



*Dear Michał,*

*What are currently the main forces in Polish politics? How can they be expected to perform at the forthcoming parliamentary elections?*



Over the last ten years, there have been two major parties that have dominated the struggle for power in Poland. The first one is centre-right 'Civic Platform' (Platforma Obywatelska - PO), which has been in power for eight years, and the second one is right wing-populist party 'Law and Justice' (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS).

Identifying some personalities may give a better clue for outsiders: The Civic Platform is the party of Donald Tusk, who has now accepted the position of President of the European Council in Brussels. Law and Justice, on the other hand, is a party led by Jarosław Kaczyński, the twin brother of the former Polish president who died in airplane crash in Smolensk in 2010.

There are other contenders: some re-united leftist parties, an old Polish Peasants' Party, a newly emerged neoliberal party named 'Modern.pl' (Nowoczesna.pl), and the both ultra-liberal and ultra-conservative KORWiN's party, the name of which is derived from its leader, the European Parliamentarian Janusz Korwin-Mikke, famous for his shocking statements in Brussels (like 'immigrants are scum'). And there is the anti-establishment 'Kukiz' 15', also named after its leader, the rock musician Paweł Kukiz.

Current opinion polls, carried out ten days before the elections by Millward Brown, show that PiS is leading in voters' support with 32%, while PO ranks second with 22%. The United Left has a 10% support, followed by Modern.pl, and KORWiN, Kukiz'15 and the Peasants' Party, all with 5%. This is not innocuous, as the threshold for representation in the 'Sejm' – the local name of the Polish Parliament – is precisely 5% (8% for coalitions). 13% of the voters are as yet undecided, and 1% support the leftist-democratic 'Together' initiative that has emerged from the urban grass-roots movements and remains, at least for the time being, insignificant.

To put it shortly, it seems that majority of the seats in the Parliament will be divided between two parties from the right: the populist PiS and the centrist PO. The rest is uncertain, and the future ruling coalition will depend on the fact which parties will actually make it beyond the 5% threshold and into the 'Sejm'. Experience tells us that entering a coalition with PiS can end with court charges for the partner, as it happened to the leaders of the 'Samoobrona' party between 2005 and 2007...

*Best wishes,*

*Michał*

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