



# Weekly Briefing

**Poland Political briefing:**  
**Poland Domestic Political Development**  
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During the latest week, the political scene in Poland was dominated by the Law and Justice Convention that was organized on 31st August 2018. The first important question is about the new proposals delivered by the Prime Minister Morawiecki and what might be the Prime Minister role in the further actions taken by the Law and Justice, how do the opposition parties approach the convention and to what extent the convention might help the Law and Justice to win the upcoming local elections?

As the media observed the most important point of the of the convention, however, was to familiarize the electorate with the fact that now Morawiecki is the face of the Law and Justice and probably the future leader of the party. Prime Minister Morawiecki made another five promises: including lowering of heat bills, rebuilding of bus connections and construction of new playgrounds. In brief summary the new plan is based on five major points:

1. The reduction from the beginning of next year of CIT tax for small businesses from 15 to 9 percent, the lowest level in the EU;

2. Introduction of a small ZUS (The Polish Social Insurance Institution), calculated in proportion to the revenues for companies achieving the monthly turnover of up to 2,5 minimum wages in Poland. The smaller the earnings, the less obligatory payments;

3. Special, extra money PLN 300 (app. 70 EURO) at the beginning of the school year for each student starting primary and secondary school;

4. New fund for the construction of local roads worth at least PLN 5 billion. This means thousands of kilometers of renovated roads in villages, small towns, communes, and counties;

5. Accessibility + program - elimination of barriers for the disabled with the special budget of PLN 20 billion in 8 years.

During his short speech, the leader of the Law and Justice builds the picture of the besieged fortress by saying that: *There is a campaign against "good change". It exceeds what is normal in the democracy, simple discussion,*

*criticism.* Moreover, Jarosław Kaczyński referred to the so-called “Polexit” by saying that the Polish citizens want to be in Europe and the European Union. This statement, however, should be placed in the context of the leader of the Law and Justice when he said that being together with the Western Europe *does not mean that we should repeat the mistakes of the West, get infected with these social diseases that prevail there* This complex situation when Polish government hopes to use and utilize the European Union funds to change the standards of living in Poland without obeying the European Union’s laws might be perceived as the contradictory. This, however, should be read not only through the lenses of the role of law, or other political aspects but also through the prism of the role of the state in the economy. This also might be seen as the support for the Prime Minister Morawiecki. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki is a supporter of wide state interference in economic processes, including by expanding the state-owned sector. From this perspective, the Prime Minister refers to the concepts of New Structural Economics, the creator and propagator of which is the former chief economist of the World Bank Justin Yifu Lin. Justin Lin is a chairperson of the South-South Cooperation Institute and the Center for New Structural Economics at the University of Beijing. For years, she has been advising the Chinese government on economic policy matters.

The second international issue mentioned during the convention was the success of Polish policy towards Israel, and the problem with refugees or scaring the budget deficit on our programs. All three pillars are named as the successes of the Polish government. Israel talks about history in our language, the EU has adopted our solutions on refugees, in terms of growth we are at the forefront of Europe – as said by the Prime Minister.

The third important issue, during the convention, was the officially announced the campaign for the elections to the local governments. In this regard, the statement delivered by Jarosław Kaczyński should be recognized as the important. He mentioned the problem of efficiency and synergy between the

central government and the local governments. *Do we want such self-government that will fight, growling on the government? Do we want those that will cooperate?* - asked the Law and Justice leader. This statement was negatively perceived by the opposition parties. As said by some opposition parties leaders this declaration purely confirms unwillingness for cooperation with the opposition governments at the local level. The key to the success of the Law and Justice electoral strategy, as the president said, is not innovation, but the scale of undertakings that is to flow from "synergy with the government". In one sentence, the party's self-government program can be summarized as: "we will give you more and better, but we must have the full power to act more effectively."

As commented by the policymakers from Kukiz'15 the convention, however, organized in the very Hollywood style was really disappointed. The dissonance between PR and reality was visible. In the opinion of Deputy Speaker of the Sejm, Stanisław Tyszka, "PiS with the Platform, both at the central level and at the local government level, are fighting for the State Treasury companies, not for the citizens to live more easily."

Katarzyna Lubnauer from Nowoczesna assessed that during the convention there were *a lot of clichés that do not have coverage in the previous actions of the authorities*. The problem with the Law and Justice is that the party prefers centralism over decentralization because the central system is more effective. The head of Nowoczesna referred to Kaczyński's statements about Western errors. According to her when Jarosław Kaczyński referred to the disease of the western world, he considers this the disease of the western world canons of liberal democracy: inalienable rights and freedoms of citizens, including women's rights, the right to shape their identity, minority rights, the right to economic initiatives, and trust to the state institutions, and without these values we will never live in Poland and work like Europe. This, however, is not only

the case and the policy of the Law and Justice should be analyzed through the lenses of the role of the state in social and economic development.

### **Conclusions**

In fact, the overall impression is that Mateusz Morawiecki is that he is responsible for the upcoming election marathon. The Prime Minister, however, performs much better in the role of a speaker on conventions, where he acts as the head of the government, rather than as a tribune of people in the field. It was evident that Morawiecki strictly adheres to the narrative plan sketched out by the party spin-doctors. Many of the "life" examples concerned the Law and Justice promises that are to be guarantors of similar standards in local governments.

As was said before the Prime Minister Morawiecki should be perceived as the technocrat. As he said *For the past 30 years, there has not been as much freedom in Poland as it is now, because now Polish families have the most freedom.* This freedom is not perceived as the freedom of speech, religion or freedom of choice, but freedom from the poverty and soulless rule of our predecessors.

However, he did the best when he sketched the electoral program presented as a local government version of the "Morawiecki Five". He skillfully left the story of a warm and heated house, with lower electricity bills and segregation of rubbish, through its surroundings (sidewalks and roads), safe and modern playgrounds and playgrounds, refurbished stations, and senior homes. It is hard to say that these promises are new, revealing or groundbreaking, "500+". Actually, all of them have been self-governing for a long time. From this perspective, the central government took over the local economic and social policies and from this point of view, we can discuss the implementation of Justin Lin structural economy concept.

During the next 21 specific months ahead the Polish political scene will experience four electoral campaigns, four times the citizens will go to the polls to vote to make an act that is the essence of democracy. This will also be the

months of evaluating the policy of power and opposition. According to Jarosław Kaczyński when it comes to local elections, the matter is quite complicated. Most of the local governments are ruled by the opposition. But for the Law and Justice, it will be primarily an assessment of the "good change" policy. According to the newest public opinion polls, the Law and Justice will win in 12 provinces and in seven provinces the opposition parties coalition. On the national scale, in the elections to regional diets, the Law and Justice have 35.8% support, the Civic Coalition has 23.3%, 12.8 percent for the Polish Peasant Party, the Democratic Left Alliance 7.3 percent, Kukiz'15 7.2 percent, and regional and non-party committees 5.4 percent. From this perspective the regional committees are marginalized and from the more scientific approach, we need to elaborate on the centralization of the local politics in Poland.