

The Law and Justice Party win the parliamentary elections and the absolute majority

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Results

Abstract:

Five months after having been elected Andrzej Duda (PiS) as President of the Republic on 24th May last (with 51.55% of the vote) the Law and Justice Party (PiS) won the parliamentary elections that took place in Poland on 25th October. It won the absolute majority and should therefore be able to govern Poland alone over the next four years – a first in the country's history since the fall of communism in 1989.

The conservative and eurosceptic party, also extremely attached to Poland's Catholic identity led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, won 37.58% of the vote and 242 seats (+85 in comparison with the last parliamentary elections on 9th October 2011) in the Diet, the Lower Chamber of Parliament. It drew ahead of Civic Platform (PO), the party of outgoing Prime Minister Eva Kopacz, which won 24.09% of the vote and 133 seats (- 74).

Pawel Kukiz – a rock singer and protest candidate who won 20.8% of the vote in the first round of the presidential election on 10th May 2015 took third place with 8.81% of the vote and 44 seats.

Nowoczesna (N), a party led by liberal economist Ryszard Petru founded last May won its wager taking 7.6% of the vote and 22 seats. The party had campaigned on a liberal programme which aimed to attract young people, graduates and entrepreneurs

who were disappointed with the PO. The People's Party (PSL), a centrist, agrarian party chaired by outgoing Prime Minister Janusz Piechocinski, won 5.13% of the vote and 18 seats (- 10).

The left has disappeared from Parliament. The United Left Coalition (ZL, Zjednoczona Lewica), formed of the Alliance between the Democratic Left (SLD) led by Leszek Miller, Your Movement (TR, Twój Ruch) led by Janusz Palikot, the Socialist Party, the Greens and the Labour Union (UP), won 7.55% of the vote i.e. below the 8% necessary for a coalition to be represented in the Diet.

Turnout was slightly higher than that recorded in the last parliamentary elections on 9th October 2011: just over half of the Poles turned out to ballot (50.9%).

Results of the elections in the Polish Diet 25th October 2015

Turnout : 50.9%

Political Parties	% of votes won	No of seats won
Law and Justice (PiS)	37.58	242
Civic Platform (PO)	24.09	133
Pavel Kukiz Lists	8.81	44
Modern PL (Nowoczesna)	7.6	22
People's Party (PSL)	5.13	18
United Left (ZL)	7.55	0
German Minority		1
Others	9,60	0

Source :

<http://wyborcza.pl/0,143644.html#TRNavSST>

<http://www1.parlamentarny.pl/>

http://parlament2015.pkw.gov.pl/pliki/1445898069_Komunikat-pkw-zbiorcze-wyniki-glosowania.pdf

Results of the elections in the Polish Senate 25th October 2015



Eight years after its last electoral victory PiS does not just attract the poorest Poles, the losers in the economic transition, those living in the country and the most religious, but also many young people who did not experience the communist period and who are concerned about their vulnerability on the labour market and their living standards. "The new

generation has no – and quite rightly – awareness of the immense leap the country has made since 1989," indicates Ben Stanley, a political analyst from the University of Warsaw. Moreover, the real improvements in living standards has led to an increase in aspiration on the part of the Poles. "The feeling of well-being has never been as high but the

appreciation of the country's general situation is still poor. Most people who vote for the PiS approve of its motto of a "Poland in ruins" and of the representation of a poor, unequal, unfair Poland," stresses Janusz Czapinski, a sociologist just a few days before the election.

The PiS multiplied its promises during the electoral campaign: reduction of the retirement age (set at 67 at present for men and 65 for women) to 60 for women and 65 for men, a reduction in taxation on the poorest Poles and on small businesses, an increase in the minimum salary, a reduction in VAT, the payment of a monthly allocation of 500 zlotys (-117.30 €) for each children, free medicine for the elderly over 75. All of these measures are due to cost between 40 to 60 billion zlotys (9 to 14 billion €). The PiS also held an anti-migrant discourse – popular in Poland. Against the introduction of European quotas for refugees, Jaroslaw Kaczynski was quick to accuse Muslims of wanting to impose sharia law in certain parts of Sweden, of wanting to use churches as toilets in Italy and of making trouble in France, Germany and the UK. He also spoke of "epidemics and parasites" which migrants are supposed to carry, notably cholera, which in his opinion is already spreading across the Greek islands, just like dysentery in the Austrian capital of Vienna.

Finally the PiS has succeeded in renewing and rejuvenating its leading ranks: after the election of 53 year old Andrzej Duda, as President of the Republic, 52 year-old Beata Szydlo, is due to become the country's next Prime Minister.

Jaroslaw Kaczynski, has found inspiration with his Hungarian neighbour Victor Orban, and notably his decision in 2010 to tax multinationals and economic business sectors where there is high foreign investment (energy, telecommunications, finance and the supermarkets). "The PiS hopes to make the economy "Polish" again by introducing new taxes on banks and supermarkets similar to that in force in Hungary and by limiting the transfer for profits abroad by non-Polish companies which are established in the country," maintained one of Jaroslaw Kaczynski's advisors, Piotr Glinski. Two

thirds of the banks and most supermarkets are held by foreigners in Poland. "The PiS wants to introduce a different State model from that in practice in the traditional western democracies, an authoritarian system which will marginalise the legal institutions," indicates Adam Michnik, director of the daily newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza. His editor in chief, Jaroslaw Kurski, shares the same point of view and maintains that although "Jaroslaw Kaczynski is not Prime Minister he is in fact the uncontested leader who will decide everything: the appointment of ministers, the director of the national TV channel, the directors of the Central Bank and of the State's businesses." These are fears shared by many political observers.

Outgoing Prime Minister Eva Kopacz (PO) quickly acknowledged her defeat indicating however that the party "had not lost the last eight years. Poland is a country that is moving forward from an economic point of view and in which unemployment is a single figure. This is the state in which we are leaving the country to those who have won the election today," she added.

The PO has paid for the 8 years it has been in office and has fallen victim to the test of time. In spite of its good economic results, the country has been marked by the inequalities of development and the PiS has had the easy part in showing that all of the Poles have not benefited from the fruits of the country's economic dynamism. "In terms of GDP Poland has grown rich but many Poles have grown poorer," stressed Kazimierz Kik, a political analyst. Over the years its leaders have appeared – either rightly or wrongly – to be arrogant and disconnected from the population. The illegal phone tapping scandal (with the use of compromising bad language, involving many personalities from political and economic life) which started in June 2014 severely damaged the party's image and destabilised the government that was led by Donald Tusk (PO) at the time. The investigation that followed the publication of these conversations led to the arrest of several people and to the resignation of the leader of parliament, Radoslaw Sikorski, and three ministers in June. "PO has not succeeded in communicating with people. Donald Tusk was charismatic but we did

not see him. People said: 'we want politicians who talk to us'. This has been the major success in the PiS campaign," analyses Ireneusz Krzeminski of the Institute for Sociology at the University of Warsaw.

PO was unable to embody change and the party's bid to play on the fear of a return of Jaroslaw Kaczynski did not work. Pavel Dobrowolski, an economist at the Sobieski Institute believes *"the PO's biggest sin was the lack of strategic vision in its economic policy. It was passive and missed major reform such as that of the civil service and the simplification of its tax policy and the continuation of the privatisation process."*

One question remains: with the PiS in office again – will it succumb to its nationalist, populist demons? Many believe that the party has changed and that

it will not make the same mistakes as in its first mandate (2005-2007) when it tried to impose moral order in Poland. Likewise on a European level, a member of the European Conservatives and Reformists in the European Parliament alongside the British Conservative Party, it knows that the country, the leading beneficiary of European funds, needs this aid to continue its development. Warsaw will receive 82.5 billion € between 2014 and 2020 i.e. the equivalent of its annual budget. *"The European Union is our house and we need it but we have to do what others are doing: take care of our own interests,"* indicated Beata Szydlo during her electoral campaign. The new Polish government will certainly be against any further progress towards greater European integration such as the transfer of any further competences over to Brussels.

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