

## INFOCUS

### **The possible impact of the 2023 Polish elections on the European Union**

C4EP analysis on the subject – *Not that PiSsed up anymore? – Implications of the 2023 Polish general elections on the EU*

“The 2023 Polish parliamentary election (held on 15 October 2023) has been widely expected to bring serious changes to Poland, and some to European politics as well, many hoping to see the fall of the right-winged governing party Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS) out of power after a long time and Poland taking a new, more pro-European track under the leadership of Donald Tusk, previous Polish Prime Minister, President of the European Council and of the European People’s Party.

During these elections, Polish people were to fill up seats in both the Sejm and the Senate, the first one being relevant to a potential new government. (Additionally, a referendum of four questions concerning economic and immigration policy of the government was held, but it has no real relevance to the governmental changes, it was more of a propaganda-tool by the government). The real question was if the “United Right” coalition (made by PiS and its allies) can hold its Sejm majority, giving the possibility to Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki to form a second government against the opposition (a coalition of the parties Civic Coalition, Third Way, and The Left), lead by Donald Tusk.”

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*A New Start for Poland*

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## C4REPORT

*EPC: Beyond the elections: What's next for European democracy? – 23 October 2023*

„Alin Mituta (...) underlined a critical issue, stating that the European elections tend to pivot more around national concerns than of European nature ones. According to him, this constitutes a significant problem.”

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*C4EP: European Elections Through Young Eyes – 24 October 2023*

“The aim of this C4EP-organized conference was to have an informal discussion on the upcoming elections and the challenges facing the European Union in terms of youth participation, political initiatives, and strategies to encourage greater involvement of young people in politics.”

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*EPC: EU membership in a new era: Serbia's perspective – 26 October 2023*

„Ana Brnabic, Prime Minister of Serbia welcomed that enlargement is back on the EU agenda, even though she assumes that 2030 is a very optimistic estimation. According to her, it's not likely to happen in 2030, but Serbia is going to be ready anyway. She hopes that her country can also settle the currently open issue by then: the dialogue with Pristina.”

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## C4EPOSITION

Ivan Botoucharov, Accredited Parliamentary Adviser, European Parliament, EPP Group

Through their active participation in the parliamentary elections (74% voter turnout – highest since 1919!) the Polish people have given us three important – and highly uplifting – messages:

*1. One of the largest and most geopolitically key EU member states will once again be a constructive player in European politics.*

The spiral of declining relations between Poland and the EU institutions posed a significant risk to the stability and integrity of the union. The strong pro-European result in the Polish elections creates a new clean slate and a huge sigh of relief from all those that cherish European unity. On a very practical level €35 billion, to which Poland is entitled, should soon be unfrozen from the EU's Recovery Fund.

*2. Partners are important.*

The wide range of political parties that have been voted into parliament, and will need to forge a coalition together, demonstrate that it is essential to be able to work with partners. This is something that is hard to achieve for populist parties which have extreme ideological positions and are therefore hard-pressed to find governing partners.

*3. The illiberal turn is not a one-way street.*

Providing that civil society is active, democracy remains strong – even if institutions are eroded. This is an important and encouraging example for opposition and civil society actors in other countries that have seen a decline in the system of checks and balances in recent years.