

No 50



INSTYTUT SPRAW PUBLICZNYCH
THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Analyses & Opinions

Analizy i Opinie

**What will the new Polish
Government's policy be in Europe
after the parliamentary and
presidential elections?**

Piotr Maciej Kaczyński

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- *There will be more continuity in Polish foreign policy making than one would have thought. The PO's dominant position in the foreign affairs domain of the new Government indicates a positive attitude towards deepening European integration and new political initiatives, provided they respect Polish national interests.*
- *The future of the CFSP is essential for the Polish foreign policy. It should include an Eastern dimension (towards CIS and Russia), and Europeanisation of energy policy.*
- *Integrity in the West (Europe and the USA) in global affairs is a key objective. This may lead to tensions with some Western European partners but their better understanding of Polish interests will prevent repetition of recent clashes.*
- *There will be few new political ideas originating from Poland, as the country will focus on internal economic development. On Europe it will defend the status quo. In addition, opposition to certain new Western proposals is likely, i.e. concerning narrower, deeper political integration.*

Introduction

In a few weeks time, the PO (Civic Platform) and the PiS (Law and Justice) will take over the running of Poland. However, the two parties will not start to shape Polish policy in Europe on 25 September. They are, in fact, co-responsible for the direction of the SLD (Democratic Left Alliance) Government's EU policy. After all, it was

Jan Rokita, the PO candidate for the premiership, who first uttered the motto 'Nice or death' from the parliamentary podium.

This paper is an attempt to examine the future policy of the Polish Government after the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections. Key sources used for this document were official PiS and

PO programmes, as well as speeches and statements by the parties' leaders, including the PO presidential and prime ministerial candidates, Donald Tusk, and Jan Rokita, Minister of Foreign Affairs candidate, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski and Defence Minister candidate, Bronisław Komorowski, as well as the

PiS presidential and prime ministerial candidates, Lech Kaczyński and Jarosław Kaczyński. However, it is important to stress that actual policy always differs from programmes and statements, and is often shaped by outside developments and unpredicted events.

The Concepts of Europe

For both the PO and the PiS, the general concept Europe is based around the idea of solidarity, though PiS adds the adjective "Christian". The Kaczyński brothers' party seems to have fewer aspirations about the EU than the PO. In principle, the PiS wants to maintain European solidarity. The Civic Platform presents the EU with a lot more challenges. Most of them cover fundamental foreign policy issues such as security, historical memory and the capacity for further EU enlargement (especially towards Eastern Europe).

The PiS distinctly defines the ultimate goal, *finalité politique*, of European integration as a 'Europe of nations' based on the continent's cultural diversity. Even though the PO does not specify the final form of this integration, its politicians declare support for deeper political integration, which seems to reflect the views of the majority of Poles.

The new Government's foreign policy will be based mainly on historical values. The reason behind this is a need to compensate for Poland's 'economic weakness' with a different strength. This will be a constant challenge for Poland, at least until it reaches a GDP (which in 2004 was 240 billion USD, equal to Denmark) similar to the Netherlands (580 billion USD in 2004).

The attitude towards the United States is another important factor in Poland's foreign policy. On the one hand, the PiS prefers a policy of equal distance between Washington and Brussels. On the other hand, the PO calls for the establishment of a political Europe, under one fundamental condition. This united Europe cannot be built in opposition to the United States. Moreover, the PO supports a strong American presence in Europe.

The PO calls for creating a Europe based on historical memory. European political thinking needs to include Central Europe's heritage. There are many examples of peaceful political coexistence between many nations within one state here, such as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth or the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

The historical memory of 20th century Europe is equally important. Experience of two totalitarian systems, as well as the tradition of anti-fascist and anti-communist opposition, is unique. Although it does not officially mention historical memory in its programme, the PiS is equally eager to refer to these values and to the heritage of John Paul II.

'Europe's Christian heritage' is perhaps the most important challenge the PiS puts to Europe.

However, this concept may be strongly opposed, not only by other European countries but also by the PO. The Civic Platform objects to constructing

Europe on the basis of religion. Yet, they agree that Christianity is an essential factor in Europe.

Particular Issues

The Constitution & Crisis in Europe

The PiS and the PO agree that the European Constitution was a bad idea. Both parties strongly opposed it. The PiS was a little more critical about the document. The PO mainly concentrated on defence of the Nice voting system in the Council. The PiS also criticised the regulation which transferred state competences to the European level and accused the document of imposing 'anti-Christian censorship' (the PiS programme, 2005). However, the PO supports strengthening the EU institutions, especially the European Commission.

The Constitution's failure caused a political crisis in Europe. Over the last few months, several ways of overcoming the crisis have been proposed. The PO contributed to this process. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, EP Vice-President and PO candidate for the MFA, called for the Constitution to be renegotiated. In his opinion, above all the EU should: (1) be a Union of solidarity; (2) be an open Union (especially towards Eastern Europe); (3) provide equal treatment for both old and new members; and (4) respect the historical memory of all the members.

Bronisław Komorowski, PO candidate for Minister of Defence, offered his views in a 'Nice Plus' proposal. He suggested a slight amendment to the current treaties. This change should not be

voted on in referenda. 'Nice Plus' would cover three issues: (1) maintaining the Nice voting system in the Council; (2) strengthening the role of the European Parliament; and (3) deepening the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

However, these ideas do not constitute PO's official political programme. Rather, the future Government will have a reactive, not proactive policy. It will seek to defend national interests, rather than present new initiatives. In this context, the key Polish interests are:

- Maintaining the Nice system of decision-making in the Council
- Strengthening the CFSP, especially its Eastern European dimension
- Appealing to historical and religious values in a preamble, if a preamble were to be issued

The Common Foreign and Security Policy

Jan Rokita stated that "Poland dreams of a Common Foreign and Security Policy, provided that this policy (...) is truly a common one." The new Government intends to strengthen the CFSP, because a strong CFSP could potentially contribute to a positive extension and strengthening of Polish foreign policy.

The PiS' concept of the CFSP concentrates on (1) Eastern Europe and the Balkans, (2) transatlantic relations as the basis for a European security policy and (3) the Mediterranean countries. Jan Rokita sees two main geographical directions for CFSP development: Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean Basin. He also emphasises the importance of the participation of all EU members in the process of creating CFSP.

The PiS and the PO emphasise the significance of a common policy towards Russia. This policy should include the energy interests of all EU countries. They also demand that the Eastern dimension become one of the basic elements of the CFSP. Poland is interested in becoming a major player in defining future EU policy in Eastern Europe.

The European Neighbourhood Policy will be supported by the future Government, provided it does not harm the possibility of full EU membership for Ukraine, Moldova and, in the distant future, Belarus. For the time being, those countries should also be considered vitally important within the CFSP and the ENP. In this respect, Poland will play key role as an advocate of Eastern Europeans.

Turkey

The PiS, within the concept of a Christian Europe, is against Turkish membership of the EU. The PO, on the other hand, supports Turkey's aspirations. However, both parties' positions are not dogmatic and can change. One of the arguments in Poland for Turkish membership is that Ukraine could only become a member of the EU if the Union embraces Turkey. However, whatever the final Polish position, it may change once negotiations begin. With time, other issues will need to be dealt with, such as low

social development in Turkey, which would make many Polish regions illegible for EU structural funds. This may even move Poland from being the biggest recipient of EU funding into a net contributor to the common budget.

CAP Reform

The PO and the PiS think that the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) needs to be reformed. However, this reform cannot be made at the expense of Central European farmers, who receive lower financing than farmers from the 'old' Union. The key Polish argument will be the different functions of the CAP in Western Europe and Central Europe. In Poland, its main function is rural development, whereas in Western countries it supports the social status quo in the countryside.

Energy Policy

In September 2005, Germany and Russia signed an agreement on the construction of a gas pipeline beneath the Baltic Sea. Warsaw has never been consulted about this pipeline, which by-passes Poland. News about the agreement gained great coverage in the Polish media and was used in the election debate. The PO and the PiS strongly object to the construction of this pipeline because it is against Polish national interests and the Polish Government was never consulted on the issue. This is why the future Government will support co-ordination of energy policy at the European level. Tensions with Germany and Russia may arise over this topic.

The Economy and the Euro

The PO and the PiS are against delegating decisions in key economic policies, such as macroeconomic co-ordination or taxation, to the EU level. They will support a general tendency of lowering taxes and stimulating growth in Western Europe. The goal is the Lisbon Strategy achieved through economic liberalisation.

The PO supports joining the Eurozone, approximately in 2009-2011. The PiS prefers to wait until other countries in the region adopt the common currency to observe the consequences. Both parties might end up arguing over the issue of holding a referendum on the euro, while standing on opposite sides of the spectrum.

Both parties also support the quick opening of Western European labour markets. It would

contribute to lowering unemployment in Poland and would allow young Poles to gain professional experience, as well as making the European economy more competitive.

The Budget

The right-wing government will support bigger EU budget (more than 1% of GDP contribution). During the negotiations over the financial perspective 2007-2013 the Government's position will be to adopt the common budget as soon as possible, provided that it will be optimal for the Polish aspirations. J. Saryusz-Wolski (likely MFA) has recently stated that annual budgetary provision is not a tragedy, and Poland should not hurry for any budget, just for a good one.

Bilateral Relations

For the PiS, the most important bilateral relations are those with the United States. The PiS want a new agreement between the two countries which would underline the 'special relationship' between Poland and the US. The PO places Polish-American relations within broader EU-US relations.

There will be no rapid withdrawal from Iraq. Both parties support Polish presence on the ground as long as the US and the UK are present there.

Poland's future position in the EU will be created on the basis of bi- and multilateral relations with other EU members. The most important are relations with Poland's EU neighbours and other new EU

members. The Visegrad Group and Lithuania will potentially be its closest partners. As the biggest new EU member, Poland will try to keep its leading role among the new members. Potential support from other countries would serve to strengthen Poland's position in negotiations with older EU members.

However, the PO's most important partner in Europe will be Germany. If Angela Merkel becomes the new German Chancellor, relations might be better than in previous years. After 2007, especially if Nicolas Sarkozy becomes the new French President, the Weimar Triangle (or the Sarkozy G6) may prove a useful tool for the Polish Government's foreign policy.

Final Remarks

- There will be more continuity in Polish foreign policy making than one would have thought.
- The PO's likely dominant position in the future Government (at least in the domain of foreign affairs) indicates a more positive attitude towards deepening European integration and new political initiatives, provided they respect Polish national interests.
- The future of the CFSP is essential. It should include an Eastern dimension (towards CIS and Russia), and Europeanisation of energy policy.
- Integrity in the West (Europe and the USA) in global affairs is a key objective. This may lead to tensions with some Western European partners but their better understanding of Polish interests will prevent repetition of recent clashes (i.e. on Iraq or the Constitution). The leading candidate in the presidential race, Donald Tusk (PO), has said that Poles will stand up for their interests in Europe: "we know it is costly but we have to do it."
- If Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz attempts to form a Government are successful, the PiS input into his Government's foreign policy will be limited. Most of the major foreign policy posts will be taken by the PO, with the notable exception of the Prime Minister. Yet, Marcinkiewicz's experience in this field is limited, as his main domains are education and economy.
- There will be few new political ideas originating from Poland, as the country will be focused on internal economic development. On Europe it will defend the status quo. In addition, opposition to certain new Western proposals

is likely, i.e. concerning narrower, deeper political integration. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (the PO's candidate for the MFA) mentions three areas of possible future Polish initiatives in Europe: (1) transatlantic relations; (2) economic liberalisation in Europe; and (3) the Eastern Dimension of the CFSP.

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**Analyses & Opinions
No 50, september 2005**

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