

The first round of the presidential election in Poland will finally take place on June 28

Poles will be called to the ballot box on June 28 for the first round of the presidential election, said Elzbieta Witek (Law and Justice, PiS), President of the Sejm (Zgromadzenie Narodowe), the lower house of Parliament, on June 3. [Initially planned for May 10](#), this election was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability of the government, led by Mateusz Morawiecki (Law and Justice PiS) to find a compromise with the opposition regarding the method by which to vote, as well as its legal nature.

If no candidate obtains more than 50% of the votes cast, a second round will be held on July 12.

The presidential election was postponed on May 6. On May 7, the Diet adopted, on second reading, an amendment to the Electoral Code and thus confirmed the postponement of the vote. Three days later, the Electoral Commission noted that it was technically impossible to hold the presidential election. Parliament then had two weeks to announce the new date for the election, which had to be held within the next 60 days. On May 12, the PiS introduced a bill to repeal the previous reform. Once adopted, the text provides for the holding of a conventional ballot with the possibility of voting by mail for voters who request it no later than 12 days before the vote, a period reduced to 5 days for those placed in quarantine. Voting may nevertheless take place by post alone in certain regions if the Ministry of Health deems it necessary.

Those already in the running for the presidential election were able to maintain their candidacy but new candidates were also able to enter the race. On June 1, the Senate therefore approved the amendment to

the Electoral Code and the holding of the presidential election on the basis of a "mixed" vote (in polling stations and by post). Two days later, the Speaker of the Sejm set the election date for June 28.

This presidential election might nevertheless be deemed unconstitutional. The Polish Constitution prohibits any amendment to the electoral law less than 6 months before voting day. Several people might therefore turn to the Supreme Court to challenge the legality of the ballot, particularly if the result is close.

The candidates running

10 people are officially candidates in the presidential elections on June 28 and July 12:

- Andrzej Duda (Law and Justice, PiS), outgoing President of the Republic, running for a second term;
- Rafal Trzaskowski, current mayor of Warsaw and former Minister of Administration and Digital Technology (2013-2014), is the candidate of the Civic Platform (PO) led by Grzegorz Schetyna ;
- Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, Chairman of the Peasant Party (PSL);
- Robert Biedron MEP, leader of the left-wing Wiosna party (Spring);
- Szymon Holownia, journalist and presenter, independent candidate;
- Krzysztof Bosak, MP, National Movement (RN);
- Miroslaw Piotrowski, Real Europe Movement;
- Stanislaw Zoltek, Congress of the New Right (KNP);
- Marek Jakubiak, former MP, independent;
- Pawel Tanajno, business leader, independent.

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On May 15, the Vice-President of the Parliament, Malgorzata Kidawa-Blonska, candidate of the Civic Platform (PO), credited with less than 5% of the votes in the opinion polls, chose to withdraw from the electoral race. The following day, the Mayor of Warsaw, Rafal Trzaskowski, replaced her. Rafal Trzaskowski had seven days to collect the 100,000 signatures of support required for his candidacy.

The other 9 candidates were allowed to use the signatures collected in April and May.

A strange election campaign

Large cities support the PO candidate and although the countryside remains favourable to the PiS, Rafal Trzaskowski can nevertheless try to mobilise the inhabitants of medium-sized towns (between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants) in his favour. He is campaigning hard throughout Poland, visiting up to five of these municipalities a day.

The opposition candidate promises to build a Poland "that offends no one" and to play a real role as a counter-power, using the right of veto and legislative initiative conferred on the President of the Republic. *"He is running a good campaign. He talks of new solidarity, a slogan that rallies Poles together, from the youngest to those who experienced the Solidarity movement in the 1980s. The effect he is having is a novel one, he is trying to stand out from the other candidates in his bid to try to unify as much as possible. He is not too critical of the PiS or the other candidates. He makes reference to Catholicism, and expresses respect for the former*

President of the Republic (2005-2010), Lech Kaczynski, twin brother of the current head of the PiS (who died on April 19 2010 in the crash of the presidential plane in Smolensk (Russia))," said Ewa Marciniak, professor of political science at the University of Warsaw.

Outgoing head of State Andrzej Duda is promising to build a new bridge over the Vistula River in Warsaw. He has made many social promises, including the allocation of a children's holiday grant for people on the 500+[1] family allowance programme, new investment in infrastructures, local development, the environment and the modernisation of the health system, spending which he believes will help create one million jobs.

According to the latest survey carried out by *Pollster* on June 9 and 10, the outgoing head of State Andrzej Duda is expected to lead the first round of the presidential election with 41.17% of the vote. Rafal Trzaskowski is expected to win 28.14%, Szymon Holownia 14%, Robert Biedron 5.22%, Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz 4.99% and Krzysztof Bosak 4.97%.

The second round would therefore pit the outgoing President against the Civic Platform candidate. The polls show that Andrzej Duda might then find it difficult to mobilise beyond his own camp. Hence, only a third of Krzysztof Bosak's voters (34%) say they are ready to vote in his favour in a second round. On the other hand, Rafal Trzaskowski might succeed in attracting the votes of several of the candidates in the first round, or even the undecided, to his name.

[1] Monthly allowance of 500 zlotys (€125) paid for each child in families with the lowest income and from the second child onwards in families receiving the average wage (5,000 zlotys or €1,300).

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