

European
Elections monitor

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RESULTS

Karol Nawrocki wins the presidential election in Poland by a hair's breadth

Karol Nawrocki, director of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), the body responsible for prosecuting Nazi and Soviet crimes against Poles, who was supported by the main opposition party, Law and Justice (PiS), won 50.89% of the vote in the second round of voting on 1 June. He narrowly beat Rafal Trzaskowski (Civic Platform, PO). The latter, mayor of Warsaw and former Minister of Administration and Digitisation (2013-2014), won 49.11% of the vote. Only 369,591 votes (out of a total of 19,603,784 votes) separated the two men at the end of the election, even fewer than in the previous presidential election on 12 July 2020, when Rafal Trzaskowski was defeated in the second round, by 422,385 votes.

The mayor of Warsaw led the first round on 18 May with 31.36% of the vote, narrowly ahead of his rival, who won 29.54% of the vote.

Karol Nawrocki won in rural areas of Poland with 63.4% of the vote. Furthermore, according to exit polls, he benefited greatly from the transfer of votes from Slawomir Mentzen, the candidate of Confederation (K), a far-right alliance comprising his party, New Hope (NN), and the National Movement (RN), an ultra-nationalist group led by Krzysztof Bosak, who came third in the first round with 14.81% of the vote. According to the polls, nearly nine out of ten Slawomir Mentzen voters (87%) switched their support to the PiS-backed candidate on 1 June. Five years ago, Krzysztof Bosak's (RN) votes were

split almost equally between the two candidates remaining in the second round.

Before giving any voting instructions, Slawomir Mentzen organised a meeting with each of the candidates in the second round, asking them to sign an eight-point charter. Karol Nawrocki accepted all the demands (no tax increases, easier access to weapons, opposition to Ukraine's accession to NATO, rejection of any transfer of new powers to the European Union), while the Civic Platform candidate rejected half of them. Following these consultations, Slawomir Mentzen declared that he saw 'no reason to vote for Rafal Trzaskowski'.

The presidential election on 18 May and 1 June reflects the weakening of the two main parties that have shaped the country's political landscape for the past 20 years. In the first round on 18 May, Rafal Trzaskowski and Karol Nawrocki together won 60.90% of the vote, the lowest combined result for the two parties, and, more significantly, 22.70% among the youngest voters. The left remains reduced to a mere shadow of its former self in Poland, while the far-right opposition is gaining ground with each election.

Turnout was very high, with seven out of ten Poles (71.63%) casting their ballots. This is the highest turnout ever recorded for the second round of a presidential election, exceeding that of the first round (+4.32 points) and that of the second round of the previous election in 2015 (+3.45 points).

Presidential election in Poland

1st June 2025

Results of the presidential elections of 18 May and 1 June 2025 in Poland

Turnout: 67.31% (1st round) and 71.63% (2nd round)

Candidates	Number of votes obtained (1st round)	Percentage of votes received (1st round)	Number of votes obtained (2nd round)	Percentage of votes received (2nd round)
Karol Tadeusz Nawrocki (backed by Law and Justice, PiS)	5 790 804	29.54	10 606 877	50.89
Rafal Kazimierz Trzaskowski (Citizens' Platform, PO)	6 147 797	31.36	10 237 286	49.11
Slawomir Jerzy Mentzen (Confederation, K)	2 902 448	14.81		
Grzegorz Michal Braun (Confederation of the Polish Crown, KKP)	1 242 917	6.34		
Szymon Franciszek Holownia (Poland 2050, PL2050)	978 901	4.99		
Adrian Tadeusz Zandberg (Together, razem)	952 832	4.86		
Magdalena Agnieszka Biejat (independent)	829 361	4.23		
Krzysztof Stanowski (independent)	243 479	1.24		
Joanna Senyszyn (independent)	214 198	1.09		
Marek Jakubiak (Federation for the Republic, FdR)	150 698	0.77		
Artur Bartoszewicz (independent)	95 640	0.49		
Maciej Maciak (Movement for Prosperity and Peace, RDiP)	36 371	0.19		
Marek Marian Woch, (Non-partisan local authority activists, BS)	18 338	0.09		

Source : <https://wybory.gov.pl/prezydent2025/pl/2/wynik/pl>

Ultimately, the PiS's decision to nominate a candidate who was little known to the general public (as was also the case with Andrzej Duda when he was first elected on 24 May 2015) and who was not a member of the party proved to be a winning strategy. He was able to attract his compatriots by appealing to their nationalist sentiments. Furthermore, unlike many former ministers, he could not be held responsible for the malpractices of former PiS elected officials currently on trial. Numerous revelations were made during the election campaign concerning his involvement in hooligan brawls and his acquisition of a former social housing property at a supposedly preferential price from an elderly and disabled person in a precarious situation in Gdansk. Karol Nawrocki was even accused of pimping while working as a security guard at a luxury hotel in Sopot, a seaside

resort on the Baltic Sea. None of these accusations weakened his electoral base, and the candidate was able to play upon his position as a victim.

'I ask for your forgiveness. I know you were expecting faster change and that political gangsters were in power. Today, it is gangsters in the literal sense who want power. This cannot go on! Poland, wake up!' Prime Minister Donald Tusk (PO) had urged his compatriots between the two rounds of voting.

This plea went unheard, and the Polish people chose to continue the cohabitation between their president and their prime minister, a situation that makes it very difficult for the state to function and for certain reforms sought by the current government led by the Civic Platform to be implemented. The President of

the Republic of Poland has the right to veto any law passed by parliament. This veto can be overturned, but only by a three-fifths majority in a vote in which at least half of the members of parliament are present. The current government majority does not have enough votes to achieve this majority and override a presidential veto. Cohabitation was the real issue at stake in this election.

Donald Tusk is struggling to implement his policies as he would like, which is causing growing discontent among Poles. Karol Nawrocki is likely to continue blocking the government's programme, particularly on social issues (abortion, the morning-after pill, LGBT+ rights, etc.), and could reignite tensions with the European Union on the rule of law, which is a priority issue. He could also change Poland's ties with neighbouring Ukraine. It should be remembered that Karol Nawrocki, whose slogan was 'Poland first, Poles first', is opposed to Kyiv's immediate entry into the European Union and NATO and wants to reduce the aid available to Ukrainian refugees in Poland. *'Karol Nawrocki is a doctrinaire, he is ready and he has said so: his main mission will be to block Donald Tusk's government,'* said Wawrzyniec Konarski, rector of the University of the Vistula. *'Karol Nawrocki would undoubtedly be an even tougher and more determined opponent of Donald Tusk's government than Andrzej Duda,'* said political scientist Robert Alberski.

Political analysts are now wondering about the future of Donald Tusk's government. Could the confrontation with the new head of state lead to institutional deadlock, forcing Donald Tusk to call early parliamentary elections?[1] *'With Karol Tadeusz Nawrocki, it will not be a question of cohabitation but of open struggle. He makes no secret of the fact that his presidency would be a tool to block Donald Tusk's government and call early parliamentary elections. The frustration of the current voters of Donald Tusk's government would grow, so that the possibility of a return of Law and Justice to power could become a reality even before 2027,'* said Anna Paczesniak, professor of political science at the University of Wrocław.

Karol Nawrocki, 42, is from Gdansk and holds a PhD in history. He also has an MBA from the Gdansk University of Technology. In 2009, he began working at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), an organisation responsible for prosecuting Nazi and Soviet crimes against Poles. Between 2017 and 2021, he was director of the Second World War Museum in Gdansk. He then returned to the Institute of National Remembrance in 2021, where he was elected president. On 1 June, Karol Tadeusz Nawrocki was elected President of the Republic of Poland. He will succeed Andrzej Duda, whose term ends on 6 August.

[1] These are planned for the autumn of 2027.

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