



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on October 17, 2023

Pro-Euro Polish Party Gains Traction in Recent Elections, Dealing Blow to Ruling Party

Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party was ahead in a national election, but fell short of a majority, final official results revealed on October 17. The official results from 100 percent of voting districts disclosed that PiS gained 35.38 percent of votes; the opposition and pro-EU Civic Coalition (KO) won 30.70 percent; the center-right Third Way came in third with 14.40 percent; New Left had 8.61 percent; and the nationalist Confederation party got only 7.16 percent of the votes.



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An Ipsos exit poll published following nationwide elections on October 15 likewise depicted PiS in the lead, but not adequately enough to form a government.

While the Ipsos poll had PiS emerging top with 37 percent of the vote, giving the party a head start to set up a governing coalition, the next three placers — Civic Coalition at 32 percent, Third Way at 13 percent, and the New Left at 8.6 percent — garnered ample backing to impede PiS's efforts, leaving it with only the nationalist Confederation party (with just 6.2 percent of the vote) as a possible ally.

The first move to form a government arguably belongs to Polish President Andrzej Duda, a former PiS member who has exhibited loyalty to the party. Duda has admitted that past presidents hitherto have selected the leader of the largest party to try to form a government.

According to Poland's constitution, the president has to call a new parliamentary session within 30 days of the election, then has 14 days to name a candidate for the post of prime minister. After getting selected, the nominee has 14 days to win a vote of confidence in Parliament, failing which Parliament would choose a nominee for the role.

Should Duda remain with PiS, the three opposition parties — Civic Coalition, Third Way, and New Left — could wait till December to form a government. Together, they have 249 seats in the new legislature.

The Third Way is a coalition of two parties — Poland 2050, established by TV host [Szymon Hołownia](#), and the Polish People's Party (PSL), the country's oldest political force representing the peasantry. Meanwhile, the Polish Left is a combination of three small groupings whose leaders have been at bitter odds with one another.

Opposition leader Donald Tusk now leads the KO party — which joined the Third Way alliance and the New Left party to constitute what seemed to be the winning faction. A former prime minister and European Council president, Tusk is part of the European People's Party in the European Parliament. The European Commission moved to halt Poland's voting rights as an EU member based on a so-called Article 7 procedure, [blocked](#) the payout of €36 billion in loans and grants from the alliance's Covid-19 recovery fund, and sued Poland at the Court of Justice of the EU, while the European Parliament passed



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resolutions condemning Warsaw's alleged undermining of EU principles.

Referencing the Ipsos outcome, Tusk declared it as “the end of the bad times, the end of Law and Justice rule.” “Never in my life have I been so happy about taking second place,” Tusk, prime minister from 2007 to 2014, declared in an address to supporters in Warsaw. “Poland won, democracy won.”

In the wake of the Ipsos exit poll results, a columnist for *Rzeczpospolita*, a news outlet, [declared](#) that Tusk had “become the king of Europe” by successfully returning to domestic politics and defeating the PiS government.

Victory for Tusk and his allies would push Poland closer to the globalist EU, which has penalized PiS for contesting EU law with Poland's own by withholding more than €35 billion (\$37 billion) in aid during the party's eight-year hold on power.

Notably, PiS leader Jarosław Aleksander Kaczyński announced that his party's electoral performance was a great success, but not great enough.

“The question before us is whether this success will be able to be turned into another term of office of our government,” Kaczyński admitted to supporters at his party's headquarters, encouraging them to “have hope” and pledging that “regardless of whether we are in power or in the opposition, we will implement this project [for Poland].”

Following the Ipsos poll results, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki from PiS tried to sound optimistic about the outcome.

“We won,” Morawiecki proclaimed, hailing the results as a “historic victory” because PiS had become the first party in Poland to win the most votes in three consecutive parliamentary elections. “We will definitely try to build a parliamentary majority,” [said](#) Morawiecki.

PiS had positioned its election messaging on a campaign of stricter migration policy, greater social spending, enhanced military strength, and supporting Ukraine against Russia without permitting cheap Ukrainian grain to jeopardize Polish farmers' livelihoods.

For their part, all three opposition parties campaigned on pledges to boost ties with the EU, including by undoing PiS judicial reforms and liberalizing abortion and LGBT policy.

Various media outlets have hailed the election as the most significant in Poland's post-communist history, explaining how voter turnout — including 600,000 Poles living abroad — surpassed even the number of voters who headed to the polls in 1989, in the country's first democratic election.

Prior to the finalized election results on October 17, unofficial sources within PiS had told *The European Conservative* that if PiS loses, the party would use their control of the Polish presidency to impede any progressive legislative agenda. The same sources hinted that the party could ultimately profit from a short-lived coalition of mayhem in Warsaw led by Tusk.

The nationalist Confederation party unexpectedly performed poorer than expected, with only 7.16 percent of support. A few months ago, the Confederation had risen in popularity to double-digit support in the polls, leading many pundits to posit that it could play a kingmaker role in determining whether PiS or opposition parties would be able to govern.



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