



Weekly Briefing

Poland Political briefing:
Poland Politics in 2018
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At the beginning of the New Year 2018 three dynamics at the Polish political scene were appeared. First, the discussions over the reshuffling of the Law and Justice government has been continued, Nowoczesna – the opposition party formed the new board, and thirdly more attacks against the Law and Justice's offices took place.

On January 3rd the special management meeting organized by the Law and Justice was taken place. During the two hours meeting between Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, vice prime ministers Beata Szydło and Piotr Gliński, the leader of the Law and Justice Jarosław Kaczyński, and Stanisław Karczewski – the Speaker of the Senate (Upper Chamber of Polish Parliament), Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration Mariusz Błaszczak, Minister of Defence Antoni Macierewicz, chair of Parliamentary club Ryszard Terlecki and vicechairman of the Law and Justice Joachim Brudziński. The Speaker of the Senate Stanisław Karczewski, leaving the office, confirmed in an interview with journalists, that one of the topics of the meeting was the reconstruction of the government. According to RMF (private radio station), the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Witold Waszczykowski is expected to “say goodbye”, and will be replaced by the current head of President Andrzej Duda's cabinet, Krzysztof Szczerski. Due to the changes in the image of the Ministry, the Minister of the Environment, Jan Szyszko, will also leave. The minister of the digitization Anna Streżyńska will cease to be the minister. According to RMF journalists, the future of infrastructure minister Andrzej Adamczyk is uncertain.

Apart from the above mentioned personal changes the relations between President Andrzej Duda and the head of the Ministry of Defense, Antoni Macierewicz should be perceived as the most important one. This tensions are connected to the two major elements: first, the personal relations are “cold” and there is no “chemistry” between both policy makers, the second more important is devoted to the constitutional level and the interpretation of the constitution. This situation, however, is not new and was visible under the past governments.

According to the constitution for 1997 the president is the supreme head of the armed forces, but he does not have instruments for this supremacy to be carried out. That is the Minister of Defence that has instruments to manage the entire ministry and the constitutional incoherence creates disputes between both policy makers. This situation was described by Paweł Soloch, head of the National Security Bureau: *For a long time, there has been at least a cold war there, if not a "hybrid"*.

The core question here is what tactic did the Ministry of Defence choose? For some analyst the answer is very clear and obvious. The Ministry of Defence works to weaken the President position within the defence system and plays a deceive role in shaping Polish defence policy. The very visible example is that with the knowledge and approval of the Ministry of Defence Military Counterintelligence Service started the verification procedure with General Jaroslaw Kraszewski, the most important military presidential adviser. The procedure is started if the person that have an access to classified information is suspected of having relations with the previous communist regime. The effect was to cut him off from classified information. At the same time, the National Security Bureau claims that for many months it cannot wait for the Ministry of Defense to respond to the request to strengthen the staffing of the office by delegating military officers. This situation brought the huge tension between both sides and President is expecting for changing the Minister of Defence calling his methods as “UB – secret political police’s methods”. The President’s office sends unequivocal signals that Macierewicz's departure is expected otherwise it will cause an escalation of the conflict with President Duda. But the signals from the Law and Justice’s headquarter are contradictory. It is more likely that the changes will come in the spring, after the results of the Smolensk commission's work have been announced. On the other hand Maciarewicz might be offered a promitent position and migh be replaced by Mariusz Blaszczak – the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration. This decision, however, might be postponed due to the fact, that the Minister of Defence was invited by

the White House to take part in the meeting with general Herbert Raymond McMaster who is the current National Security Adviser to President Donald Trump. The meeting in Washington is scheduled for January 17th and decisions of the government reconstruction will be taken between January 8th and 12th.

The second new dynamic appear in the opposition party – Nowoczesna. In November 2017 the founding father of the party – Ryszard Petru, after two years, lost his position as the chairperson of Nowoczesna. Katarzyna Lubnauer, former vicechairwoman, and academician from the University of Lodz became the leader of the party, winning with nine votes in favour of Ryszard Peter. K. Lubnauer appointed new vice-chairmen of Nowoczesna: Kamila Gasiuk-Pihowicz, Jerzy Meysztowicz, Witold Zembaczyński and the head of the region of the Lower Silesia party Tadeusz Grabarek. This situation placed Ryszard Petru as the “grey eminence” in Nowoczesna, and as said by himself he would make sure that Nowoczesna did not go "into a dark alley". He also confirmed that: *For me, the official positions (stools) are not significant, it is important that you can have influence through various political and substantive activities - not only in the parliament, but outside the parliament as well.* He indicated that Nowoczesna must remain a modernist, free-market party, seeking solutions, pro-European and striving for Poland's entry into the eurozone. This approach differs him from the current leader of Nowoczesna Katarzyna Lubnauer. To the certain extant her points of view can be picked up as the announcement of the course to the left. As was analyzed by media Petru managed to avoid unambiguous advocacy on the liberal-left side of ideological disputes. As a result, the party was associated rather with a free-market approach to the economy, and only the eye would go to the liberal liberals. After recent the Law and Justice party decisions on the economy - abolition of the Social Insurance Institution premium limit, the ban on Sunday trading, limiting the number of creative professions entitled to 50-percent income tax, Nowczesna can win support from small entrepreneurs and the middle and be perceived as advocate for their interests. The only single condition is that Lubnauer will not be willing

to join in the moral revolution. Lubnauer's victory was unexpected. But as history teaches us, the success of Piechocinski who was elected the leader of the Polish People's Party in November 2012 with the very small difference (Pawlak got 530 votes, Piechociński – 547), in 2015 Piechocinski did not get to the Parliament and the Polish People's Party obtained a historically bad result. Now in Nowoczesna the story can be repeated. The test will come soon and if Nowoczesna fails to have good result in local elections the new changes start.

The growing political tension in Poland resulted in more attacks on the Law and Justice's offices. The most cruel attack was taken seven years ago, in October 19, 2010. A former member of the Civic Platform, Ryszard Cyba, invaded the Law and Justice office in Lodz, and pistol Marek Rosiak and injured one of the office's employees. M. Rosiak died on the spot. Lately, there are more and more attacks on parliamentary offices of the Law and Justice party. In October 2017 in Opole, the Deputy Minister of Justice Patryk Jaki's office was attacked. On the façade of the tenement house where the deputy's office is located, someone has painted various types of anti Law and Justice slogans. In December 2017 The office of the Deputy Minister Beata Kempy in Syców (Lower Silesia province) was poured with flammable liquid and set on fire. Fortunately nobody suffered, although the office is located on the ground floor of a residential building in the city center near the market square. In Warsaw, unknown perpetrators sealed the door to the office of Deputy Paweł Lisiecki and the Euro-deputy professor Zdzisław Krasnodębski. In the city of Nakło, the entrance to the office of Łukasz Schreiber and his colleague from the European Parliament was devastated. As interpreted by the Law and Justice policy makers: *Attacks on the parliamentary offices of the Law and Justice politicians are related to the opposition. All action are taken because of the "hate speeches" sponsored by the opposition parties.*

Conclusions

The ongoing discussions on the reconstruction of the government paralyse the new initiatives and decisions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was by saying:

I'm sick because it bothers all ministries. It does not mobilize employees to work. So I would like this festival to end In fact the speculations affect the international situation. At the international are Poland is watched, heard and Polish partners wondered if they can take us seriously. From the above discussed perspective the reshuffling of the government should be made as soon as possible.

The new situation in Nowoczesna might play a negative role for the whole opposition. Lubnauer is a relative new person, and not as experienced as the leader of Platforma Grzegorz Schetyna or the leader of the Polish People's Party Wladyslaw Kosiniak Kamysz. This situation might be used to the fullest by Platforma and the Polish People's Party and both parties will strengthen their negotiations positions with Nowoczesna. Lubnauer tries to differ Nowoczesna from two opposition parties by saying that Nowoczesna has a different programme and is driven by different values. Schetyna's proposal of having joint presidium of the parties was considered as *proposal without consultations* and should be rejected by Nowoczesna. The different perspective is offered by Ryszard Petru, who tried to "build the huge" coalition by his own, without the support of Nowoczesna.