



# Weekly Briefing

**Poland Political briefing:**  
**Political Developments in Poland**  
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Three significant dynamics have mainly stimulated the latest political development in Poland: the relation inside the Civic Platform (the most prominent opposition party), the new law that it assumes the possibility of depriving military grades of retired soldiers who were members of the former communist bodies, and the upcoming anniversary of March 1968.

Regarding the first issue, we need to state that the closer to the local elections, the more the atmosphere in the Civic Platform thickens. The situation is created by the conflict between the current President of Gdansk Pawel Adamowicz and the leader of the Civic Platform Grzegorz Schetyna. Pawel Adamowicz decided to denounce his formation obedience and apply for re-election without the blessing and supporting of the party authorities. Adamowicz announced his intention to apply - for the fifth time - for re-election. His declaration did not arouse enthusiasm among the Platform's politicians who wanted a common candidate with other opposition parties. What sounds like the paradox Adamowicz has governed Gdańsk since 1998. Contrary to Adamowicz statement Grzegorz Schetyna (Civic Platform leader) does not see any possibility of supporting Pawel Adamowicz as the Civic Platform candidate for elections in the city of Gdansk. *It is impossible now. I think that he just chose the decision to stand against the Civic Platform and that must be the consequences* - emphasised Schetyna. The PO leader said that he would talk on this subject with Nowoczesna and other city movements to build a massive coalition in Gdansk that will guarantee Gdańsk's defence against the Law and Justice. According to the Polish Press Agency says the most likely Civic Platform candidate for the president of Gdańsk is MEP Jarosław Wałęsa – the son of Lech Walesa, the Solidarity movement leader in 1980s. According to Walesa, legal problems of Pawel Adamowicz will be used in the campaign by political opponents. In his opinion, Adamowicz went ahead of the row. - At the moment there are ongoing talks in opposition to going to the elections with a

large bloc - he explained and added that the debate is going to stand up to the Law and Justice. This candidate, however, is not definite yet. Adamowicz is too controversial for the Civic Platform.

At the end of September 2017 in front of the District Court in Gdańsk Adamowicz was accused of providing false data in his assets declarations in the years 2010-2012. According to the prosecutor's office, he did not put two of the seven owned apartments in the statements, and the data on the savings collected did not agree. Adamowicz admitted before the court that he did not include all information about his property in the declarations. After the charges were prosecuted in 2015 by the prosecutor's office, Adamowicz suspended his membership in the Civic Platform, which had already expired.

The second dynamic is due to the so-called “degradation act” (draft) was accepted by the government. According to the law, there is the possibility of depriving military grades of retired soldiers who were members of, e.g. the Military Council of National Salvation or the Internal Security Corps, bodies that were responsible for the communist terror in Poland. Under the Act, those who created the Military Council of National Salvation will be deprived of officer's degrees. As we have already informed, in the so-called the degrading act has been extended to the catalogue of people who can be degraded - said the head of the Prime Minister's Chancellery, Michał Dworczyk. As he added, according to the draft, the Prime Minister will also be able to apply for degradation, which will be decided by the head of the Ministry of National Defense with the consent of the presidential office. For the prime minister Morawiecki, who is the historian by training this was the dream: *The dream of our generation was to restore this justice at the beginning of the transformation period, but it was not possible, today it becomes possible* - the Prime Minister said during a press conference after the government meeting. Proceedings regarding the reception of a degree would be initiated ex officio or at the request of the prime minister, the defence minister, the Institute of National

Remembrance, Military Historical Bureau, state archives and veterans' and pro-independence organisations. This newly “degradation act” was announced during the Day of the Cursed Soldiers (1st March). The "doomed soldiers" is the term describing the soldiers that were formed as the anti-soviet and anti-communist movement after the World War Second. During the official ceremony Minister of Defence Mariusz Blaszczak remarked on the braveness of the Cursed Soldiers: *Thanks to the ordinance established on the initiative of President Lech Kaczyński, we restore the heroes of the so-called "Second conspiracy" their place in history.* What should be noted during the official ceremonies the Smolensk Appeal did not appear. Antoni Macierewicz, former Minister of Defence, sent a command to all military units - before each appeal with their participation the formula should be read, which is a tribute to the dead tragically in the presidential aeroplane catastrophe in April 2010.

The last essential features are the upcoming anniversary of the Polish March 1968. The political crisis resulted in the suppression of student strikes by security forces. Moreover, the controversies arise from the fact that mass emigration accompanied all mass rally following an anti-Semitic (branded "anti-Zionist") campaign waged by the minister of internal affairs, General Mieczyslaw Moczar, with the approval of First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka of the Polish United Workers' Party. The Jewish people were accused by the communist leaders of being “the capitalist fifth column”. In short, at least 13,000 Poles of Jewish origin emigrated to Israel. The 50th Anniversary of the March 68 would be commemorated by the Polish Senate (the Polish Parliament Upper House). Due to the latest tensions with Israel Polish authorities handle this issue very carefully. The Speaker of the Senate, Stanisław Karczewski said that there are two proposals at the moment. The first proposal sponsored by the Law and Justice said that the March 1968 belongs to the canon of Polish months building our path to independence. The draft praised the students, the Catholic Church and its role in fighting against communism, and reminds that *the then*

*communist authorities, launching anti-Semitic rallies and forcing Poles to take part in them, and introducing into the public space pathological anti-Jewish moods, did not represent the will of the Nation, only Moscow and its intra-communist and international interests.* In turn the Civic Platform senators: Bogdan Borusewicz, Tomasz Grodzki, Bogdan Klich, Grażyna Sztark, Piotr Wach, Piotr Zientarski proposed a draft resolution. In the proposed resolution we can read: both the defense of civil rights and freedom of speech as well as openness to the variety of trends creating Polish culture and history is one of the most valuable parts of our national tradition. Furthermore, as mentioned by the Civic Platform Senators the Senate of the Republic of Poland considers the events of 1968 an essential memento for today and pays homage to all those who stood for freedom in defence of Polish culture and the tradition of tolerance. Senators also wrote that at the same time, the Senate of the Republic of Poland, remembering the dramatic fate of Polish Jews, including the purges of 1968, expresses its anniversary on the opposition to any symptoms of anti-Semitism in any form. Stanisław Karczewski stressed that he proposed that should be one resolution, accepted by both parties: the Law and Justice and the Civic Platform. *If there is no such resolution, I will not submit it for discussion in the Senate. There is no point in conducting additional discussion, debate and arguing - he said.*

## **Conclusions**

The further controversies in the Civic Platform create the lower level of the public support. In Gdansk, the headquarter of the Civic Platform; the local elections might be win by the Law and Justice. If Adamowicz and the Civic Platform cannot reach the agreement, the Law and Justice will have one candidate, while the opposition side at least two. This situation might repeat in the different cities as well. The local elections will be scheduled for three dates: 21 and 28 October and 4 November. The prime minister should decide on this matter between July 16 and August 16 this year. From this perspective of having

not subordinated members, the Civic Platform can be trapped. The last two issues are related to the new chapter in the Polish historical narrative. Its anti-communist sentiments drive the Law, and Justice government have tried to fulfil the obligation from the elections campaign. Although the de-communisation campaign is needed, the playing with the history should be perceived as dangerous. The recent controversies with Israel and Israelis diasporas in the United States sound like the lesson for the Polish government. The experience has its impact on the current approach to the anniversary of the Polish March 1968. The speaker of the Senate, Stanislaw Karczewski cuts the debates by saying that once the upper house of the Polish parliament failed to have one, joint resolution, he would not submit any.