

# The Future of Polish Foreign and Security Policy in the context of Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in 2015

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## Introduction

The results of the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections in Poland have brought a change in the political scene in Poland, which will determine the future of Polish foreign and security policy as well as Poland's position in the European Union and NATO in the next four years. For the first time in history since the political transformation in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries, the winning party – Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) has reached an absolute majority in the parliamentary election, will govern alone for the next four years. Based on the official results (released on October 27, 2015), Law and Justice had been supported by 37,58 percent of the vote, putting it far ahead of the current ruling party – Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) with 24,09 percent. Therefore, the results would give Law and Justice 235 seats, against 138 seats for Civic Platform, in the 460-members lower house (Sejm), and 61 seats in the 100-members upper house of parliament (Senat). Three other parties will also be sitting in the Sejm: Kukiz'15 (founded by a former leader of a popular rock band in Poland in the 1990s) with 9 percent of the vote and 42 seats; Nowoczesna.pl (Modern) – 7,1 percent and 28 seats, and finally the Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) supported by 5,2 percent of the vote and receiving 16 seats.

In turn, the other big story of the 2015 election was the failure of the United Left (Zjednoczona Lewica) which only received 6,6 percent of the vote. It is a messy mix of greens, socialists, radicals and post-communists, who have been trying to rebuild themselves since the fall of the last central left wing government in 2005, but they could not reach more than obligatory 8 percent of the vote needed to enter the Sejm by coalition.

## Constitutional Matters: Who is a Driving Force of Polish Foreign and Security Policy

The constitution of the Republic of Poland from April 2, 1997, defines the Polish foreign and security policy as a main domain of the government and its ministries (article 146) in cooperation with the President of the Republic of Poland (article 133).

Moreover, the president remains Poland's highest representative on international level (article 126) and the highest head of the Polish Armed Forces. The president is also involved in nominating generals and picking up the Chiefs of Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. However, the Chiefs of Staff are nominated for serving terms and each single change, e.g., replacements are required to have a counter-signature from the prime minister based on the defense minister's opinion. Unfortunately, the vague wording of the article 133 remains unclear, caused misunderstandings between the Civic Platform government and President Lech Kaczyński in the years 2007–2010, concerning who should represent Poland on the highest level during the European Council Meetings.

The main bodies providing aid and support to the president in executing security and defense tasks are: the National Security Bureau (BBN) and the Chancellery of the President (Kancelaria Prezydenta RP). The National Security Bureau (BBN) provides advice and support, preparing short and long term analysis of the various security threats and risks, as well as organizing the National Security Council meetings, in accordance with the Constitution from 1997. The Chancellery of the President, on the other hand, is mainly focused on providing logistical support to daily routines of the president, planning his domestic and international visits, as well as organizing mass media briefings. Besides logistical and organizing matters, the Legal and Legislative Office of the Chancellery is responsible for preparing draft versions of legal acts to be introduced to the Sejm on the initiative of the president, analyzing all acts presented to the president for signing and formulating applications to the Constitutional Tribunal, the State Tribunal and the Sejm as well as preparing applications pertaining to ratifying or revoking international agreements.

## Security Challenges facing Poland in 2015 and beyond

The Polish foreign and security policy is based on three vital pillars: the membership in the EU with participation in CSDP, the NATO membership, and eventually the bilateral ties with the United States.

The membership in both organizations, and the bilateral alliance with the US should be considered as the milestones of Polish foreign and security policy of the 21st century. However, Poland has taken steps to strengthen its own military capabilities and continue the modernization process of its army. In fact, the transformation of the Polish Armed Forces has been underway since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, whereas the NATO enlargement on March 12, 1999, and Poland's accession into the EU on May 1, 2004, has opened a completely new chapter of these efforts. The Polish Armed Forces has bought foreign military equipment in large numbers, including: 48 American F-16 jet fighters in 2002, Finnish armored vehicles manufactured by Patria's Armored Modular Vehicle, Israeli Spike anti-tank missiles, Swedish Saab RBS-15 Mk3 naval missiles, Norwegian Kongsberg NSM anti-naval missiles, German Leopard 2 tanks but also sold almost half of its military industry to western investors, e.g., Sikorsky Aircraft manufacturing and assembly facilities in Mielec (former Polish aerospace manufacturer – PZL Mielec), and an Anglo-Italian multinational helicopter design and manufacturing company AugustaWestland based in Świdnik (former PZL Świdnik).

Furthermore, Poland has invested heavily in its relations to the US military by supporting all American wars in the framework of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) after 9/11. Warsaw was one of the first nations to send its troops to Afghanistan during US operation Enduring Freedom and the Polish Special Forces Unit GROM was involved in the combat missions along US Navy Seals since the beginning of the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Subsequently to the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime, the Polish Armed Forces launched the largest foreign operation since the World War II. For the first time in history, the Polish Armed Forces were responsible for the occupation zone called the South Central Zone, which had a population of about 5 million spread over 65,632 square kilometers, and was in command of the seventeen other nations taking part in the mission.

The EU and NATO enlargements have settled Poland along the NATO eastern flank as well as the





