



Polish Members of the 7th European Parliament

Midterm Report

Executive summary

Polish Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) started the 7th term as a team that has a stronger position and political potential than four years ago. Each party that acquired mandates had in their ranks MEPs with experience and important achievements from the 6th term. Representatives of the Eurosceptic parties who, during the previous term, stood out mainly by openly criticizing European integration were not elected as Members of the European Parliament.

The number of MEPs representing the Civic Platform in the European People's Party Group - EPP (the largest political group in the Parliament) has increased considerably. This increase strengthened the candidature of Jerzy Buzek for the position of the President of the European Parliament, gave Civic Platform MEPs better possibilities of following the work of the Parliament, and of influencing the political group's position, and, finally, opened the way to important posts (group coordinators in two committees of the Parliament, and recently, the post of Vice-chairman of the EPP group). The Polish delegation in the Group of Socialists and Democrats diminished in importance (9 members before and 7 members now). Meanwhile, MEPs from the Law and Justice party created a new political group with British and Czech Conservatives. It is, however, a smaller group and, as a consequence, it has less influence on the Parliament's decisions than the EPP or the Socialists.

The analysis of the reports prepared by the Polish MEPs - which are one of the main instruments used to exercise an influence on parliamentary decisions warrant a number of positive conclusions. It can be seen that Polish MEPs are active in different fields: apart from the relations with eastern neighbours, which have always been a subject of interest for Poland, Polish MEPs were the authors of some important reports concerning the energy policy and the European Union budget. The majority of MEPs who serve their second term continue to be active in the same committees and their reports are a proof of their strong position. Among the rapporteurs, there are names of MEPs who are just starting their careers in the European Parliament, which shows that many of them adapted quickly to their new



roles. However, in comparison with many of the large European Union countries, Poland has the lowest percentage of rapporteurs (for example, 56% of the Members from Spain are authors of reports and only 33% Polish Members).

The political position in the Parliament has a strong influence on the activities undertaken by MEPs. Those from large political groups (Civic Platform, Polish People's Party and Democratic Left Alliance) author more reports and concentrate on participating in the legislative process. MEPs of Law and Justice, Poland Comes First and Solidary Poland – who, due to group membership, have less influence on parliamentary negotiations, and who are often in opposition to the decisions taken by the coalition of the largest groups – give a more interventional character to their activity, by often speaking in plenary and formulating questions to the European Commission and the Council of the European Union.

Strong participation of some MEPs in Polish politics is one of the reasons that render influencing parliamentary decisions more difficult. MEPs have been the initiators of two splits, which happened in the Law and Justice Party in 2010-2011. Both the Civic Platform and the Law and Justice parties chose Members of the Parliament as their campaign coordinators in the 2011 elections. Because of the quantity of obligations related to the exercise of the European mandate, the activity of the MEPs on the Polish political scene strongly limits their capability to be effective in Brussels.

The second factor making it difficult to effectively influence parliamentary decisions is the presence of a small number of Polish MEPs in important committees: Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, and Economic and Monetary Affairs. Similarly to the previous term, Poles are strongly represented in the committees that deal with the Foreign and Security Policy issues, in which the influence of the European Parliament on the policy of the European Union is limited.

The Institute of Public Affairs systematically publishes reports that examine the activity of the Polish Members of the European Parliament. This report is the third one that deals with this subject. The complete report will be published in April 2012.

IPA research was conducted between November 2011 and January 2012. Initial conclusions were presented in the report “Polish Members of the 7th European Parliament. Midterm summary”, available at www.isp.org.pl



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