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**Several remarks on the context and consequences of the parliamentary elections in Poland
of 13 October 2019**

Any elections – notwithstanding their subject or territorial scope – take place in a specific legal and political context. Such are also the ensuing consequences thereof. I shall try to scrutinize each of the above mentioned areas.

1. The pre-election period

In the area of legal solutions, it should be noted that it was a subsequent election carried out under the provisions of the Electoral Code of 5 January 2011 (Journal of Laws 2011, No. 21, item 112). It is a single legal act describing both the general principles for the organization of elections in Poland as well as the rules for the individual types thereof. It is worth noting that the Code introduced single-mandate constituencies in the elections to the Senate which in general failed to eliminate the dependency of that chamber on political parties, though – which shall be discussed further on – resulted in unconventional electoral decisions (countering the results of the elections to the Sejm), e.g. casting wasted votes.

In light of Polish systemic solutions the parliament is bicameral, which means there are two chambers – though they are not, as it is frequently erroneously thought, a lower chamber and a higher chamber. With a view to its modest powers as compared with the Sejm, the Senate plays an ancillary and supplementary role vis-à-vis the first chamber.

The Polish political scene is still *in statu nascendi*. For many years the fact that there were no left-wing groups represented in the parliament and the struggle between Law and Justice (PiS) and Civic Platform (PO) suggested formation of a bi-party system. The results of the last elections negated that thesis. Poles are still searching for their representation going beyond what is offered by the two above mentioned parties. In the political context, it is also

worth noting that PiS, like PO in 2011, ran for a second victory in a row and getting an absolute majority in both chambers.

2. The elections and their consequences

The 13 October rivalry between the electoral committees ended with the victory of PiS in the elections to the Sejm, though eventually that party failed to get more than 50 seats in the Senate. A consequence of this state of affairs is the majority of the opposition in the second chamber, although – it should be emphasized – it is slight and actually based on one vote. Considering the powers of the Senate, it may become an inhibitor of the legislative process, that is be more actively than during the previous term involved in the making of law, for instance using the possibility of proposing amendments. Since the Sejm will be able to reject those amendments by the absolute majority, it is appropriate to use the term “inhibitor” rather than “blocker” of the will of the ruling party.

The results of the elections also allowed to get seats by the grouping which were not present in the Sejm for some years or ever, i.e. Lewica (the Left) and Konfederacja (Confederation). It is my belief that the consequences of the multi-partisan political scene are as follows: diversification of the opposition and minimization the opportunity to form one united bloc; greater competition among right-wing parties; more animated debates in the parliament.

The last remark concerning the consequences of the elections will be a look at their victor. Although PiS got over 230 seats in the Sejm, though it counted for more, as the Chairman of PiS – Jarosław Kaczyński – remarked on the electoral evening right after the exit poll results were announced. Functioning within the formation of the United Right (Zjednoczona Prawica) PiS has to take into account the interests of its inner coalitionists – Agreement (Porozumienie) and Solidary Poland (Solidarna Polska).

Finally, it should be remembered that 2020 is also an electoral year. The 5-year term of President Andrzej Duda is coming to an end. And although this fight will absorb individual candidates, it would be naïve to say that it will not embrace the entire political scene. After

all, the individual candidates are backed by the parties without the involvement of which the chances for victory in the presidential elections in Poland are really minimal.

Attachment

Results of 2019 elections to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland

Committee	No. of votes	% of votes	No. of seats	% of seats
KOMITET WYBORCZY PRAWO I SPRAWIEDLIWOŚĆ	8 051 935	43,59%	235	51,09%
KOALICYJNY KOMITET WYBORCZY KOALICJA OBYWATELSKA PO .N IPL ZIELONI	5 060 355	27,40%	134	29,13%
KOMITET WYBORCZY SOJUSZ LEWICY DEMOKRATYCZNEJ	2 319 946	12,56%	49	10,65%
KOMITET WYBORCZY POLSKIE STRONNICTWO LUDOWE	1 578 523	8,55%	30	6,52%
KOMITET WYBORCZY KONFEDERACJA WOLNOŚĆ I NIEPODLEGŁOŚĆ	1 256 953	6,81%	11	2,39%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW KOALICJA BEZPARTYJNI I SAMORZĄDOWCY	144 773	0,78%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW MNIEJSZOŚĆ NIEMIECKA	32 094	0,17%	1	0,22%
KOMITET WYBORCZY SKUTECZNI PIOTRA LIROYA-MARCA	18 918	0,10%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY AKCJA ZAWIEDZIONYCH EMERYTÓW RENCISTÓW	5 448	0,03%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY PRAWICA	1 765	0,01%	0	0,00%
Total	18 470 710	100,00%	460	100,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY POLSKA LEWICA	94 988	0,52%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW ROZWÓJ PODKARPACIA	94 028	0,52%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW PRZYWRÓCIĆ PRAWO	92 006	0,51%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW RUCHU „OBYWATELE RP”	85 720	0,47%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW „WSPOLNY SENATOR MARZENA DĘBNIAK”	55 729	0,31%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY ŚLONZOKI RAZEM	50 071	0,28%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW MNIEJSZOŚĆ NIEMIECKA	49 138	0,27%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW KUKIZ15 DO SENATU	46 210	0,25%	0	0,00%
KOMITET WYBORCZY WYBORCÓW DEMOKRACJA OBYWATELSKA	44 956	0,25%	1	1,00%

<https://wybory.gov.pl/sejmsenat2019/>