



Weekly Briefing

**Poland Social briefing:
Social Development in Poland
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Recently, the most important issues on the social development are the Polish citizens political preferences, the Poles expectations for 2018, and their relations and understanding of the international situation.

The latest public opinion polls indicate that the Law and Justice have the support of 40% of respondents. The ruling party won the most sympathisers in south-eastern Poland. In the Podkarpackie and Małopolskie provinces, more than half of the inhabitants, who announced their specific participation in the elections, declared their willingness to vote for the Law and Justice (53.5% and 50.1% respectively). Relatively many supporters the Law and Justice party has still in Podlasie (48.8%) and Lublin (45.3%) provinces. On the other hand, the least willing to vote for the ruling party was the hypothetical participants in the elections living in Lubuskie (29.1%), Pomeranian (30.1%) and Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia) (32%) provinces.

The political force in Poland, the Civic Platform, has the support around 21%. The most significant popularity of the Civic Platform is in the northwest of the country, the average support for this party declared in nine polls exceeded one-fourth of all indications there. Most the Civic Platform supporters are noted in the provinces as follow: Pomeranian (28.5%), Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland) (27.4%), Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia) and Zachodniopomorskie (West Pomeranian) (26.9%). In turn, the least sympathisers to Civic Platform are living in the provinces dominated by the Law and Justice: Małopolskie (Lesser Poland) (12%), Lubelskie (13.2%) and Podkarpackie (14.3%). The territorial division in the sympathies for the Civic Platform is slightly more critical than in the case of the Law and Justice. For the Civic Platform, the highest recorded support (28.5%) is more than twice the lowest (12%). In the case of the Law and Justice, the maximum to the minimum ratio is 53.5% to 29.1%.

According to the public opinion survey, 8.1% of voters wanted to vote for the Kukiz'15 movement. The Kukiz'15 is the most popular in the province of Opole. In this voivodeship, 16.2% of voters declared willing to vote for the

movement founded by Paweł Kukiz. This is one of two cases of such a high of the local support and reaches twice the average. Relatively many supporters of this political party are noted in Western Poland in Lubuskie Voivodship (12.1%). Over one-tenth of the declared participants in the elections intended to vote for this group in the Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia) (10.3%), Śląskie (Silesia) and Świętokrzyskie (10.1%) voivodships. On the other hand, the least supporters of Paweł Kukiz's party are in the north and east of the country namely in the Podlasie (5.2%), West Pomeranian (5.4%) and Pomeranian (5.5%) voivodships. The average support for Nowoczesna in the whole country amounted to 6.2% of respondents. The diversities in the territorial distribution of support for Nowoczesna turned out to be not very high. Relatively the most significant support of this party is in the following provinces: Pomorskie (Pomeranian) (9.9%), Dolnośląskie (Lower Silesia) (8.4%), and Lubuskie (7.8%). The least sympathy for Nowoczesna was aroused among the politically active inhabitants of the following provinces: Podkarpackie (3.2%), Podlasie (3.3%) and Świętokrzyskie (3.4%).

The party in order of the ranking is the post-communist the Democratic Left Alliances the SLD. The SLD has on average 4.3% of supporters on the national scale. The group gained the relatively more significant favour of the inhabitants of the provinces the Western Pomeranian (7.3%), Lower Silesia (7%), Lubuskie (6.4%) and Warmian-Masurian (6.2%) provinces. On the other hand, voters from Podkarpackie (2.3%), Mazowieckie (2.8%) and Małopolskie (Lesser Poland) (3%) voivodeships were the least likely to vote for this party. The Polish People's Party has the support of 4% of voters. The PPP has exceptionally many supporters among the inhabitants of the Lublin province: in this voivodship, the support for the Polish People's Party reached twice the national average (8%). The party has still gained relatively more sympathisers among voters from the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship (6.2%). However, the smallest PSL support was recorded in the Małopolskie (Lesser Poland) and Śląskie (Silesia) voivodships (1.7% and 1.8% respectively).

The second issue discussed in the briefing is dedicated to Polish people expectations. As said by the report prepared by the Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) the expectations for 2018 are moderately optimistic, with hopes for improvement primarily relating to family life and personal matters. Over two-fifths of respondents expect that this year will be better for them (46%) and their families (45%) than the previous year. What should be noted the rest predict that it will be the same as 2015 (38% and 39% respectively). Moreover, the predictions about personal and family life depend mainly on age. Younger respondents look into the future with greater optimism than the older. For example, a better year for themselves is expected by 65% of respondents from 18 to 34 years old and only 29% of respondents aged over 65. Hopefully, for the year 2018, the excellent assessment of the financial situation of the household is also distinctly favourable: a better year for yourself expects 19% of those surveyed poorly assessing their financial situation and 55% describing it as well. The workers similarly expect that for their workplaces in 2018 will be the same as the past (43%) or better (36%). They assess the prospects of their jobs in the private sector outside agriculture (44% hope to improve), while the worst - working in individual farms (29% expects improvement).

In predictions about Poland, one can also speak of moderate optimism. The most substantial part of respondents (41%) expect that 2018 will be better for Poland than the previous of 2017, the others think that it will be the same as 2017 (31%). Optimistic predictions about the development of the situation in Poland in 2018 are expressed more often than a year earlier. The forecasts for the growth of the situation in the country, as well as its assessments, are primarily associated with political orientation. The case in Poland is expected mainly by respondents declaring right-wing political views (55%), much less often those who identify themselves with the left (35%) or the political centre (36%).

Besides, the more frequent participation in religious practices, the more optimism in thinking about the situation in the country. The largest pessimists

are residents of large cities - every third of them expects a worsening situation in Poland.

In the social sense, the beginning of the year promises to be slightly worse for the world than for Poland, although the expectations for improvement (34%) or no change (31%) are the most common in this case. Also in this dimension, there is more hope for improvement compared to the previous year.

Optimism in thinking about the situation in the world is fostered by young age and commitment to religious practices, as well as satisfaction with one's financial situation. The most pessimists are among the inhabitants of large cities, the best-placed people and those surveyed who do not participate in religious practices. The estimates of 2017 in the private and public dimension show that for Poles it was an outstanding year. The assessment of the personal and family situation and the condition of workplaces is the best today since the breakthrough year 1989. In the public opinion, the past year was also good for Poland - the best since 1990. At the same time, Poles hope that 2018 will be at least as good as last year.

The last issue analysed in the briefing is on the Poles understanding the international situation. In the current crisis between Poland and Israel Poles understand the fears of Jews related to the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, but do not share them. Overall, more than half of the respondents (52%) declare their understanding that the introduction of criminal sanctions for publicly speaking untruth about the responsibility of the state or the Polish nation for crimes during World War II will block the discussion about various attitudes of Poles towards Jews in that period. At the same time, however, only less than a quarter of respondents (24%) admit that they share these concerns. Overall, more than half of the respondents (52%) believe that Polish lawmakers should take into account Jewish sensitivity regarding the freedom of debate on the attitudes of Poles during World War II.

But, overall, the Poles are not interested in international politics. Many more respondents (62%) could not mention any event in policy global, which in

2017 was stuck in their memory and about which one could say that it was the event of the year. Another 6% believe that none of the games deserves to be important in international politics. For the most important event of the last year, Poles recognised the visit of the President of the United States Donald Trump in July 2017 (9%).

Conclusions

As the public opinion polls show the Polish society is divided and the Eastern and South-East part of Poland support the Law and Justice party, while the North and the Western part of Poland support the Civic Platform. The next important issue is that the majority of the population living in the big cities endorses the Civic Platform. The people in the big cities, however, are less optimist than people living in the countryside. The second important observation is that the more frequent participation in religious practices, the more optimism in thinking about the situation in the country. This should be concluded as follow: the more conservative Poles are, the more optimist they are. Regarding the current conflict between Poland and Israel on the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance Poles supports the Law and Justice government. The conservative electorate that was slightly disappointed with the new policy towards the European Union and so-called détente with the European Commission welcomed the strong position of the government over the historical quandaries.