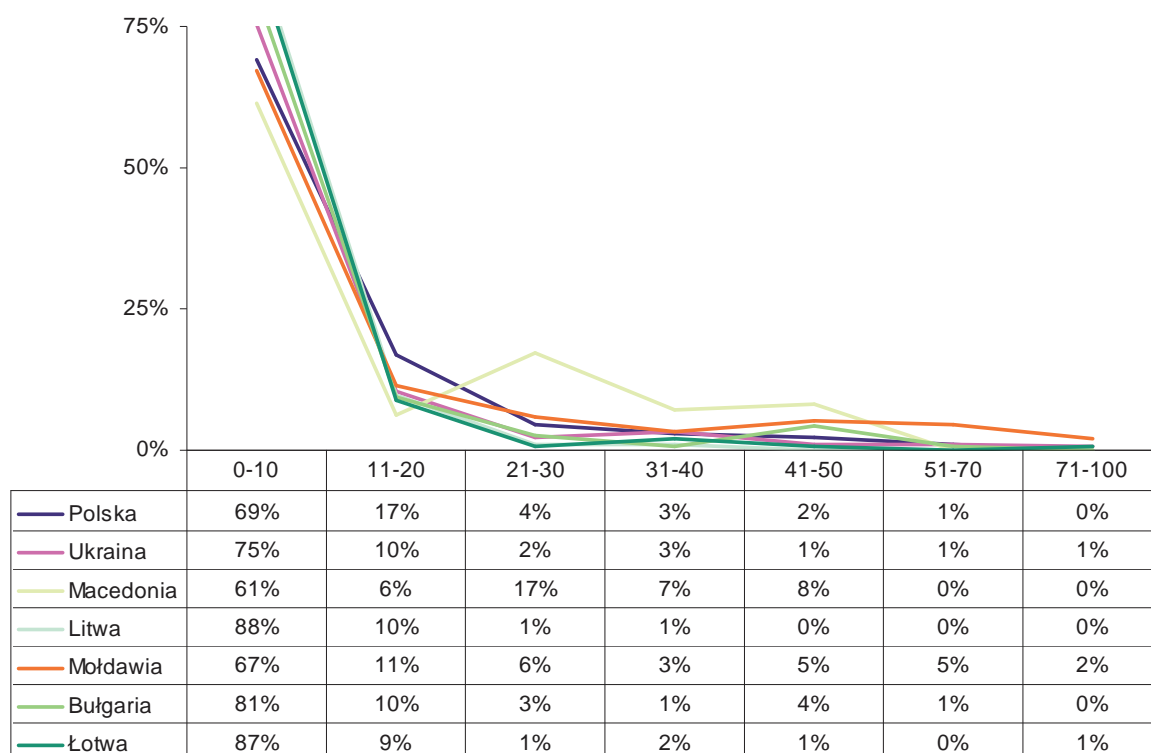
**Figure 2.** *If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience spanking by parents as a form of punishment?*



**Figure 3.** If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience *spanking by parents as a form o punishment*?



**Figure 4.** If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience *severe corporal punishment (e.g., resulting in bruises or injuries)*?



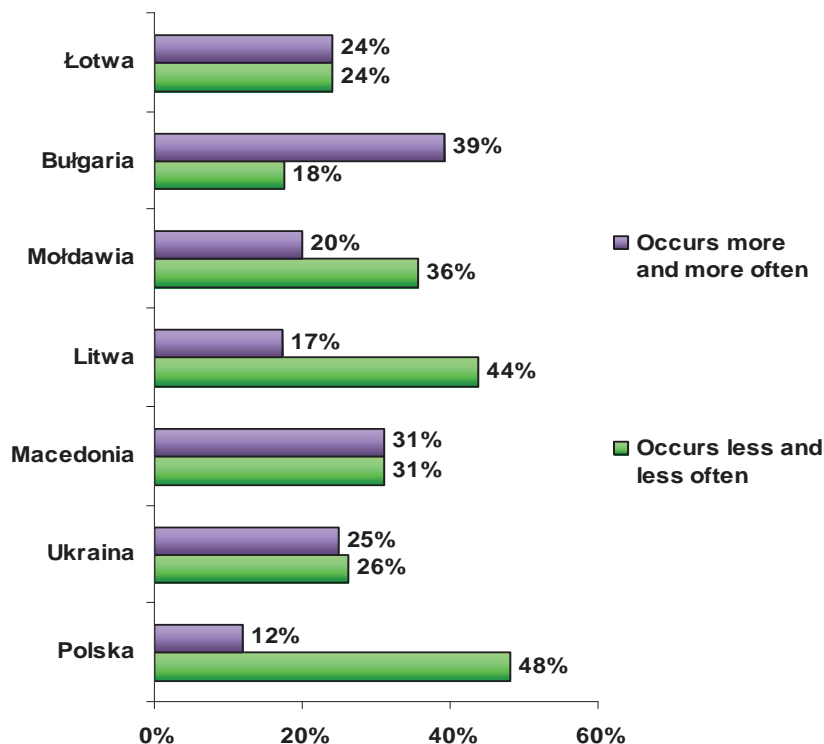
**Figure 5.** *If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience **severe corporal punishment** (e.g., **resulting in bruises or injuries**)?*

Interesting findings were obtained through asking the participants about the **dynamics of the use of corporal punishment** against children in their countries. Has the prevalence of this disciplinary method changed over the past ten years? If yes, what is the direction of this change – has the frequency of beating children by their parents grown or decreased? The opinions of those of the respondents, who had a clear view on this issue (many participants – from 15% to 30% – chose the “hard to say” option), were polarized. Most participants believed that the prevalence of the use of corporal punishment of children had been changing, but they differed dramatically in their perceptions of the direction of the changes. Opinions that the prevalence had decreased and views that it had actually grown were distributed nearly symmetrically.

Therefore, the findings certainly cannot be perceived as a reliable basis for drawing conclusions about the actual dynamics of the problem. When seeking an explanation for such a great diversity of views on the issue, one may presume that the respondents do not know the real situation but rather try to infer the answer from popular opinions about the surrounding world. If the respondents relate to popular views about the effects of the systemic transformation – occurring in all the countries included in the study – such as stress-generating impoverishment of families, or to extensive media coverage of cases of violence against children, they are likely to respond that the prevalence of corporal punishment is growing. If, however, they rely on their knowledge about



educational activities targeted at parents, the growing range of services available to families, and the legislative or political changes aimed at better child protection, they will probably answer: „The problem is decreasing”.



**Figure 6.** *Do you think that over the past 10 years parents' behaviours toward children have changed, as far as the use of corporal punishment is concerned?*

The most significant changes occurred since 4 years in opinion of respondents from Poland. A group reporting the increase of the problem decreased by 12%, whereas one reporting decrease of the problem increased by 16%. In contrary in Bulgaria is 15% less optimists and 18% more pessimists. It is difficult to interpret that change.

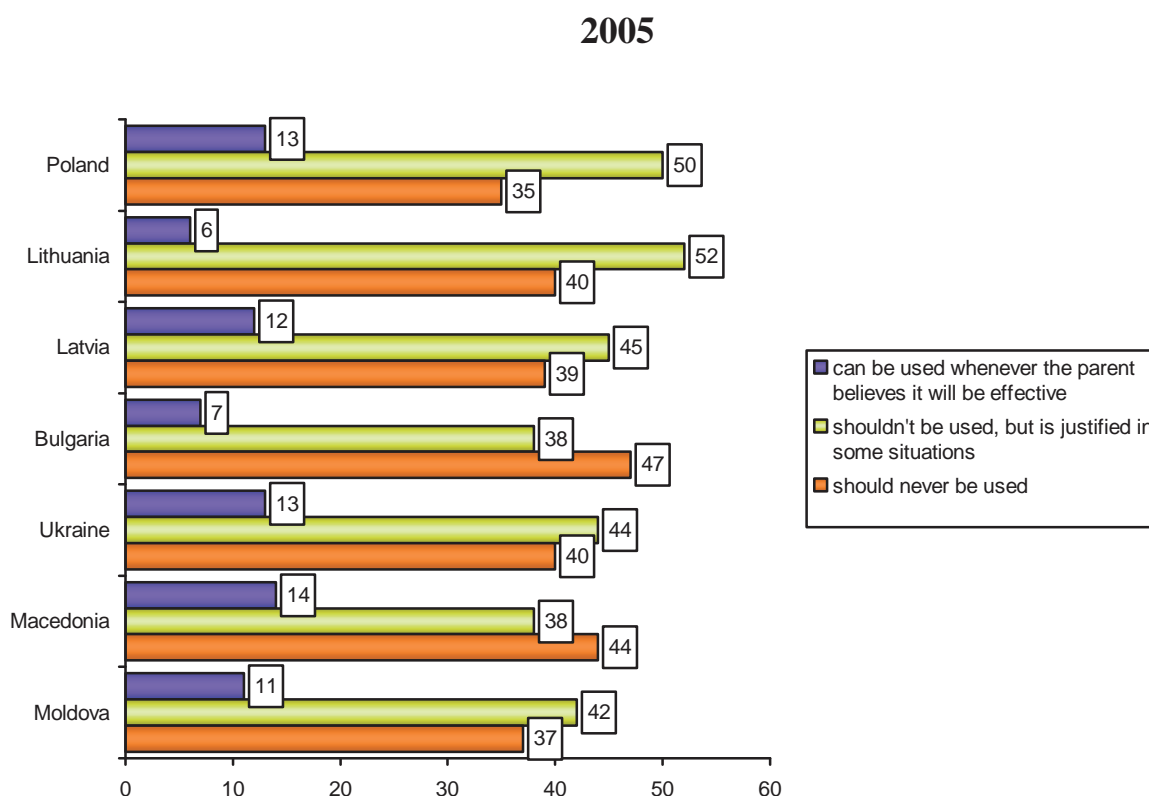
### 3.2. Social acceptance of corporal punishment of children

What are the respondents' opinions about relationships between children and their parents? Do adults in the countries included in the study perceive beating children as an acceptable child-rearing method? Answers to these questions were sought by assessing various dimensions of attitudes held by the general adult population in each country and by the sample of capital-city teachers.

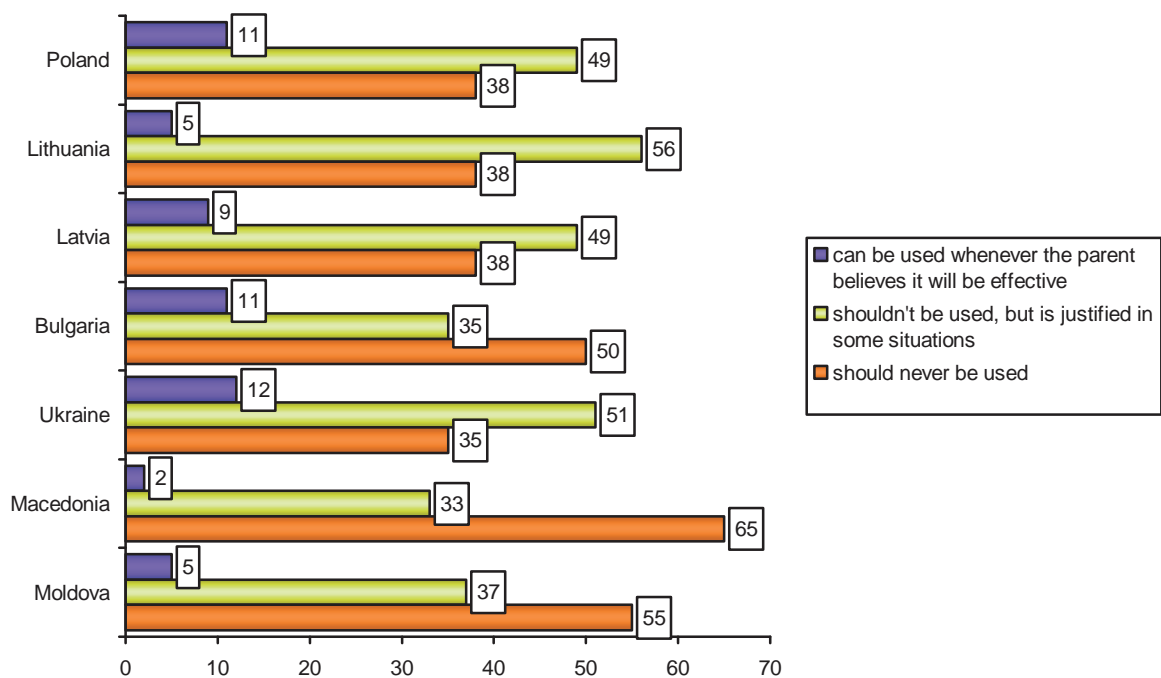
First, let us have a look at the opinions held by the adult participants in the nationwide studies concerning the acceptability of corporal punishment. Data presented in Figure 7 show the change of opinions in-between the researches. In 2005 results point to a general similarity of the patterns of views on using corporal punishment across the seven countries. In most countries

(except for Bulgaria and Macedonia) the dominating view could be described as a middle option – “Parents shouldn’t beat their children, but sometimes they have to”. In 2009 in all the countries, except Lithuania and Ukraine, increased the per cent of respondents expressing disapproval of use of corporal punishment. In Macedonia the increase was 21%, In Moldova 18%. People supporting the opinion that parents should use corporal punishment whenever they think it is the right thing to do are in the minority in each of the seven countries; their overall share in the studied population does not exceed 12%. In all the countries, except Bulgaria, in the period of 4 years in-between the researches this percentage diminished.

**Figure 7 and 8.** *Do you believe beating a child by a parent as a „punishment” is a disciplinary measure that...*



2009

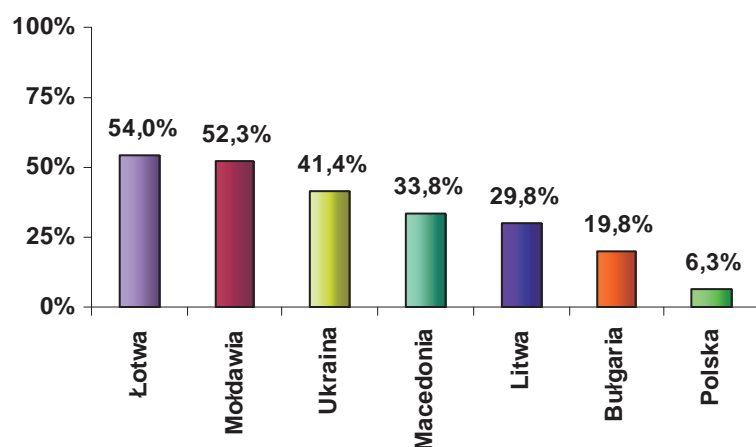


In most countries a relationship was found between the level of education and the respondents' views on the acceptability of corporal punishment of children. Better educated participants were more likely to strongly object to beating children by parents. The proportion of opponents of corporal punishment was also larger among people with higher income and living in big cities.

In the studies conducted among teachers working at capital-city schools a much wider range of attitudes concerning children-parents relationships – especially the use of corporal punishment by parents – was assessed. One important dimension of such attitudes is the respondents' views on parental authority and on toughness and distance as components of rearing methods shaping the child-parent relationship.

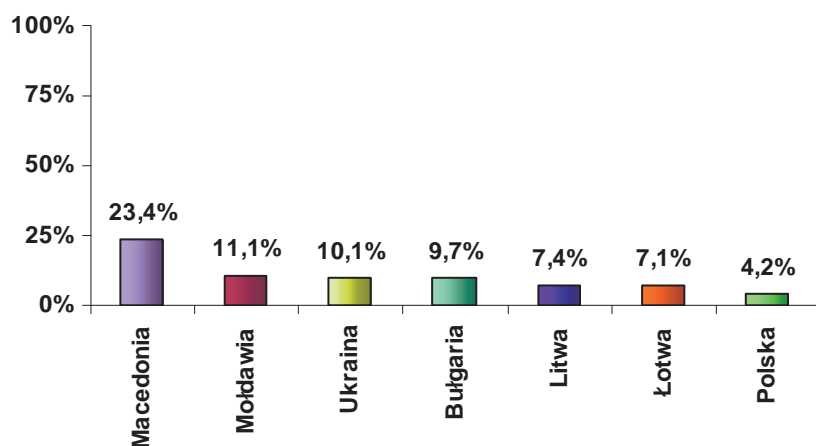
As shown in the following charts (Figures 8–9), illustrating the proportions of teachers who agreed with two opinions concerning parent-child relationships (as specified in the chart descriptions), a small part of the respondents across the seven countries supported the view that children should be disciplined by use of fear. The respondents were more likely to support a tough child-rearing style, which was supposed to strengthen children and help them cope with future life difficulties. More than half of the teachers in the Moldavian and Latvian samples agreed with the notion of tough child rearing. It was the least likely to be supported by Polish and Bulgarian participants. Similar dependences were affirmed by the 2005 research.

**Figure 9.** *Tough treatment by parents strengthens the child and, ultimately, is of benefit to him or her.* (total percentage of “definitely agree” and “rather agree” responses)



Tough treatment by parents strengthens the child and ultimately is of benefit to him or her

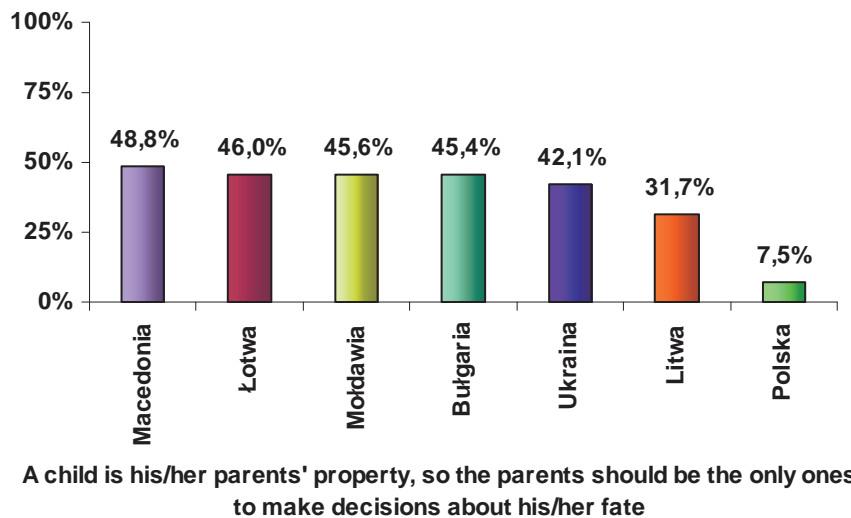
**Figure 10.** *Children should be afraid of their parents, because fear fosters obedience.* (total percentage of “definitely agree” and “rather agree” responses)



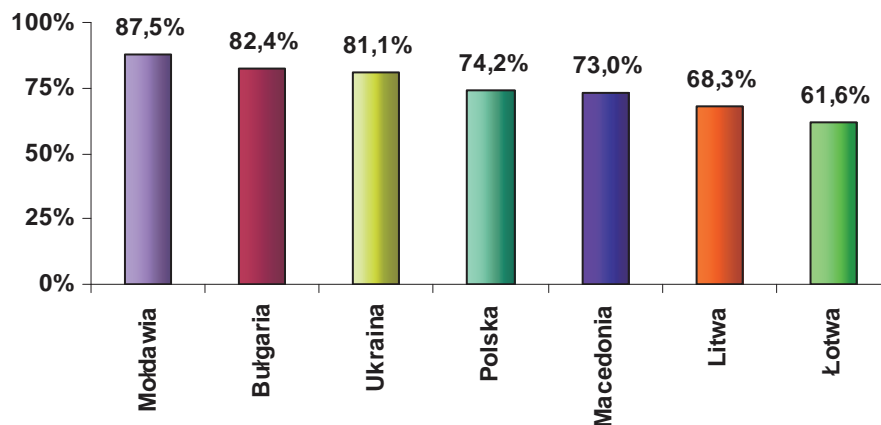
Children should be afraid of their parents, because fear fosters obedience

The teachers were also asked about their attitudes toward parental authority. A significant proportion believed that children were their parents’ “property”, and thus parents should be the only ones to make decisions about their fate. Understood in this way, parental authority was the most likely to be supported by participants from Moldova, Latvia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine.

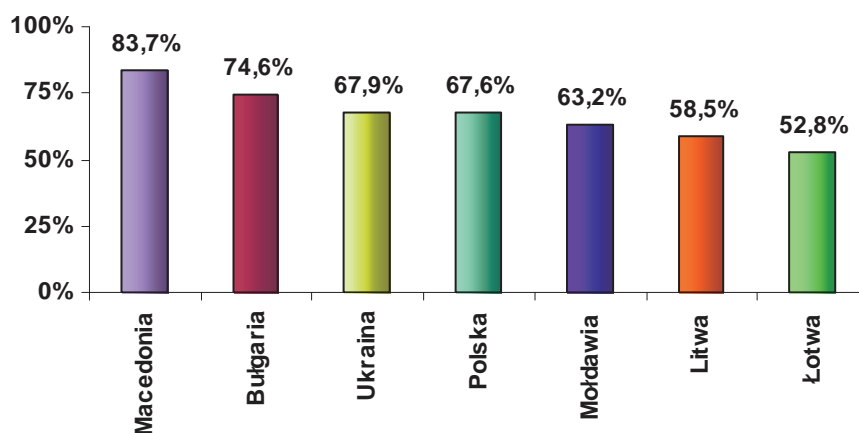
**Figure 11.** *A child is his/her parents' property, so the parents should be the only ones to make decisions about his/her fate.* (total percentage of “definitely agree” and “rather agree” responses)



However, contrary to what could be logically expected, the respondents' agreement with this statement did not mean that they supported lack of monitoring of how parents treat their children. A vast majority of the participants believed that law should regulate parents' behaviour toward their children, performing a monitoring and protective function. Interestingly, this position was most frequently supported by teachers in Moldova (87%), who were also the most likely to perceive children as their parents' property and – as documented further in this report – to accept beating children for a variety of reasons. The high level of agreement about the need to legally regulate parents' behaviour towards children was accompanied by a slightly weaker, yet significant support for a legal ban on using corporal punishment by parents (64% supporters, on average). Please bear in mind that among the countries participating in the study, such a ban has been introduced in Latvia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. In the remaining four countries there has been an intense public debate on this issue. A majority of the respondents supported imposing a legal ban on beating children by parents. The weakest support for such legislation – and for any legal control of the way parents treat their children – was expressed by the teachers in Latvia, where a legal ban on beating children has been in force since 1998.



**Figure 11.** *Should the way parents treat their children be regulated by law?* (total percentage of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” responses)



**Figure 12.** *Do you think that using corporal punishment by parents should be legally banned?* (total percentage of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” responses)

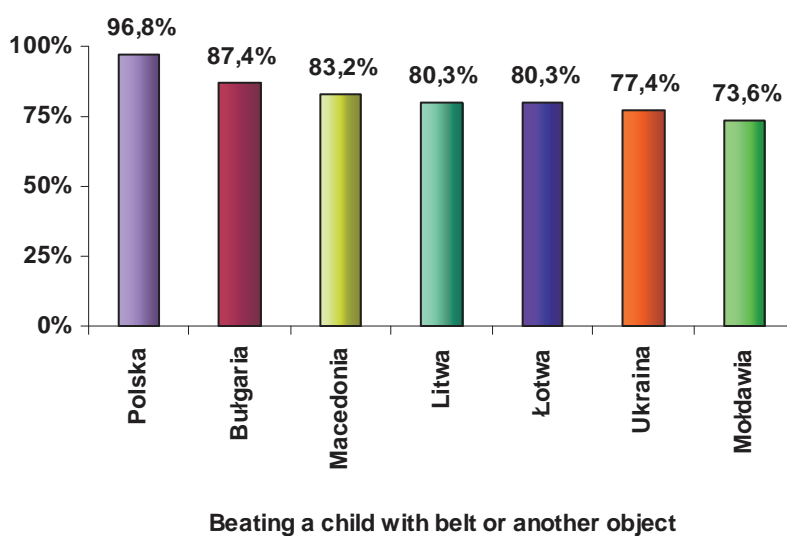
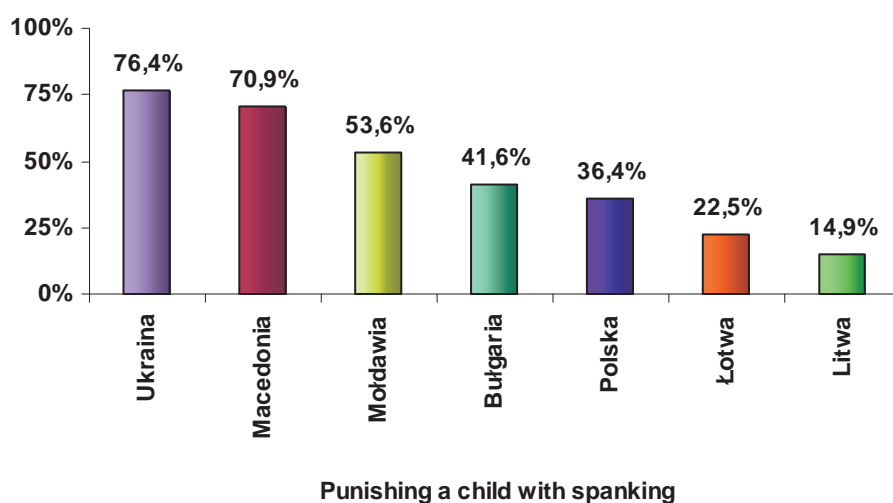
Another indication of the respondents’ attitudes toward parental authority was their view on **third parties’ interference in the family in cases of child maltreatment by parents.**

A relatively low level of approval for such an interference in cases of spanking (it was supported by 37% of the sample, on average in 2005 and 45% in 2009) grew to virtual unanimity in response to beating with a belt (85%; 87%).

The level of support for a third-party interference if a parent punishes a child with spanking diversifies the sample of teachers across the seven countries. Interestingly, the fact that a country has imposed a legal ban on corporal punishment of children does not significantly influence the

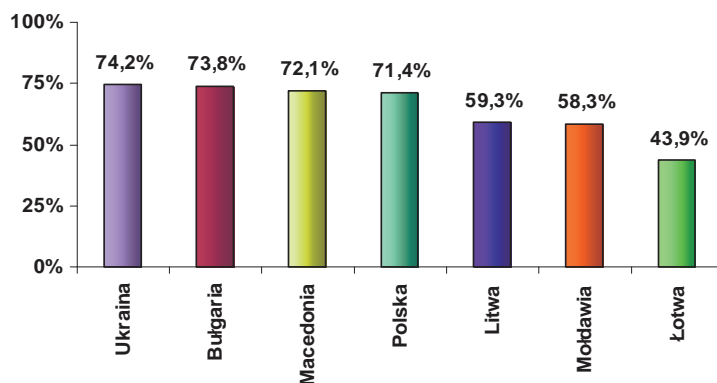
level of public consent to controlling parents' behaviour in this respect. To illustrate this, in Ukraine such a consent was expressed by 76,4% of the respondents, in Latvia – by 22,5%, and in Bulgaria – by 41,6%. The strongest resistance to interfering when a parent punishes a child with spanking was expressed by Lithuanians, Latvians (!), and Poles.

**Figure 13.** Do you think third parties (persons not being family members) should intervene when they see a parent... (total percentage of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” responses)



As demonstrated by the results of the evaluation of corporal punishment as a child-rearing method – illustrated in Figures 14 and 15 – using corporal punishment of children is often perceived as parents' failure and as humiliating to the child. More than 80% of the respondents in

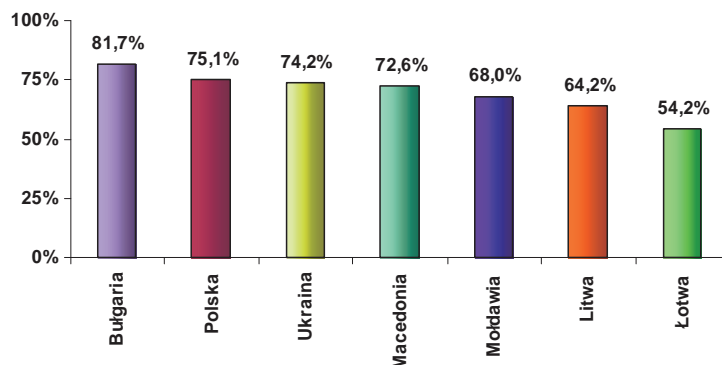
Bulgaria and more than 70% in Poland, Macedonia, and Ukraine considered beating as a parental behaviour that humiliates the child. In the remaining countries the support for such a perception of beating a child was also relatively high (73%, on average). Parents who use corporal punishment are not good at rearing children – this belief was shared by almost two thirds of the respondents. Again, it was most likely to be expressed by people in Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Macedonia.



**Figure 14.** *Do you believe using corporal punishment of children or giving a child a hiding means that:*

1. *the parents are not good at rearing children or*
2. *it is as good an educational method as any other?*

(% of responses: „the parents are not good at rearing children”)



**Figure 15.** *Do you believe that using corporal punishment or giving a child a hiding is or is not humiliating to the child?*

(% of responses: „It is humiliating”)

### 3.3. When is beating acceptable?

Widespread condemnation of using corporal punishment in the process of child rearing, which seems to be emerging from the presented analyses, is not fully reflected in the respondents' views on acceptable ways of punishing a child for specific offences.

The respondents were asked about how much it was justified to spanking a child and if they were prepared to do so in response to specific forms of the child's misbehaviour. As shown in the charts below, in the light of the teachers' previously reported opinions, a relatively high proportion of the respondents claimed they would be ready to hit a child as a punishment. This response was most likely to be triggered by children's behaviours perceived as signs of moral corruption, such as **theft, drinking alcohol, or playing truant**. Interestingly, however, a significant proportion of the



respondents believed that **disobedience to parents** and explicit disrespect toward them also deserved a spanking. The participants were most reluctant to use corporal punishment if a child damaged something, did not look after his or her clothes, or had poor marks at school. It seems that what these offences have in common is the absence of explicit bad intentions. People are most likely to find beating justified when a child breaches the fundamental norms of social adaptation or questions his/her parents' authority.

As follows from the charts presented below, the teachers in Moldavia were most willing to punish children with beating in 2005 and in 2009. For each of the assessed children's offences the percentage of such responses in the Moldavian sample was higher than in the remaining countries, and nearly two thirds of the Moldavian teachers would apply corporal punishment if a child committed a theft or drank alcohol. The respondents from Ukraine, Latvia, and Poland were the most lenient in their decisions about using corporal punishment.

It is worth mentioning the sequence of countries, according to teacher's self-reported attitudes concerning legitimacy of a corporal punishment use in various causes, have not changed during the past four years. There was also no significant change of the per cent of consent for spanking in each country. Moreover, in some cases was noticed the increase in approval. The most favourable was change of teacher's attitudes in Poland.

**Table 4.**

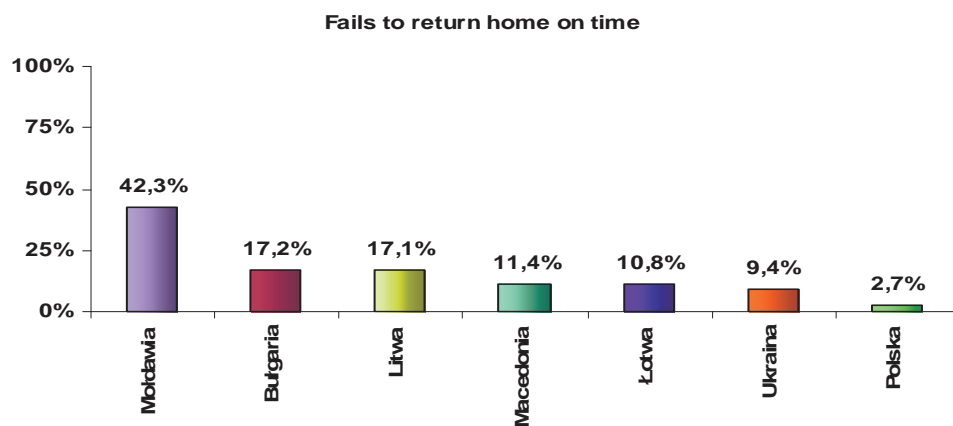
*Most people at least once in their lives got a hiding from their parents or caregivers. In what situations do you consider beating a child justified or would use this form of punishment yourself? Do you think a child deserves a hiding if he or she ... 2005-2009*

<b>Lies</b>		
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2005</b>
Moldova	49	49
Bulgaria	22	29
Macedonia	18	16
Lithuania	12	19
Latvia	11	8
Ukraine	9	7
Poland	3	6
<b>Fails to return home on time</b>		
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2005</b>
Moldova	42	49
Bulgaria	17	28
Lithuania	17	18
Macedonia	11	16
Latvia	11	8
Ukraine	9	7
Poland	3	6

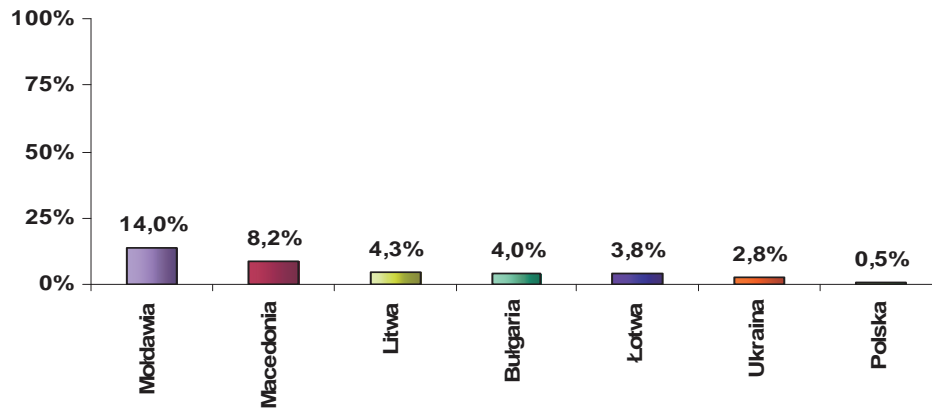
Has poor marks at school		
	2009	2005
Moldova	14	11
Macedonia	8	7
Lithuania	4	2
Bulgaria	4	3
Latvia	4	1
Ukraine	3	2
Poland	1	2
Plays truant		
	2009	2005
Moldova	62	50
Lithuania	24	26
Bulgaria	19	22
Latvia	18	13
Macedonia	13	19
Ukraine	11	7
Poland	3	11
Commits a petty theft		
	2009	2005
Moldova	75	67
Bulgaria	49	56
Lithuania	43	46
Latvia	42	44
Ukraine	34	40
Macedonia	28	40
Poland	10	20
Show disrespect toward parents		
	2009	2005
Moldova	33	23
Latvia	21	20
Bulgaria	15	18
Lithuania	11	12
Macedonia	11	9
Poland	8	15
Ukraine	8	8
Damages something of significant value		
	2009	2005
Poland	2	8
Ukraine	7	4
Macedonia	2	5
Lithuania	5	7
Moldova	13	14
Bulgaria	6	2
Latvia	7	5
Doesn't look after his/her clothes		
	2009	2005
Moldova	26	20
Lithuania	6	4

Macedonia	5	3
Latvia	5	2
Ukraine	4	4
Bulgaria	4	4
Poland	1	7
<b>Doesn't obey his/her parents</b>		
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2005</b>
Moldova	48	40
Lithuania	18	23
Latvia	17	17
Bulgaria	14	16
Macedonia	12	15
Ukraine	9	14
Poland	4	15
<b>Starts smoking cigarettes</b>		
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2005</b>
Moldova	59	47
Bulgaria	27	20
Lithuania	25	28
Latvia	21	20
Macedonia	19	25
Ukraine	16	18
Poland	8	17
<b>Drinks alcohol</b>		
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2005</b>
Moldova	65	60
Bulgaria	37	30
Lithuania	33	35
Ukraine	26	26
Latvia	26	28
Macedonia	25	37
Poland	11	21

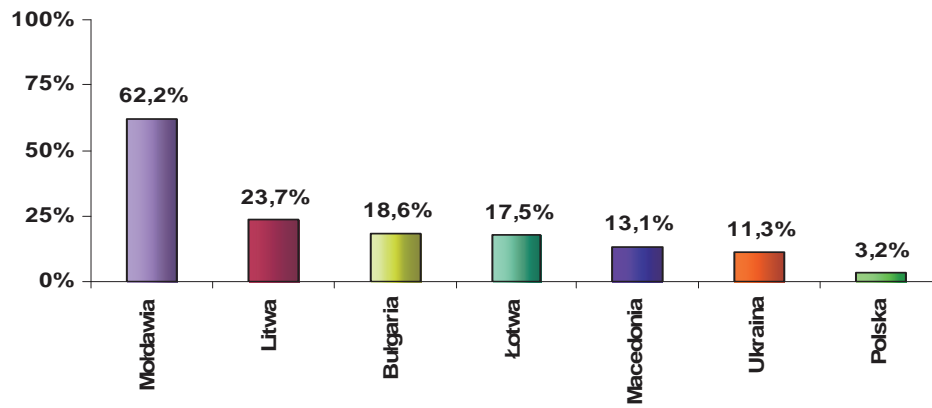
## Detailed data 2009



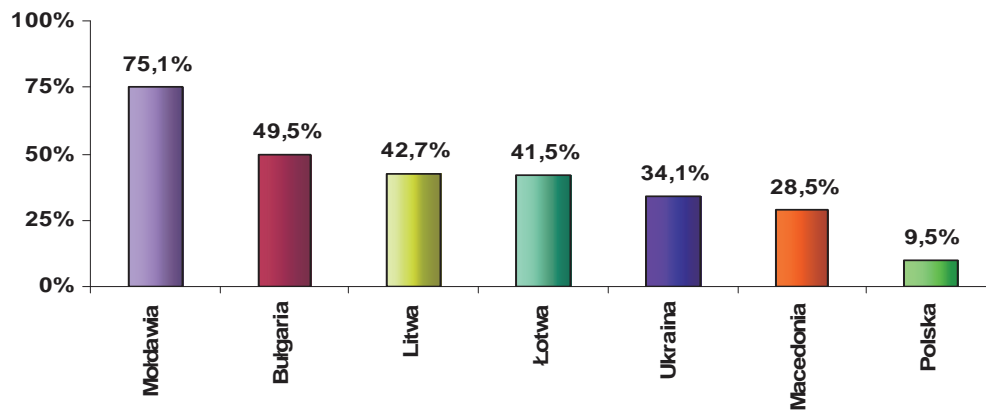
Has poor marks at school



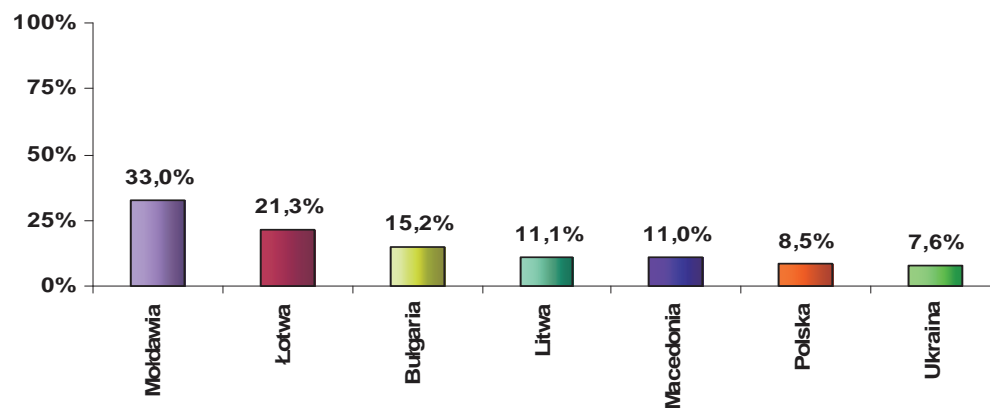
Plays truant



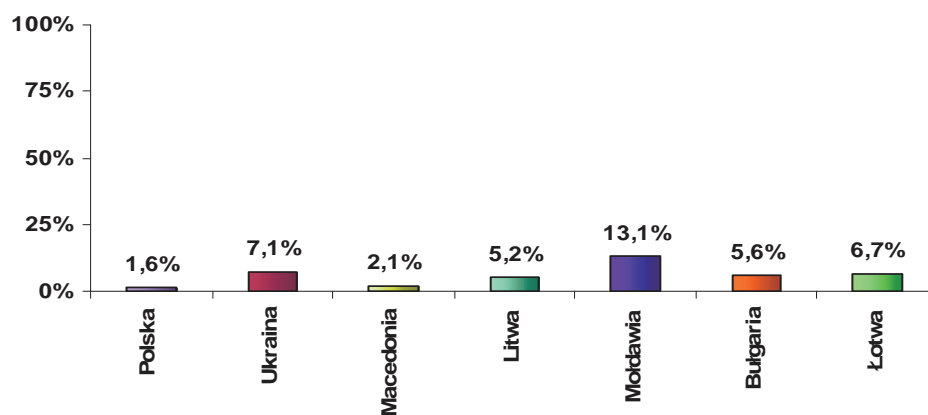
Commits a petty theft



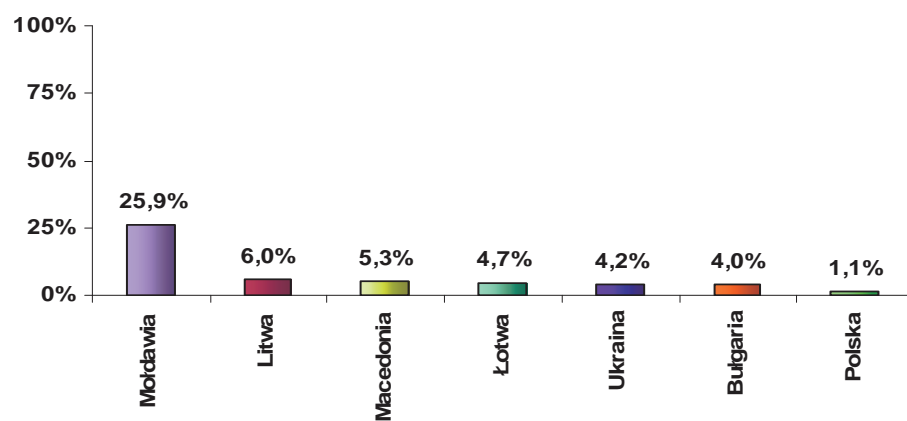
Show disrespect toward parents

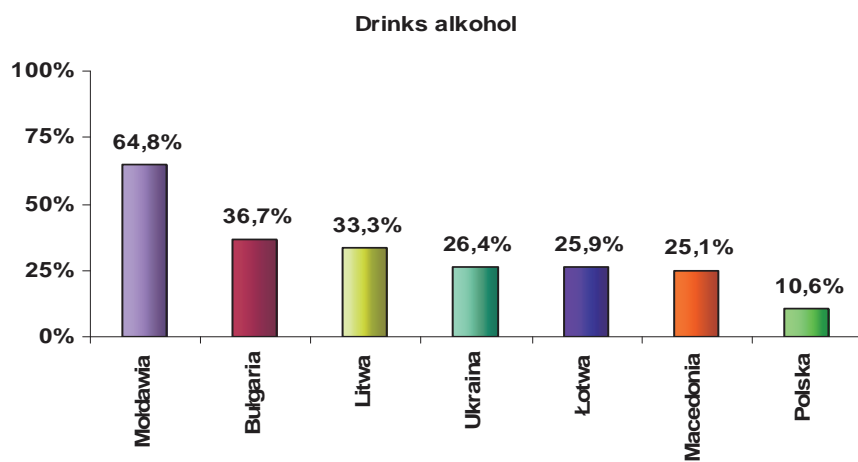
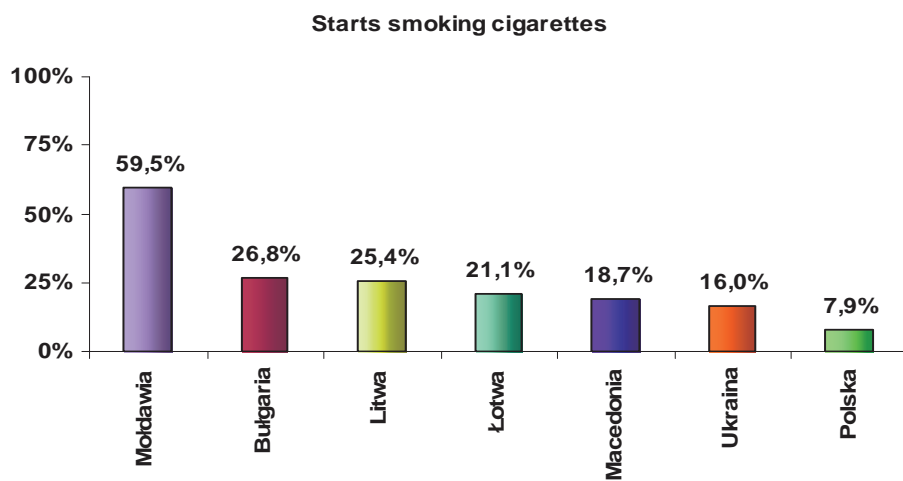
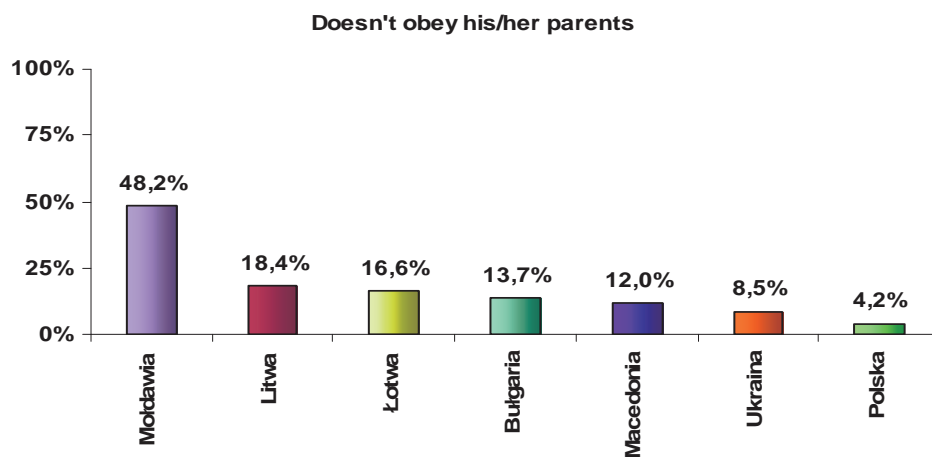


Damages something of significant value



Doesn't look after his/her clothes





## 4. Emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect

### 4.1. How many children, as perceived by the respondents, experience emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect? Is the prevalence of these problems changing?

In the respondents' opinions emotional abuse of children, in the forms assessed in the study – i.e., humiliating verbal abuse and emotional neglect (lack of interest in the child's problems) – is prevalent in their countries (it should be emphasized, however, that punishing with spanking, discussed in the section focused on corporal punishment, remains the most frequent form of child maltreatment). High ratings of the prevalence of emotional abuse of children show a slight diversification across countries. **Verbal abuse** is experienced by nearly all children – that is the opinion expressed by 20% – 30% of the participants. There is one notable exception – teachers from Poland, who are significantly less likely to formulate such radical opinions (11%). According to the respondents, children in Moldova are most likely to experience their parents' lack of interest in their problems (56% of children, on average); in the remaining countries the estimated percentage of such children – though lower than in Moldova – is also relatively high, amounting to nearly 50%.

Similarly to corporal punishment, the respondents (teachers) estimate the prevalence of emotional abuse in the general population of children in their countries as higher than for the population of children attending the schools where they work. However, as shown in Table 5, those gaps are narrower than in the assessment of corporal punishment, which may be accounted for by the respondents' self-reported experiences discussed in the next section of this paper.

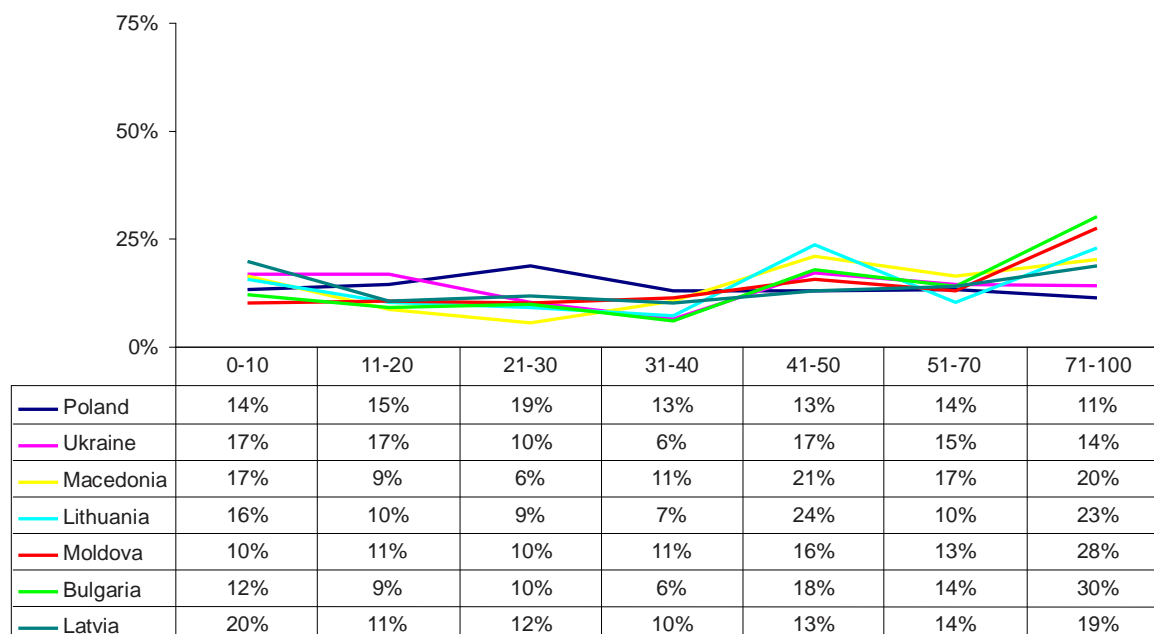
As we will find out, emotional abuse and neglect are the most frequent forms of abuse encountered by the participants in their work with children.

**Table 5. Perceived prevalence of emotional abuse of children in the general (national) population of children and in the schools where the respondents work: 2005 - 2009**

*If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience ...? (mean estimations)*

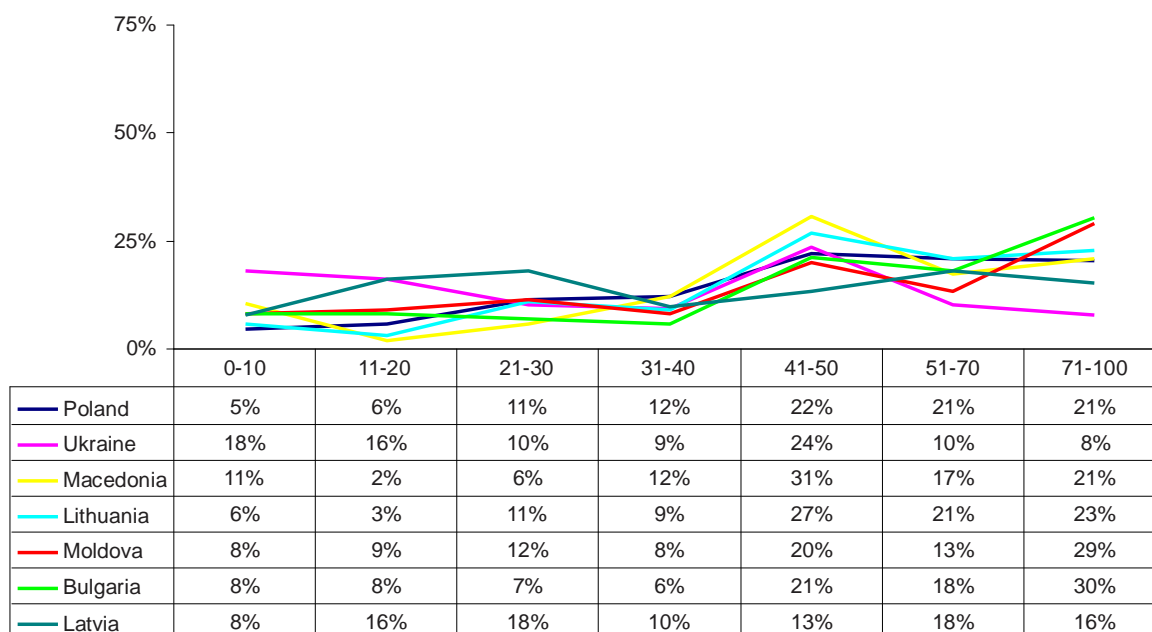
Country	Calling names, verbal humiliation (%)				Lack of interest in children's problems (%)			
	Country population		School population		Country population		School population	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Poland	41	36	25	19	52	48	37	31
Lithuania	46	34	24	15	52	41	34	23
Latvia	51	34	29	17	52	36	41	22
Bulgaria	47	20	32	22	50	42	36	28
Ukraine	52	35	30	20	46	31	30	21
Macedonia	55	29	43	18	46	31	42	21
Moldova	56	38	40	24	56	38	43	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>

**Figure 17.** *If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience **calling names or verbal humiliation**?*

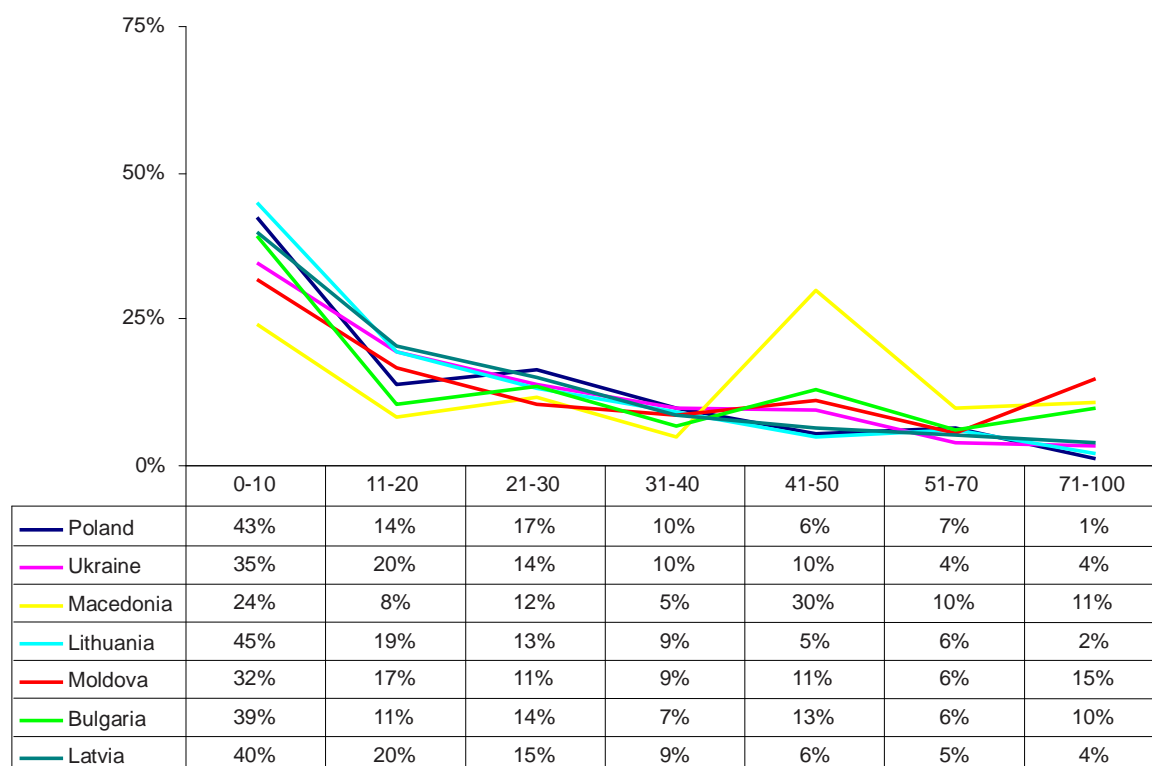




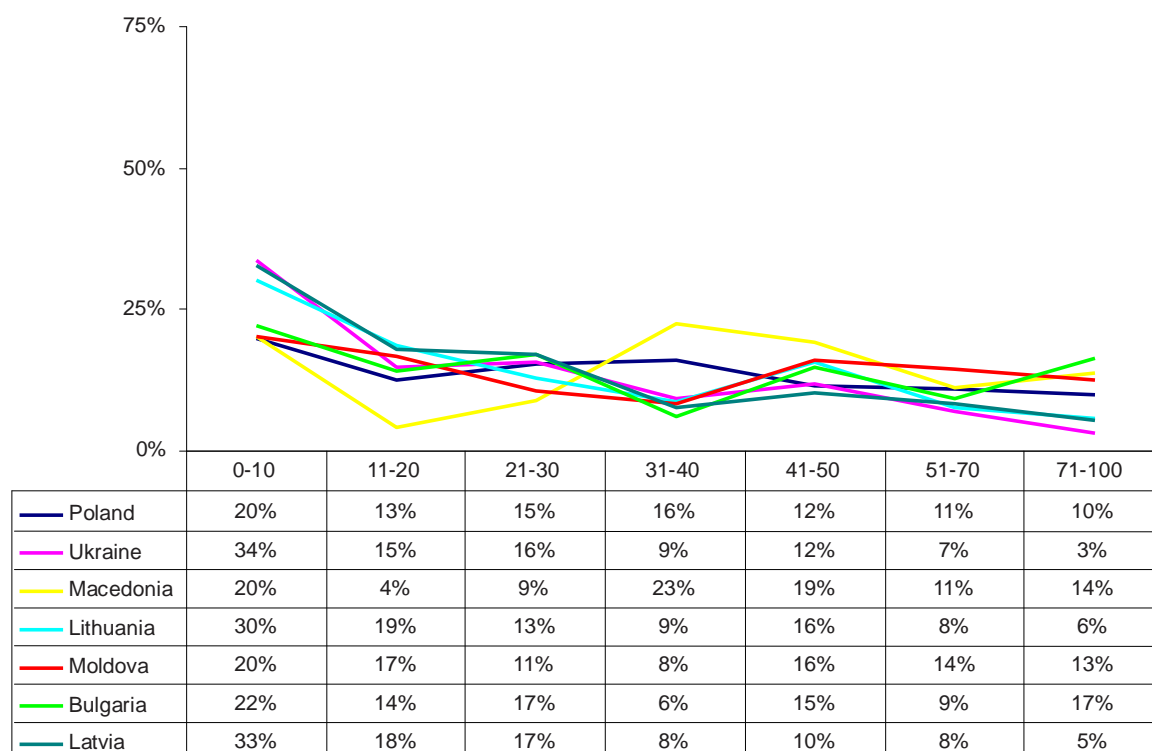
**Figure 18.** If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience *lack of interest in the child's problems*?



**Figure 19.** If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience *calling name or verbal humiliation*?



**Figure 20.** *If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience **lack of interest in the child's problems**?*



**Physical neglect**, i.e., insufficient care of the child's hygiene, clothing, and nutrition, as well as leaving the child unattended, is experienced by one third (on average, as estimated by the respondents) of the children living in the countries included in the study. The respondents' ratings in all seven countries are similar, as illustrated in Figures 21–24.

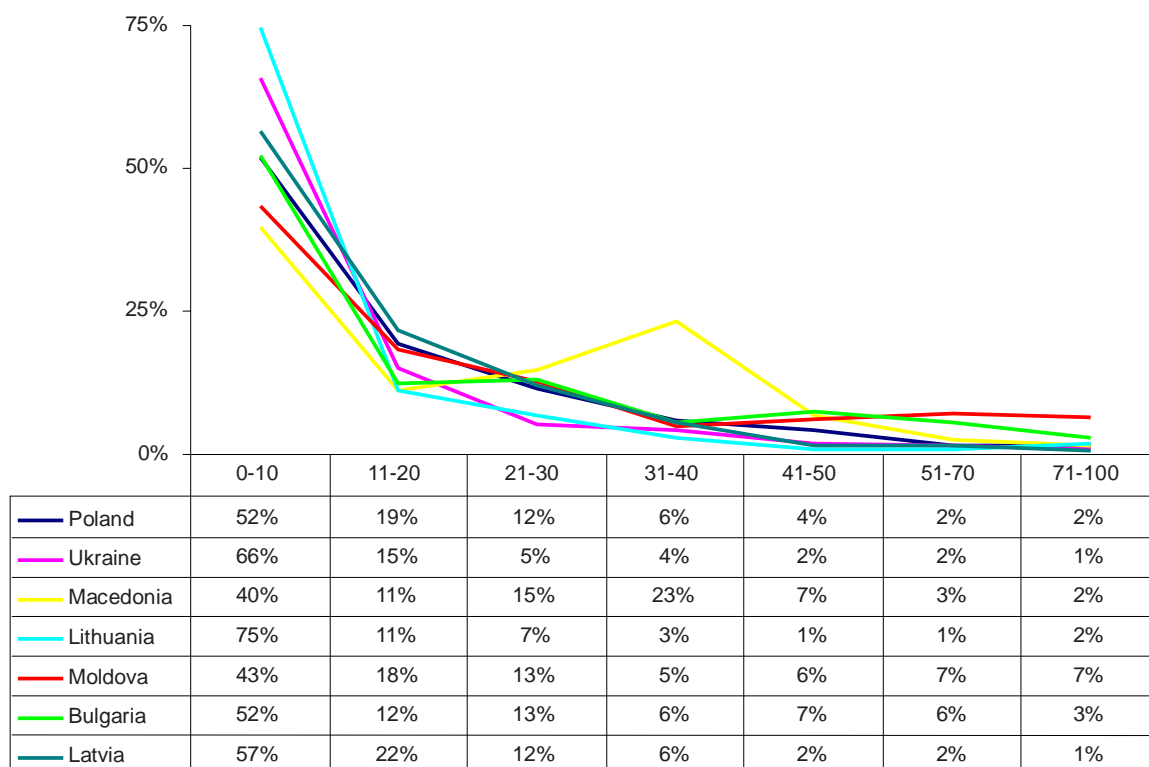
Physical neglect is perceived as the most prevalent by teachers in Macedonia and Latvia (38% of children, on average), while the problem of leaving children unattended is assessed as the most frequent by teachers in Poland (35%).

**Table 6. Perceived prevalence of child neglect in the general (national) population of children and in the respondents' schools: 200 - 2009**

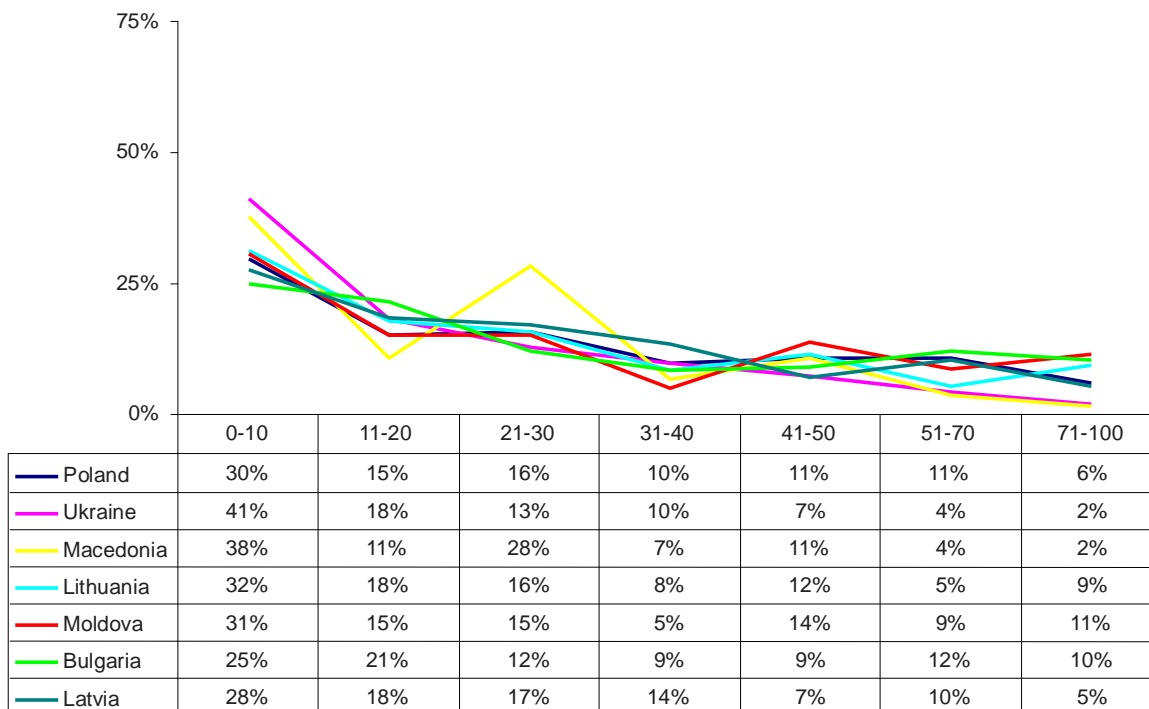
*If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience...? (mean estimations)*

Country	Physical neglect (%)				Leaving children unattended (%)			
	Country population		School population		Country population		School population	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Poland	32	24	20	14	36	28	24	16
Lithuania	28	23	13	9	23	21	7	6
Latvia	39	22	26	11	35	12	18	12
Bulgaria	27	24	15	15	26	25	15	12
Ukraine	30	19	16	10	28	18	18	8
Macedonia	30	18	22	9	26	12	16	5
Moldova	39	30	25	18	32	23	20	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>

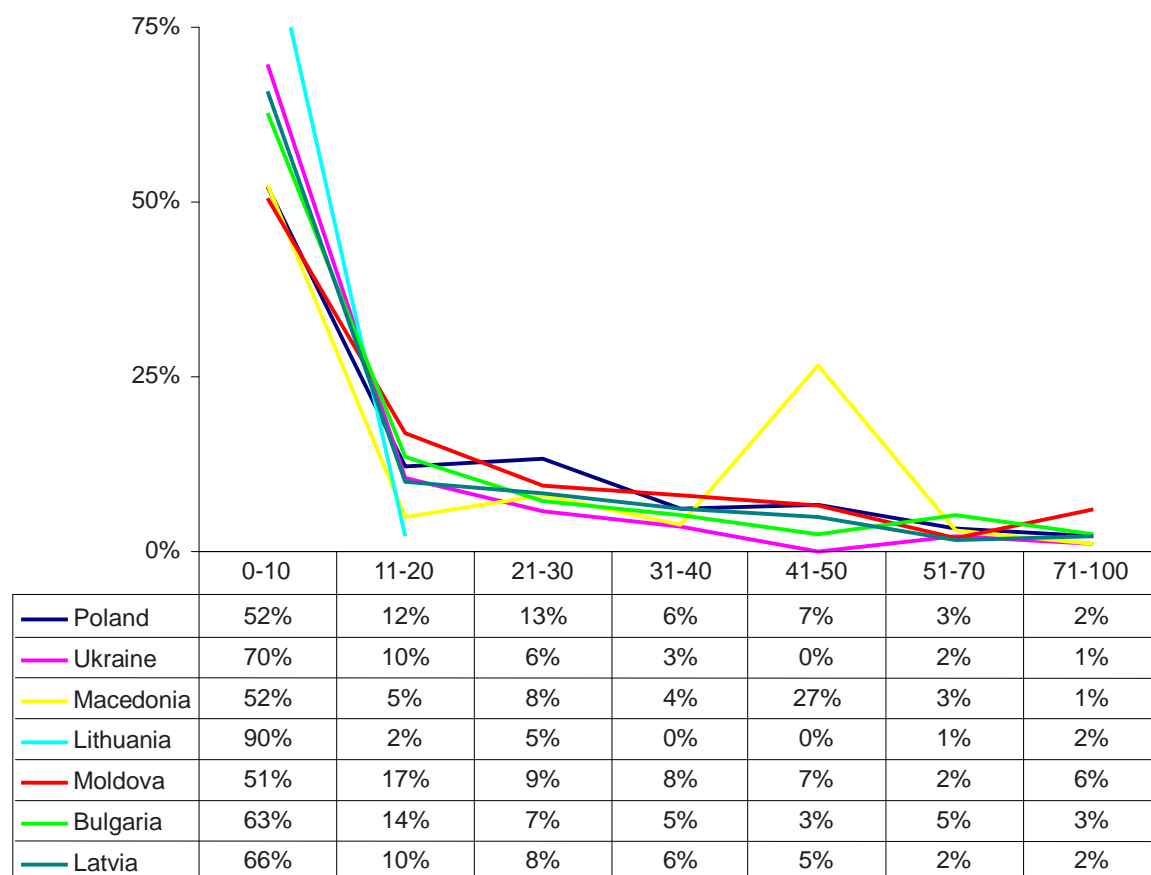
**Figure 22.** If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience *physical neglect – insufficient care of their hygiene, clothing, and nutrition?*



**Figure 23.** If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience being *left unattended?*



**Figure 24.** *If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience being **left unattended**?*

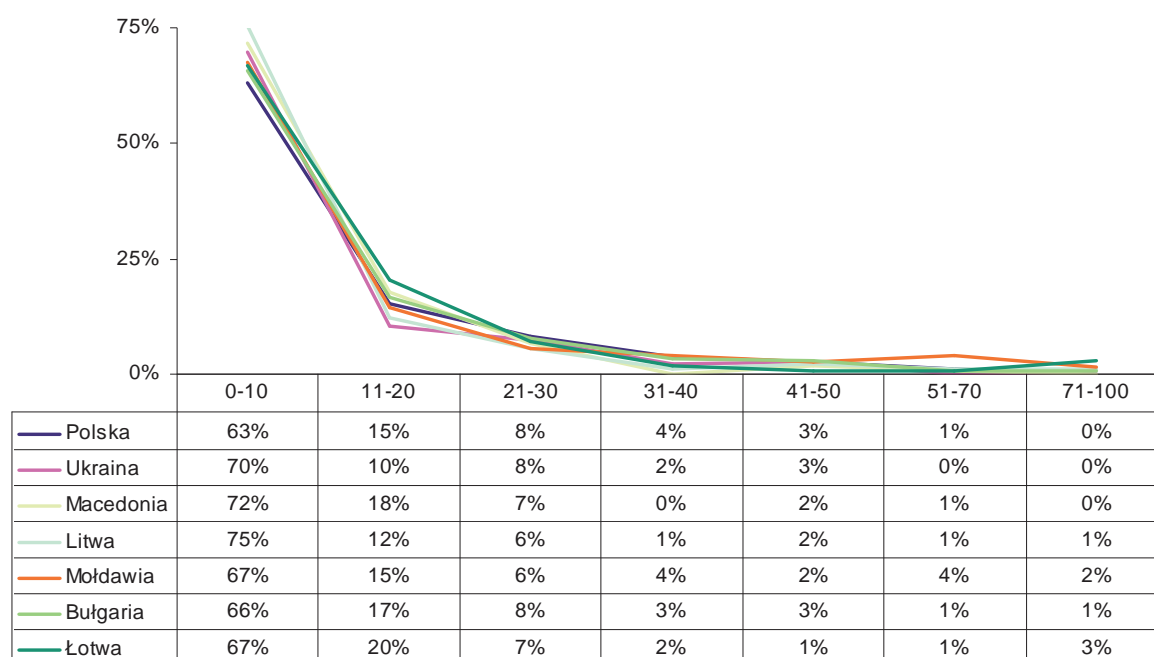


**Sexual abuse** is the least frequently noticed form of child abuse. The respondents' perceptions of its prevalence show the widest gap between the estimations for the general population of children in the country and the population of children attending the respondent's school. "Though relatively infrequent, sexual abuse does occur in my country. However, it does not occur among my students" – this is how the participants seem to perceive the problem, as we may conclude from the findings. The prevalence of the problem, as perceived by the teachers participating in the study – is the highest in Poland and Moldavia (17% of children, on average), and the lowest in Bulgaria (8%).

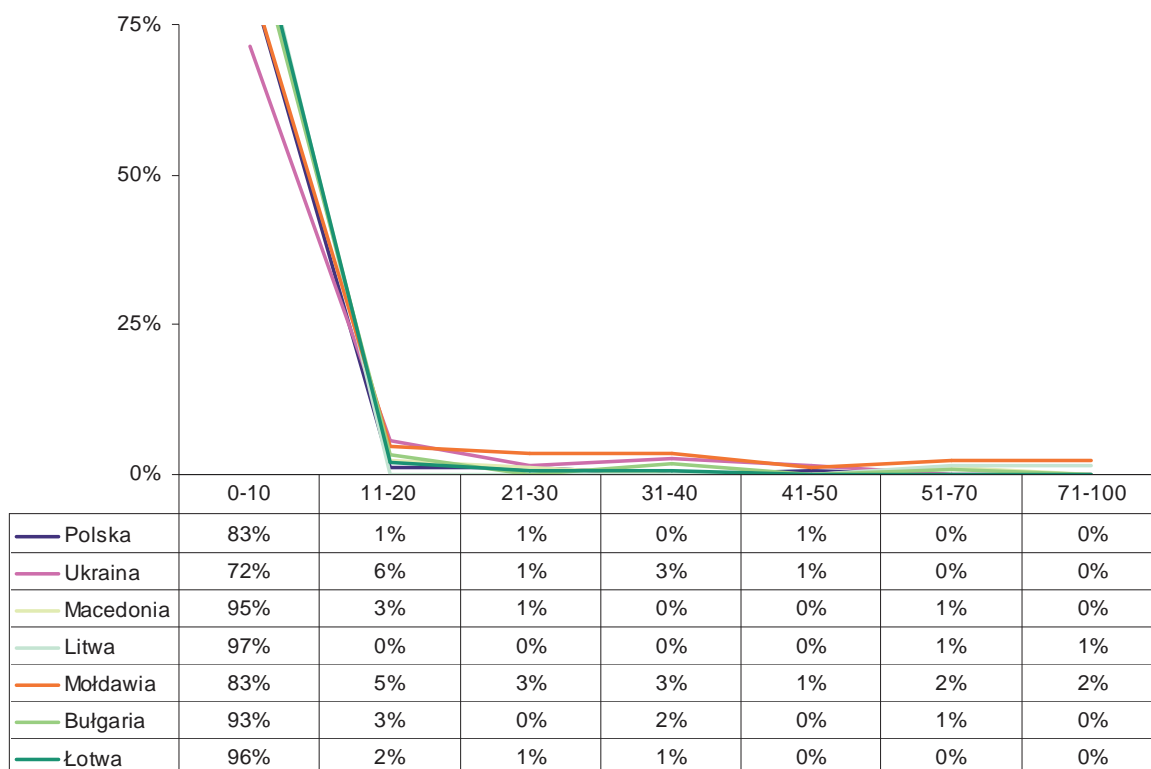
**Table 7. Perceived prevalence of child sexual abuse in the general (national) sample and in the respondents' schools: 2005 - 2009**

*If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience...? (mean estimations)*

Country	Sexual abuse (%)			
	Country population		School population	
	2005	2009	2005	2009
Poland	17	11	5	4
Lithuania	12	8	2	4
Latvia	17	9	4	4
Bulgaria	9	8	2	4
Ukraine	13	8	5	4
Macedonia	12	5	4	2
Moldova	17	8	8	4
<b>Total</b>	14	<b>8</b>	4	<b>4</b>



**Figure 25.** *If all the children living in our country constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience sexual abuse by adults?*



**Figure 26.** *If all the children attending your school constitute 100% of the population, what percentage, do you think, experience **sexual abuse by adults**?*

Many respondents found it difficult to assess the **dynamics** of various forms of child abuse in the past decade. This difficulty concerned mainly the evaluation of the actual scale of the child abuse problem. A large proportion (39%) of the respondents answered: “It’s hard to say”.

The highest proportion of the respondents notice a negative growth trend in relation to the problem of leaving children unattended. On average, 61% of the respondents believe that children in their country are more and more likely to be left without care. This opinion is expressed by as many as 78% of the Moldovan sample. The lowest proportion (though still a 53% majority) of the respondents notice a growing problem of leaving children without care in Poland and Bulgaria.

Nearly half of the respondents think that during the past few years parents have become more and more likely to yell at their children. Teachers in Bulgaria perceive this negative trend most frequently (66%). They are also likely to notice undesirable changes in humiliating forms of verbal abuse by parents, such as calling names (50%).

We should note, however, that a proportion of the sample perceive positive changes: on average, 13% believe that parents are getting better in taking care of their children, 10% perceive a decreased frequency of communicating with children by yelling, and 14% think that children are less and less likely to be humiliated verbally.

The lowest polarization of opinions was found in relation to the dynamics of child sexual abuse. Although many respondents feel unable to estimate it, a majority of those who attempt to do it, believe that the problem is growing. Obviously, such evaluations may result more from the growing public perception of the problem and its extensive media coverage than from increased actual numbers of victims.

**Table 8.** *Do you think that in the past 10 years parents’ behaviours toward children have changed with regard to:*

<b>Leaving children unattended</b>				
	Occurs more and more often	Remains at unchanged level	Occurs less and less often	Hard to say
Poland	44%	18%	23%	14%
Ukraine	59%	19%	13%	8%
Macedonia	56%	27%	12%	5%
Lithuania	66%	11%	15%	8%
Moldova	69%	12%	14%	5%
Bulgaria	79%	10%	5%	6%
Latvia	64%	18%	7%	11%
Total	62%	17%	12%	8%

<b>Verbal abuse/Yelling</b>				
	Occurs more and more often	Remains at unchanged level	Occurs less and less often	Hard to say
Poland	34%	44%	9%	14%
Ukraine	41%	40%	11%	8%
Macedonia	44%	37%	12%	7%
Lithuania	45%	32%	8%	15%
Moldova	49%	31%	12%	8%
Bulgaria	74%	13%	6%	7%
Latvia	47%	30%	10%	14%
Total	48%	32%	10%	10%

<b>Calling names, verbal humiliation</b>				
	Occurs more and more often	Remains at unchanged level	Occurs less and less often	Hard to say
Poland	29%	32%	15%	24%
Ukraine	41%	35%	11%	13%
Macedonia	40%	35%	17%	9%
Lithuania	37%	20%	11%	31%
Moldova	47%	26%	13%	13%
Bulgaria	70%	13%	7%	9%
Latvia	31%	29%	11%	29%
Total	42%	28%	12%	18%

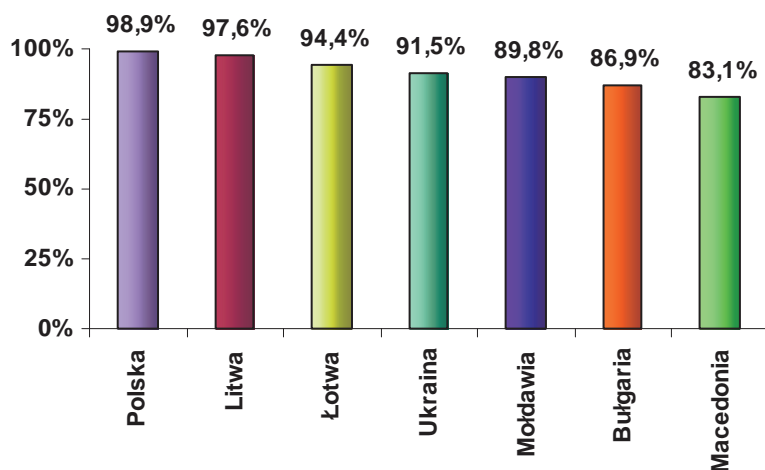
<b>Sexual abuse</b>				
	Occurs more and more often	Remains at unchanged level	Occurs less and less often	Hard to say
Poland	36%	20%	5%	39%
Ukraine	31%	11%	7%	50%
Macedonia	45%	27%	10%	18%
Lithuania	41%	10%	7%	42%
Moldova	28%	9%	8%	55%
Bulgaria	38%	11%	9%	41%
Latvia	44%	10%	7%	39%
Total	37%	14%	7%	41%

In the section concerning corporal punishment of children, we analyzed the respondents' opinions on third parties' interference in the family as an indication of their attitude toward the borders of parental authority. A similar analysis may be conducted in relation to the respondents' acceptance of such an interference in case of other forms of child maltreatment by parents. As shown in Figure 27, the respondents express a nearly general acceptance of such an interference in response to various forms of child neglect. If a child shows signs of malnutrition or poor hygiene, or if his/her parents do not provide adequate care and supervision, third parties' interventions are perceived as acceptable or even necessary.

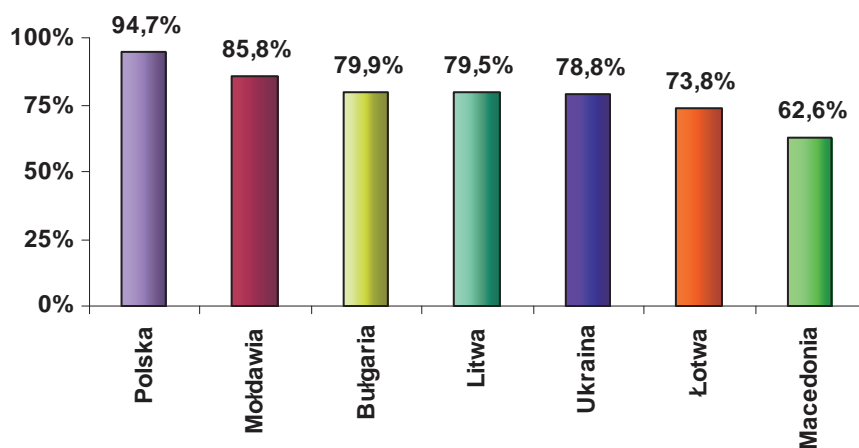


The respondents are almost unanimous about this issue; nearly all of them believe that such treatment of children signals abuse of parental authority. The participants' opinions show little variation across countries. We should note, however, that parents and family members' exclusive right to make decisions about the child is most likely to be supported by the respondents in Macedonia, whereas Poles are unanimously in favour of restricting this right.

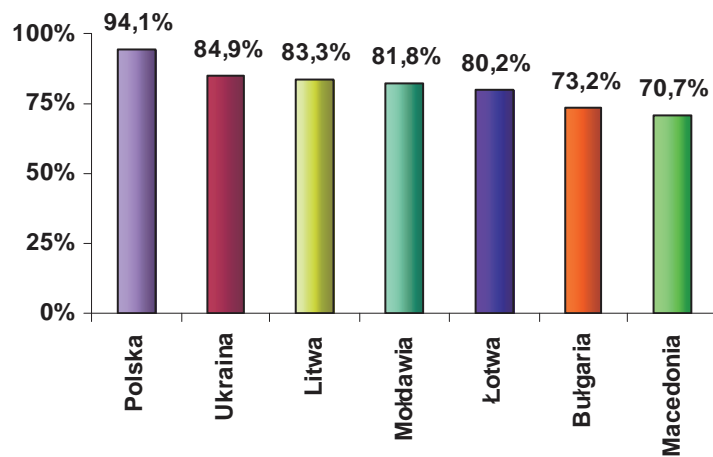
**Figure 27.** *Do you think third parties (persons not being family members) should intervene when they see that a child is...* (total percentage of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” responses)



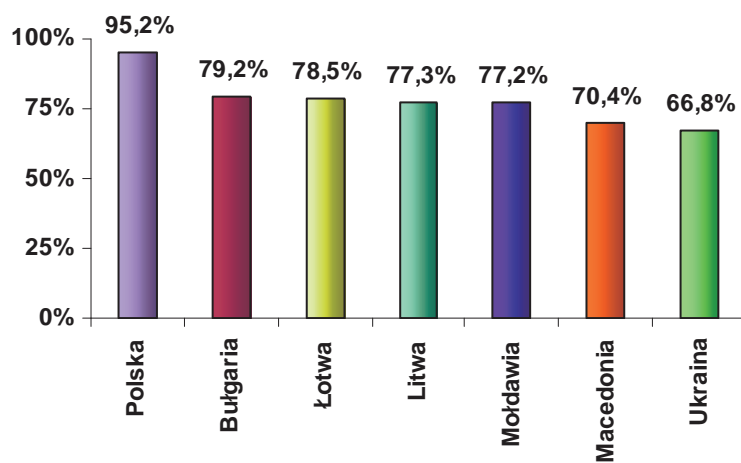
Hungry



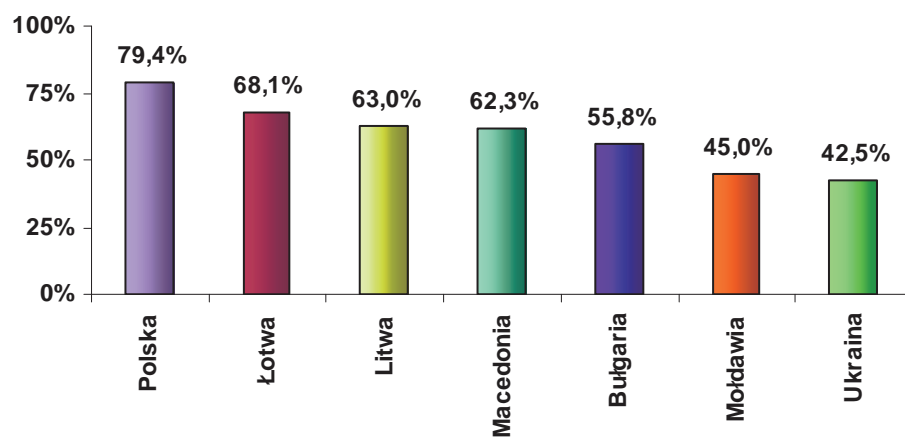
Dirty



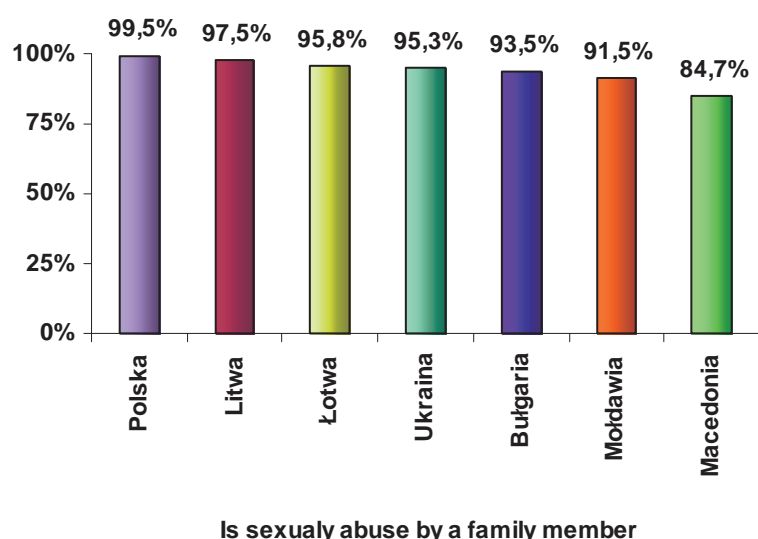
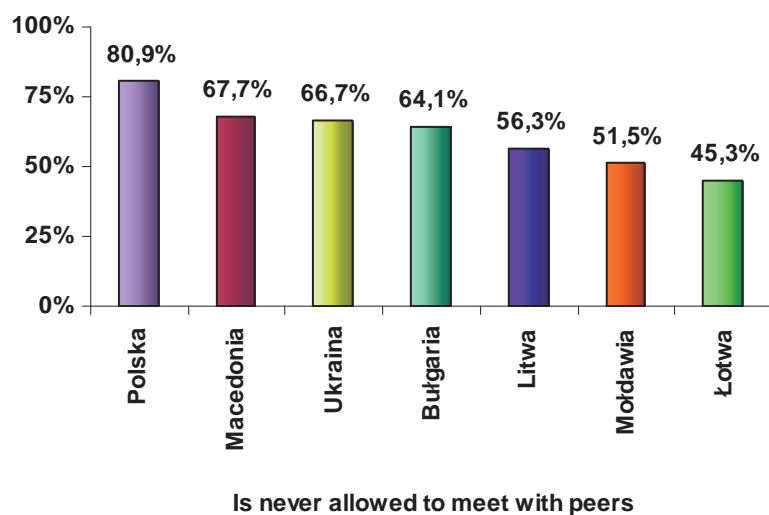
**Spends all days away from home**



**A parent is using rude language with the child**



**Force to permanently look after younger siblings**



The respondents speak in one voice not only in relation to various forms of child neglect, but also with regard to child sexual abuse by a family member. “You can’t turn a blind eye on such cases. Family members have no right to have sexual contact with the child” – this is the opinion expressed by a vast majority of respondents. Yet, we should note that more than 8,5% of teachers in Moldavia and more than 15% in Macedonia do not share this view.

There is a larger variation of opinions about such abusive behaviours as restricting the child’s freedom or overloading the child with duties. The respondents are not unanimous about parents’ right to burden children with the task of looking after younger siblings. An average of 68% of the participants believe that third parties should intervene in such cases. The proportion, however, is significantly lower in Ukraine (42,5%) and Moldova (45%). Sixty two percent of the sample (on average) condemned the parental practice of restricting children’s contact with peers.

## 5. Teachers' personal experience in undertaking interventions in cases of child abuse

### 5.1. The scale of respondents' personal experience

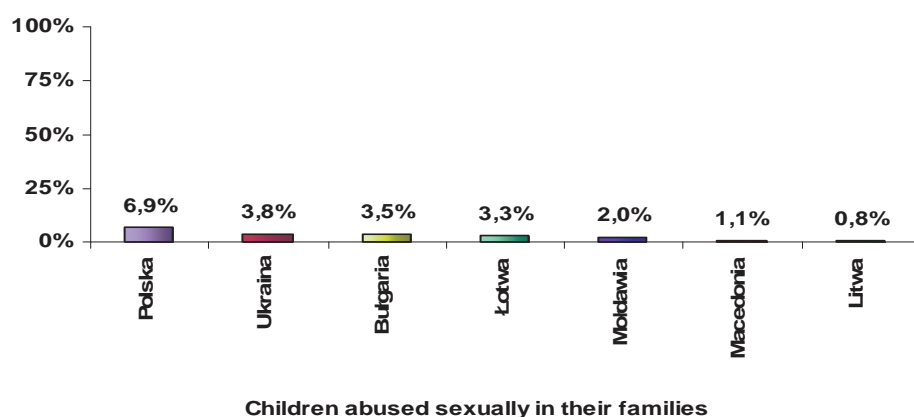
Due to their frequent, direct contact with children teachers are most likely – as compared with other professional groups – to identify cases of child abuse. They know children under their care, they see them almost every day, and they know their parents. So teachers may observe not only physical symptoms of abuse (bruises, lack of hygiene, etc.), but also changes in the child's behaviour, school performance, and peer relations. These areas of the child's psychological and social functioning may also signal his/her experiences, especially emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Moreover, teachers are persons to whom children themselves, as well as members of their families and other educators may report actual or suspected abuse.

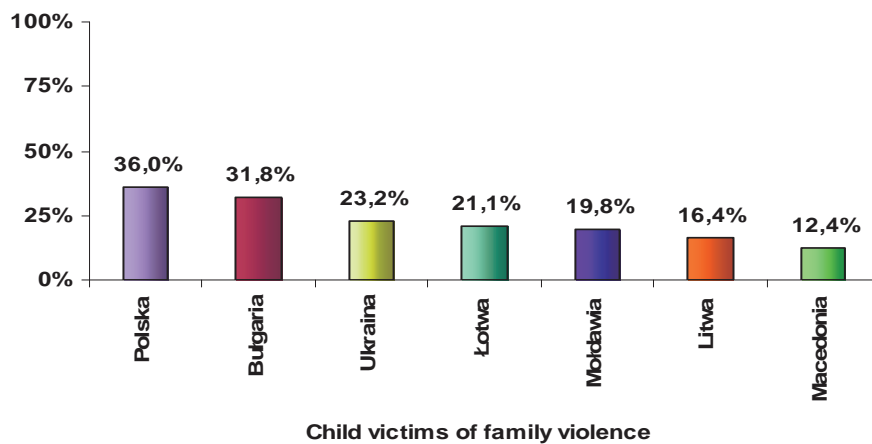
As shown in Figure 28, relative frequencies of encountering various forms of abuse among children under teachers' care are similar across countries. In all seven countries teachers were least likely to have contact with cases of child sexual abuse, and most likely – with cases of neglect and emotional abuse. Interestingly, contact with abused children was most likely to be reported by teachers in Poland. Teachers from Lithuania, Macedonia, and Ukraine were least likely to report personal experiences with abused children.

In comparison with the 2005 results, in 2009 the per cent of identified by teachers signs of children victimization was lower; sexual abuse (2005 – 5,1%; 2009 – 3,1%), physical violence (2005 – 24,9%; 2009 – 22,9%), emotional violence (2005 – 32,0%; 2009 – 29,1%) neglecting (2005 – 32,5%; 2009 – 30,9%).

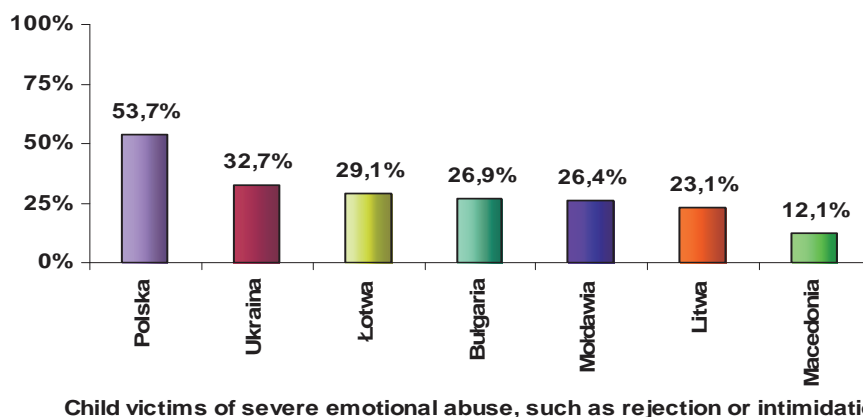
**Figure 28.**

*Have you encountered cases of ... in your professional practice in the past year?*

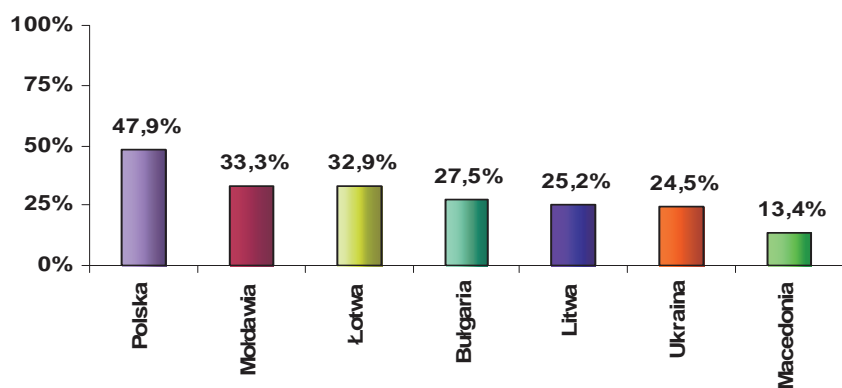




Child victims of family violence



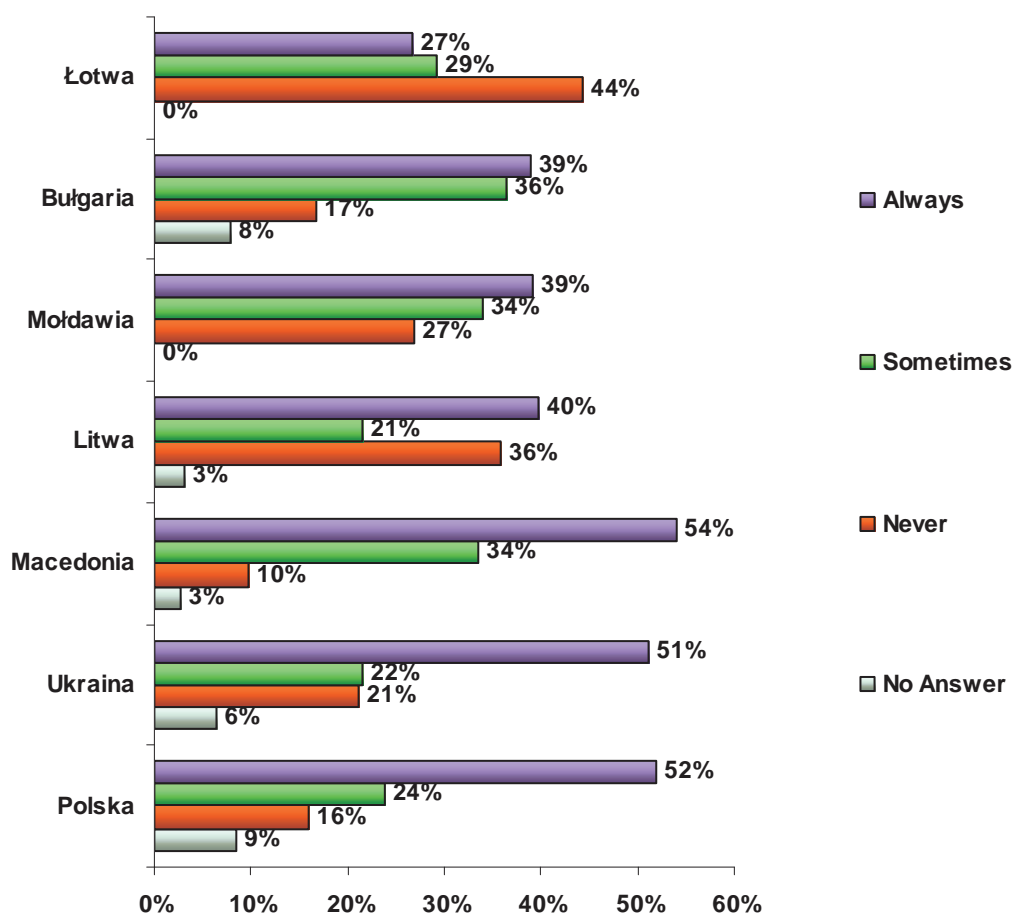
Child victims of severe emotional abuse, such as rejection or intimidation



Child victims of severe neglect - dirty, malnourished or denied proper medical care

Teachers, who had encountered cases of child abuse, were asked about whether they undertook any interventions. The highest proportions of teachers from Poland, Macedonia and Moldavia declare that they intervene whenever they perceive or suspect child abuse. However, the percentage of the “never” response was relatively high (44%–10%). It is difficult to interpret such findings conclusively. It would be dramatically alarming to conclude that more than one third of teachers in Lithuania and Latvia never react to perceived or suspected abuse of their students. However, it may be also presumed that in some situations teachers do not intervene because they know that another teacher, the school director or other services have already taken adequate action.

In the period of four years, increasingly raised the per cent of teachers who declare always undertaking intervention when necessary (32,3% in 2005; 43,1% in 2009)

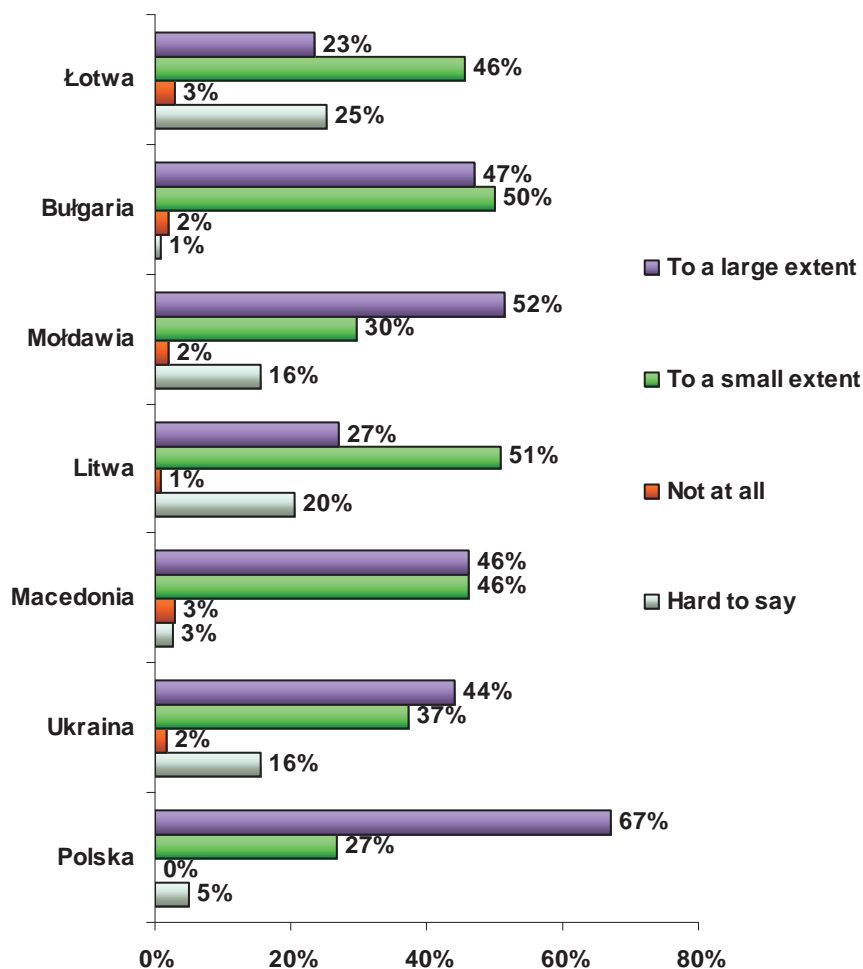


**Figure 29 .** *In cases of child abuse that you have encountered in the past year, did you take any action?*

## 5.2. Assessment of institutional help provided for abused children by various services

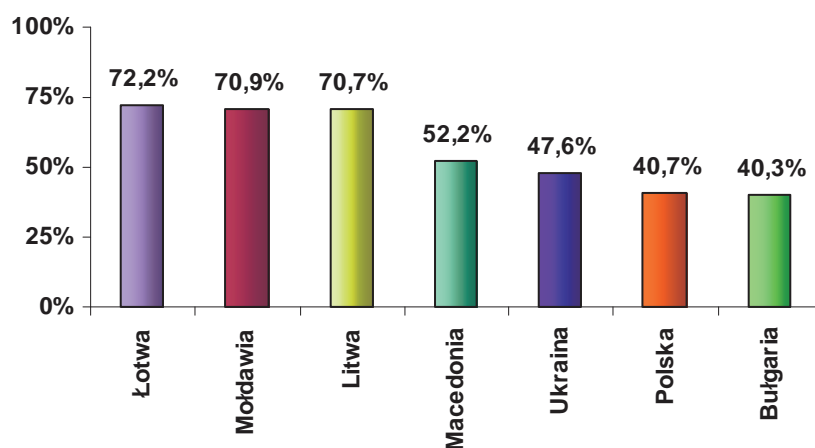
Many respondents had difficulties with assessing potential effectiveness of actions aimed at preventing child abuse. Is the problem preventable in the first place? “It’s hard to say” was the answer chosen by nearly one fourth of the respondents in Latvia, 20% in Lithuania and 16% in Ukraine. At the same time, however, few people believed that nothing could be done to prevent child abuse. Teachers from Poland (67%), Moldova, Bulgaria, and Ukraine were the most optimistic about this issue. They were most likely to express the opinion that it was possible to reduce the prevalence of child abuse.

Distribution of answers for that question was very similar to results from 2005.



However, optimism in the assessment of the nature of the child abuse problem, did not translate into positive evaluations of the help services available to abused children in the participants’ countries. The respondents who were most likely to believe that it was possible to

significantly reduce the prevalence of child abuse (teachers from Poland, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Macedonia), were also least likely to report that effective assistance is available to children in their country. The respondents' belief that something could be done is associated with criticism about what has actually been done. A majority of the respondents in each of the seven countries – and nearly 75% in Moldova, Macedonia, and Poland – think that institutions helping abused children rarely cooperate with each other.



**Figure 31.** *Do you think the existing institutional help services enable providing effective assistance for abused children in your country? (total percentage of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” responses).*

Asked about how well various services’ in their country are prepared to provide help or undertake interventions in cases of child abuse, the respondents had serious difficulties with assessing the work of police and health care services. Nearly one fourth of them chose the “hard to say” response. At the same time, the police and health care professionals are the two professional groups that were most likely to be criticized by the teachers in our sample. On average, only 16% of the participants believe that they provide help in cases of child maltreatment in families.

Professionals working at schools – teachers and school counsellors, as well as school psychologists – are the two groups judged most positively with regard to their actual level of readiness to provide help for maltreated children. The respondents did not find it difficult to evaluate these groups of professionals. After all, they were judging their colleagues and workmates. On average, 45% of the participants believed that in a critical situation children could count on school counsellors’ assistance, with only 4% of the sample expressing the opposite opinion. The most optimistic evaluations of school counsellors’ work were expressed by teachers in Bulgaria (58% believed that this group of professionals help abused children). This opinion was shared by only just under two thirds of the respondents from Ukraine and Macedonia.



In the period of four years, in general, teachers' opinions slightly changed.

**Table 9. The evaluations of assistance offered to abused children by various services: 2005 – 2009, (%).**

*How do you evaluate assistance offered by the following services to children maltreated in their families?*

	1.They don't help since they have no potential to help.	2.They don't help at all though they have some potential.	3.They try to help though their potential is limited.	4.They help.	5. It's hard to say.	6. No answer.
<b>POLICE</b>						
<b>2005</b>	8	16	35	11	23	7
<b>2009</b>	7	12	43	16	21	1
<b>DOCTORS</b>						
<b>2005</b>	10	14	26	16	26	8
<b>2009</b>	10	11	34	16	27	1
<b>SOCIAL WORKERS</b>						
<b>2005</b>	2	8	35	36	13	6
<b>2009</b>	2	7	38	39	12	1
<b>SCHOOL COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS</b>						
<b>2005</b>	2	4	42	45	4	3
<b>2009</b>	2	3	44	48	3	1
<b>TEACHERS</b>						
<b>2005</b>	2	4	48	40	4	3
<b>2009</b>	1	2	49	44	3	1

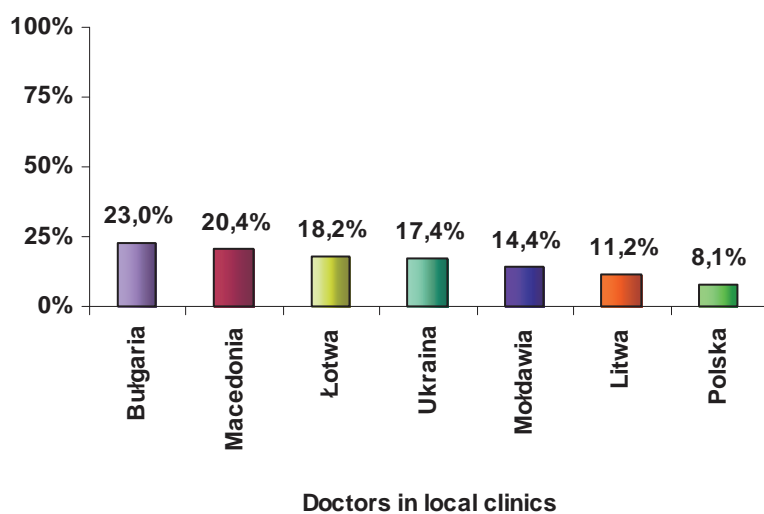
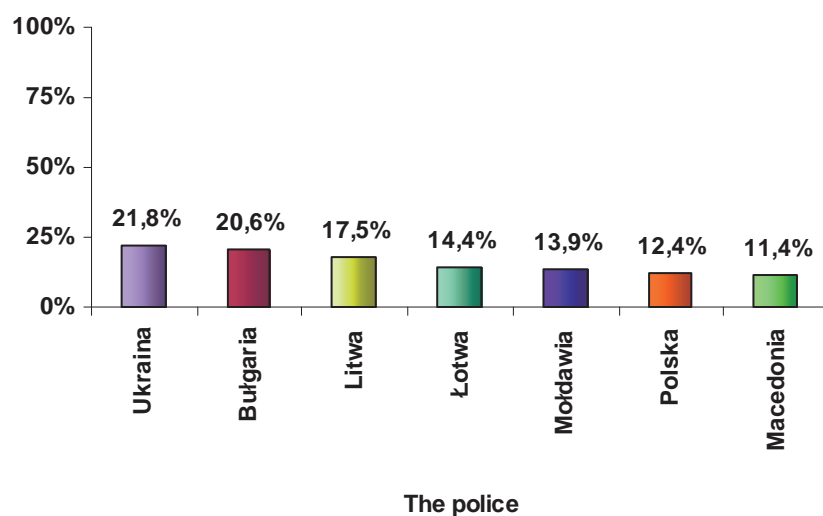
**Detailed data 2009**

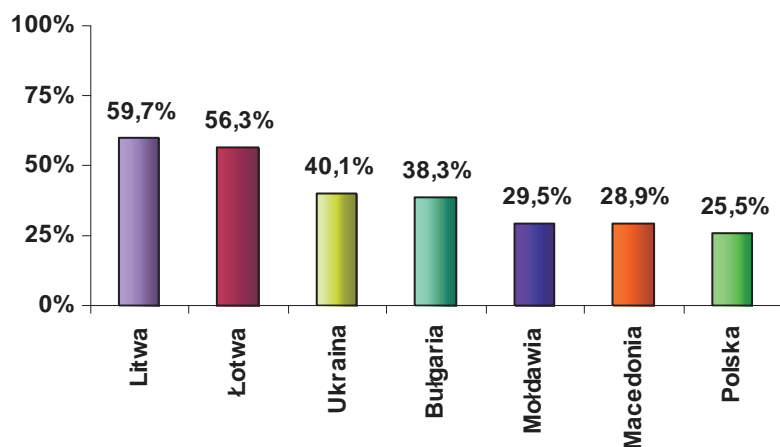
	They don't help since they have no potential to help	They don't help at all though they have some potential	They try to help though their potential is limited	They help	Hard to say	No answer
<b>THE POLICE</b>						
Poland	9%	10%	42%	12%	24%	2%
Ukraine	2%	15%	33%	22%	24%	4%
Macedonia	9%	14%	49%	11%	16%	1%
Lithuania	4%	4%	52%	18%	22%	0%
Moldova	13%	13%	37%	14%	23%	0%
Bulgaria	7%	12%	45%	21%	15%	0%
Latvia	6%	10%	48%	14%	22%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>DOCTORS IN LOCAL CLINICS</b>						
Poland	14%	23%	18%	8%	35%	3%
Ukraine	8%	6%	35%	17%	29%	4%
Macedonia	9%	9%	46%	20%	15%	1%
Lithuania	9%	7%	39%	11%	34%	0%
Moldova	13%	11%	38%	14%	24%	0%

Bulgaria	11%	10%	26%	23%	30%	0%
Latvia	8%	11%	38%	18%	26%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>SOCIAL WORKERS</b>						
Poland	2%	10%	40%	26%	21%	2%
Ukraine	1%	11%	37%	40%	8%	3%
Macedonia	5%	11%	49%	29%	6%	1%
Lithuania	0%	0%	35%	60%	5%	0%
Moldova	3%	6%	38%	30%	23%	0%
Bulgaria	4%	8%	31%	38%	18%	1%
Latvia	0%	4%	35%	56%	5%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>SCHOOL COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOLOGIST</b>						
Poland	1%	1%	48%	45%	4%	1%
Ukraine	1%	7%	49%	39%	1%	3%
Macedonia	3%	5%	59%	30%	2%	0%
Lithuania	1%	1%	43%	53%	2%	0%
Moldova	4%	2%	37%	54%	4%	0%
Bulgaria	2%	2%	32%	60%	5%	0%
Latvia	1%	1%	41%	55%	3%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>TEACHERS</b>						
Poland	2%	1%	53%	40%	4%	1%
Ukraine	1%	6%	51%	38%	1%	3%
Macedonia	4%	2%	60%	32%	2%	0%
Lithuania	0%	2%	46%	52%	1%	0%
Moldova	2%	1%	42%	54%	2%	1%
Bulgaria	2%	1%	34%	58%	5%	1%
Latvia	0%	2%	53%	42%	3%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>

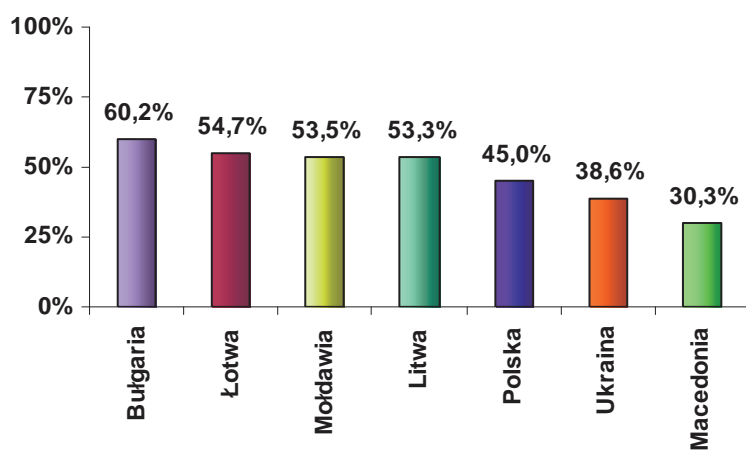
As regards teachers' activity, the highest proportion of the participants think that teachers try to help abused children, but they have limited capability to do so. Social workers were also assessed positively, though a bit more critically than school professionals. On average, 39% of the respondents believe that children may count on social workers' help.

**Figure 33.** *How do you evaluate assistance offered by the following professional groups to children maltreated in families? (percentage of “they help” responses).*

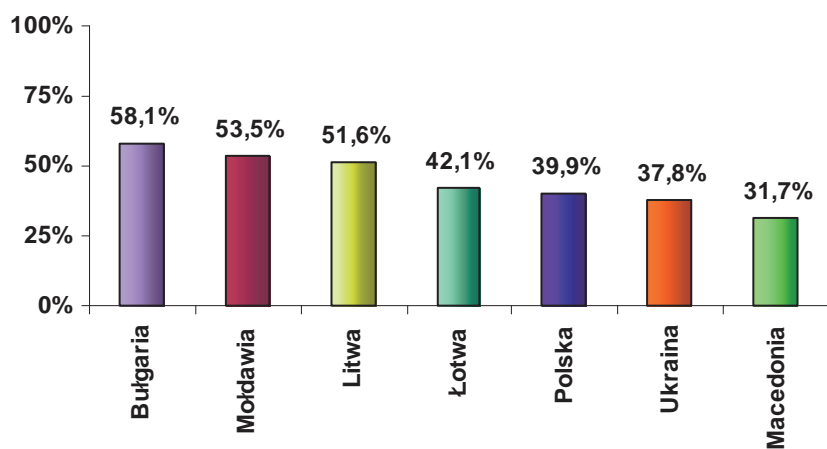




**Social workers**



**School counsellors and psychologist**



**Teachers**

A substantial proportion of teachers participating in the study notice dysfunctions in the procedures of legal intervention in cases of child abuse. Severe forms of physical violence and child sexual abuse are legally banned in all seven countries. As criminal offences, they should be persecuted, investigated, and adjudicated. A detailed presentation of national regulations for protecting children or legal procedures applied in these seven countries would go beyond the scope of this report. It is obvious, however, that in each country the police, prosecutors, and courts play specific roles at various stages of such interventions. The efficiency and effectiveness of actions undertaken by these institutions are often critical for ensuring safety for the child and adequate punishment for the offender. Do the respondents have knowledge about such actions? How do they evaluate them? What dysfunctions do they perceive as the most frequent?

Presumably, the fact that the respondents are relatively unlikely to identify cases of child abuse and even more unlikely to participate in interventions, contributes to their lack of knowledge about the realities and legal frameworks in this area. Asked about prosecutors' actions, more than 51% of the participants respond: "It's hard to say". Percentages of such answers are also high for other questions concerning dysfunctions in legal procedures.

A majority of the respondents who have a clear opinion on this issue are critical about interventions undertaken by the police at the stage of investigating criminal offences against children. This is consistent with their opinions about the police's activity in child protection, reported earlier in this report. On average, one fifth of the participants believe that the police often fail to intervene in cases of child maltreatment in families (30% of the participants who have an opinion on this issue). Few people think this is hardly ever a case.

One fourth of the participants (and a half of those who have an opinion on this matter) perceive the conditions of interviewing children during legal procedures as inappropriate. Although it is not clear what contributes to the respondents' negative opinions, we should bear in mind that the idea of child-friendly interviewing is just entering countries of the region.

The respondents generally criticize the practices of multiple interviewing and lengthy court proceedings in cases of child abuse. More than half of the general sample report this is a common problem in their countries. Only 3% think that courts work fast enough.

Respondents' critical opinions have not changed much in the period of four years.

**Table 10. Perceptions of dysfunctions in legal procedures in cases of child abuse 2005 – 2009, %.**

*Do you think that in the process of intervention in child abuse cases the following problems occur in our country?*

	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	It's hard to say	No answer
<b>Failure to undertake intervention by the police when a child abuse case has been reported</b>					
<b>2005</b>	20	35	13	28	4
<b>2009</b>	19	39	13	28	1
<b>Cases are discontinued by prosecutors (despite actual abuse experienced by the child)</b>					
<b>2005</b>	16	26	10	42	6
<b>2009</b>	15	24	9	51	1
<b>Inappropriate conditions and procedures of interviewing children</b>					
<b>2005</b>	26	22	4	41	7
<b>2009</b>	24	23	6	46	1
<b>Lengthy investigation and court procedures</b>					
<b>2005</b>	54	15	2	23	6
<b>2009</b>	48	15	3	32	1
<b>Lack of possibility to isolate the offender from the victim</b>					
<b>2005</b>	40	21	7	26	6
<b>2009</b>	37	21	8	33	1
<b>Lack of possibility to provide treatment for the offender</b>					
<b>2005</b>	34	19	7	32	8
<b>2009</b>	30	20	9	41	1
<b>Too mild sentences</b>					
<b>2005</b>	55	16	3	20	6
<b>2009</b>	52	18	3	26	1
<b>Failure to execute family courts' decisions</b>					
<b>2005</b>	55	16	2	20	5
<b>2009</b>	30	23	5	41	1

#### **Detailed data 2009**

	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Hard to say	No answer
<b>Failure to undertake intervention by the police when a child abuse case has been reported</b>					
Poland	9%	39%	19%	30%	2%
Ukraine	17%	39%	12%	30%	2%
Macedonia	30%	32%	15%	23%	0%
Lithuania	13%	42%	5%	41%	0%
Moldova	21%	47%	10%	22%	0%
Bulgaria	23%	39%	15%	23%	0%
Latvia	16%	38%	13%	33%	0%
Total	19%	39%	13%	28%	1%
<b>Application back out of notification</b>					
Poland	30%	40%	5%	24%	2%
Ukraine	17%	35%	7%	39%	1%

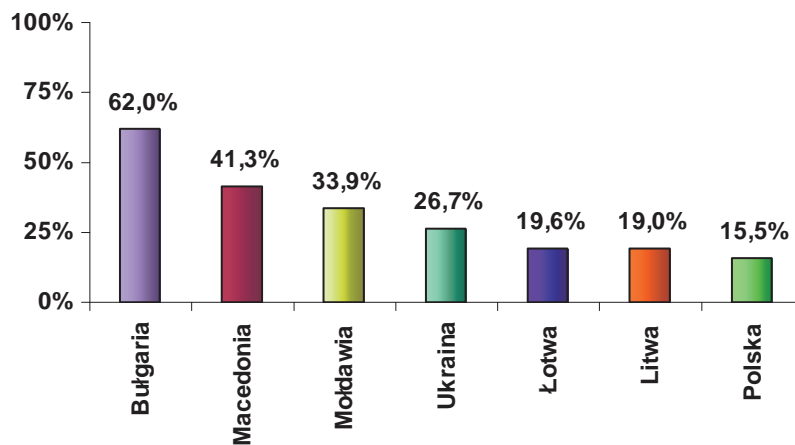
Macedonia	9%	31%	15%	45%	0%
Lithuania	22%	45%	2%	32%	0%
Moldova	27%	31%	8%	34%	0%
Bulgaria	25%	35%	6%	34%	0%
Latvia	16%	34%	7%	43%	0%
Total	21%	35%	7%	36%	0%
<b>Cases are discontinued by prosecutors (despite actual abuse experienced by the child)</b>					
Poland	16%	33%	8%	41%	2%
Ukraine	20%	22%	10%	46%	3%
Macedonia	5%	21%	13%	61%	0%
Lithuania	18%	32%	3%	47%	0%
Moldova	19%	24%	10%	47%	0%
Bulgaria	23%	28%	10%	39%	0%
Latvia	5%	13%	8%	74%	0%
Total	15%	24%	9%	51%	1%
<b>Inappropriate conditions and procedures of interviewing children</b>					
Poland	25%	31%	6%	36%	2%
Ukraine	22%	18%	8%	49%	3%
Macedonia	22%	19%	10%	50%	0%
Lithuania	21%	23%	5%	51%	0%
Moldova	25%	24%	4%	46%	0%
Bulgaria	37%	22%	5%	36%	0%
Latvia	15%	22%	6%	57%	0%
Total	24%	23%	6%	46%	1%
<b>lack of possibility to isolate the offender from the victim</b>					
Poland	51%	18%	3%	25%	2%
Ukraine	41%	19%	9%	28%	3%
Macedonia	21%	17%	13%	48%	0%
Lithuania	27%	26%	11%	36%	0%
Moldova	36%	23%	8%	33%	0%
Bulgaria	45%	22%	7%	25%	1%
Latvia	33%	23%	6%	37%	0%
Total	37%	21%	8%	33%	1%
<b>Lack of possibility to provide treatment for the offender</b>					
Poland	39%	27%	6%	25%	2%
Ukraine	38%	15%	8%	36%	3%
Macedonia	22%	16%	13%	48%	0%
Lithuania	22%	22%	10%	46%	0%
Moldova	22%	19%	9%	49%	0%
Bulgaria	39%	19%	8%	34%	0%
Latvia	21%	21%	7%	50%	0%
Total	30%	20%	9%	41%	1%
<b>To mild sentences</b>					
Poland	56%	24%	1%	17%	2%
Ukraine	44%	24%	4%	24%	3%
Macedonia	48%	12%	7%	34%	0%
Lithuania	51%	17%	1%	31%	0%
Moldova	60%	15%	3%	23%	0%
Bulgaria	65%	17%	1%	17%	1%

Latvia	41%	19%	2%	38%	0%
Total	52%	18%	3%	26%	1%
<b>Failure to execute family courts' decisions</b>					
Poland	44%	30%	3%	21%	2%
Ukraine	22%	28%	4%	43%	3%
Macedonia	23%	20%	10%	47%	0%
Lithuania	25%	26%	2%	48%	0%
Moldova	37%	22%	3%	38%	0%
Bulgaria	42%	24%	4%	30%	0%
Latvia	19%	16%	4%	61%	0%
Total	30%	23%	5%	41%	1%
<b>Lengthy investigations and court procedures</b>					
Poland	68%	15%	2%	13%	2%
Ukraine	35%	16%	2%	44%	3%
Macedonia	40%	13%	8%	38%	0%
Lithuania	56%	15%	1%	28%	0%
Moldova	42%	17%	4%	37%	0%
Bulgaria	65%	13%	2%	20%	0%
Latvia	39%	18%	1%	42%	0%
Total	48%	15%	3%	32%	1%

The respondents are also critical about the countries' policies toward child abusers. Lack of possibility to isolate the offender from the victim right after the case is reported or during the investigation, lack of treatment services for offenders, and too mild sentences in child abuse cases are the gaps and dysfunctions in the child protection system which are noticed by nearly all the respondents with sufficient knowledge to express an opinion on this issue. Similar consistency was found in the assessment of ineffective execution of family courts' rulings. More than half of the respondents believe that the child's situation often remains unchanged despite the court's decision.

One important indication of the respondents' attitudes toward law-enforcement institutions' strategies in this area is their opinions on protecting children exposed to abusive behaviour by parents.



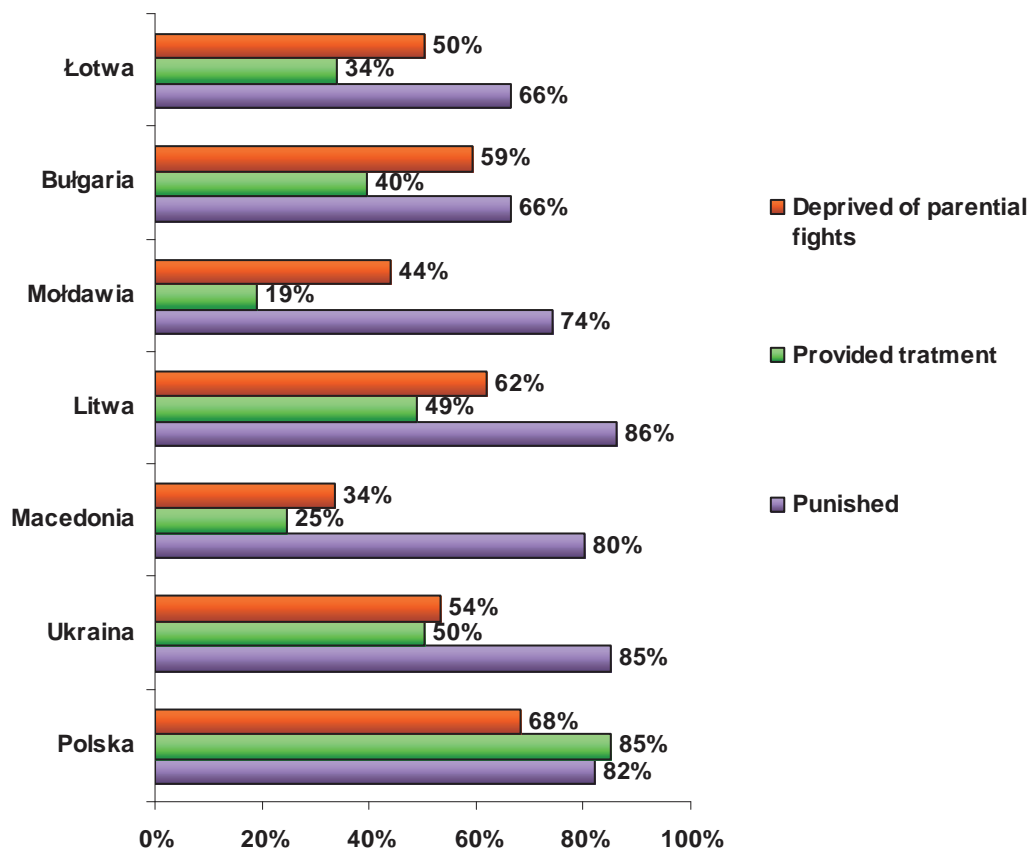


**One should always try to keep the child in the family notwithstanding his/her parents behaviour**

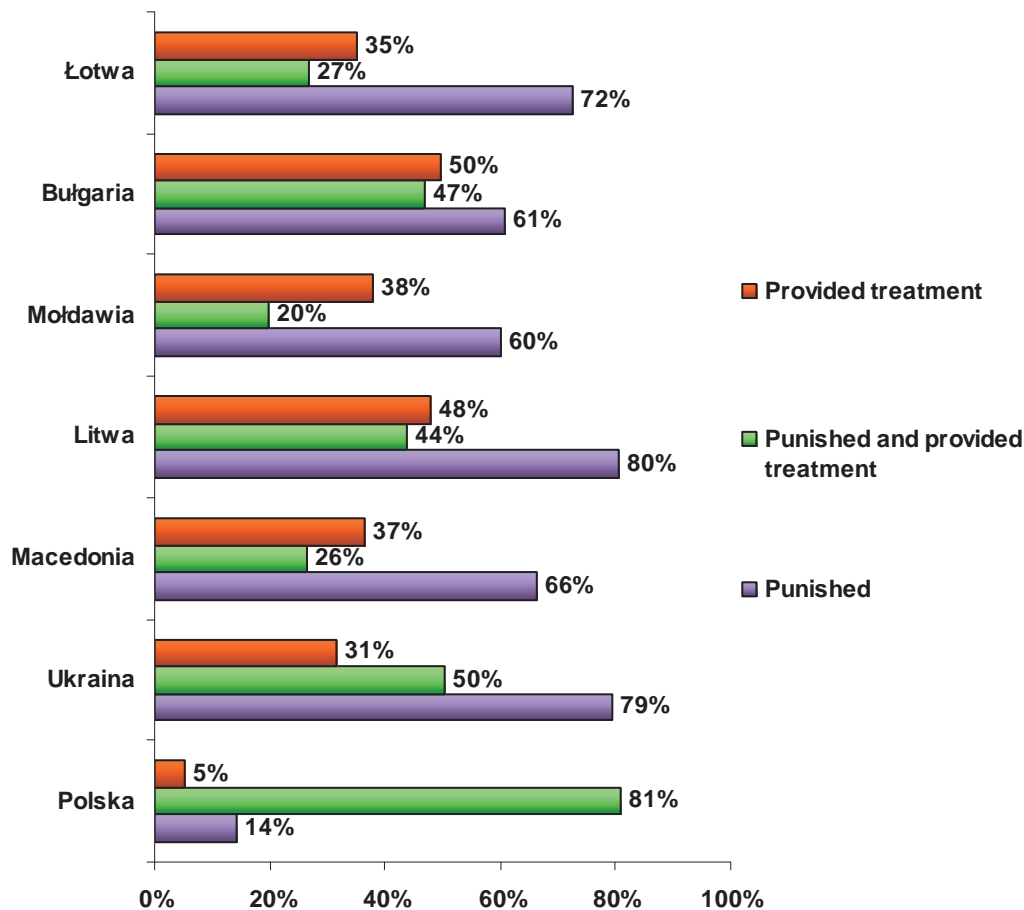
Total percentage of “definitely yes” and “rather yes” responses).

Proportion of the respondents would deprive a parent of parental authority for committing an offence against his/her child, such as severe beating or sexual abuse. Interestingly, in the hypothetical situation of severe beating leading to injuries, deprivation of parental authority was most likely (more than half of the sample) to be supported by teachers in Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Ukraine and Poland. The strategy of psychological support for abusive parents is most likely to be favoured by respondents from Poland (85%). Only in Poland the percentage of participants who support this form of intervention and prevention in child abuse cases is significantly higher than the percentage of those who believe that abusive parents should be punished or deprived of parental rights.

**Figure 35.** *Do you believe a parent who has beaten a child severely, leading to physical injuries, should be...*



**Figure 36.** *Do you believe a parent who has sexually abused a child should be...*



The proportions of respondents who think that abusive parents should be punished are significantly higher in relation to a father who has sexually abused his child. In this case the strategy of punishing is favoured by a vast majority of respondents in each of the seven countries included in the study. The support for the punishment strategy is often accompanied by a belief that psychological treatment should also be applied. 81% respondents in Poland think that a father who has committed incestuous sexual abuse should be punish and provided treatment.