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Andrzej Duda is elected President of the Republic of Poland

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Abstract :

Outgoing Polish head of State Bronislaw Komorowski (Civic Platform PO) did not succeed in making good the gap that was created after the first round of the presidential election and was beaten in the second round on 24th May with 48.45% of the vote by Andrzej Duda (Law and Justice PiS) who won 51.55% of the vote. The latter came out ahead in the first round on 10th May to everyone's surprise with 34.76% of the vote, ahead of Bronislaw Komorowski who won 33.77%.

Independent candidate Pavel Kukiz was the other surprise in the first round of the election. The rock singer, actor and former regional MP for Lower-Silesia came third with 20.8% of the vote. In the second round he called on the Poles to go to ballot without however saying how they should vote. Turnout in the second round was higher than that of 10th May (+5.4 points) totalling 55.34%.

The Polish vote also expresses the population's wish for change as well as a feeling of lassitude regarding Civic Platform, in office for the last eight years. "The Poles want change. They no longer want the generation that has been governing Poland for the last 25 years," indicates Eryk Mistewicz, a political analyst. "The first round of voting showed that voters were tired with the present elite and with the present government system," stressed Maciej Gdula, a sociologist at the University of Warsaw. In Bronislaw Komorowski, who made security and continuity the focus of his campaign, the Poles saw the representative

of these elites, whilst they deemed that 43 year-old Andrzej Duda might bring change. "Those who voted for me voted for change. I really believe that we can rebuild national community in our country, that we can join together and revive Poland," declared Mr Duda when the first results were revealed.

The result clearly shows that from an electoral point of view the country is split in two with the west and the north of Poland voting for the outgoing president and the east and part of the south voting for the PiS candidate.

Presidential election results 10th and 24th May 2015 in Poland

Turnout: 48.96% (1st round) and 55.34% (2nd round)

Candidates	No. of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
Andrzej Duda (Droit et justice, PiS)	5 179 092	34.76	51.55
Bronislaw Komorowski (Civic Platform, PO)	5 031 060	33.77	48.45
Pavel Kukiz (Independent)	3 099 079	20.80	
Janusz Korwin-Mikke Mikke (Coalition for the restoration of freedom and hope in the Republic, KORWiN)	486 084	3.26	
Magdalena Ogorek, supported by the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	353 883	2,38	
Adam Jarubas (Farmer's Party, PSL)	238 761	1,60	
Janusz Palikot (Your movement, TR)	211 242	1,42	
Grzegorz Braun (Independent)	124 132	0,83	
Marian Kowalski (National Movement, RN)	77 630	0,52	
Jacek Wilk (Congress of the New Right, KNP)	68 186	0,46	
Paweł Tanajno (Direct Democracy, DB)	29 785	0,20	

Source : Polish Electoral Commission http://prezydent2015.pkw.gov.pl/325_Ponowne_glosowanie

A BAD CAMPAIGN BY BRONISLAW KOMOROWSKI'S

The outgoing President of the Republic might be criticised for the poor quality of his electoral campaign. Bronislaw Komorowski underestimated his main rival (and even the others since the independent candidate Pavel Kukiz came in surprisingly 3rd on 10th May) and made the fatal mistake of considering that the presidential election was just a formality.

The defeat was severe for the man himself and also for his party, Civic Platform, under whose governance Poland has been since 2007 with the country experiencing the highest economic growth rate in its history (+20% in all) and a clear improvement in the Poles' living standards. Poland is also the only EU Member State not having experienced recession during the 2008 economic crisis.

Poland has also succeeded in making a place

for itself within the EU within which it is respected and listened to as a country – this was illustrated by the appointment of its former Prime Minister Donald Tusk (PO) (2007-2014) as President of the European Council on 1st December 2014. Many Poles believe however that a great number of their fellow countrymen and women are not benefiting (or not enough) from the results of this growth.

In the two rounds Bronislaw Komorowski promised a great deal : the creation of 100,000 jobs for young people (the latter represent 40% of his electorate according to the exit polls), a referendum on the modification of the voting system (relinquishment of the proportional representation system and the introduction of a single list majority system for the Diet – the lower chamber of parliament) – one of the points in Pavel Kukiz's programme – and the possibility of retiring after 40 years of work. Bronislaw Komorowski also won, according to the polls, the first TV debate in which Andrzej

Duda took part on 17th May. The second debate took place four days later on 21st May but was more balanced. 11 million Poles watched the debates on TV.

The outgoing President of the Republic was also backed by the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk. The latter, who visited Gdansk on 15th May, indeed warned his fellow Poles about politicians who were challenging European integration. Bronislaw Komorowski finally received the support of the leader of the Polish Farmers' Party, Economy Minister Janusz Piechocinski, and former head of State (1995-2005) Aleksander Kwasniewski. "Given the situation that prevails in the countries neighbouring Poland we need an experienced president and not an experimental one," stressed the latter.

Mikolaj Czesnik, a political scientist now foresees two futures for Civic Platform after the presidential election: "The first is the party's collapse, everyone will scatter in fear of failure of the next parliamentary elections (this autumn). One or two new parties will be created to replace it. The second theory is that there will be thought about how to mobilise those who are great in number in spite of everything who supported Mr Komorowski. If this succeeds Civic Platform might still be able to win the parliamentary elections," he declared.

UNKNOWN UNTIL RECENTLY, ANDRZEJ DUDA SUCCEEDED IN EMBODYING CHANGE

Chosen by PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who preferred to devote himself to the upcoming parliamentary elections and who hopes to become Prime Minister again, Andrzej Duda (PiS) held no less than 250 meetings in four months in as many towns and villages across the country. He has promised a great deal. Hence he has promised to bring the

retirement age down to 65 (set at 67 in 2012), to reduce taxes, to make social security free for employees with low income. These measures are however the competence of the government and parliament.

The new Polish president is extremely attached to the idea of national sovereignty. He hopes to "firstly defend national interests" and said he wants the State to control the most important sectors of the economy! He wants to reduce the influence of foreign banks in the country and privilege the interests of Poland in its relations with the EU. He is also against the adoption of the single currency, which in his opinion, will lead to significant price increases.

Andrzej Duda is also asking for the establishment of NATO bases in Poland in response to the Russian threat.

Finally a conservative regarding societal issues, he is against abortion, opposes the acknowledgement of homosexual couples and rejects IVF treatment. The Polish Catholic Church congratulated him on his victory.

WHO IS ANDRZEJ DUDA?

Aged 43 and from Krakow Andrzej Duda is a graduate of the faculty of law and administration at the University of Jagellonne in Krakow. A legal advisor he was appointed Deputy Justice Minister in the government led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski (PiS) from 2006 to 2007. He worked closely with Polish President Lech Kaczynski (PiS), who was killed in a plane crash on 10th April 2010. He was the party's spokesperson for some months from November 2013 to January 2014. Andrzej Duda was elected MEP (ECR) during the most recent European Elections on 25th May 2014. On 11th November last he was chosen by Jaroslaw Kaczynski to stand for PiS in the presidential election. Unknown to the man in the street just a few months ago Andrzej

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Duda will officially take over from Bronislaw Komorowski on 6th August next.

Andrzej Duda's victory is a warning to Civic Platform and might very well open the way to the PiS's return to office in the upcoming elections in the autumn. When the results were announced Andrzej Duda thanked Bronislaw Komorowski for his words of encouragement and also all of the Poles who voted for him saying that he wanted to "see even more of them at the next elections..."

For his part the outgoing President declared, "We have faced harder challenges, known more difficult battles. It is up to us to transform failure into success. We shall win."

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