

## 8 – Public opinion on politics State and Church

### Polish Politics in a European Context

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Slides are available on: [www.v4ce.net](http://www.v4ce.net)

## 2 years Tusk government ...

Platform was elected as anti-PiS –  
breaking with the “moral revolution of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic”

- Improvement of foreign relations
- Non-populist political dialogue (“poetyka miłości”)
- “Policy of silence”
- End of confrontational policy regarding past (IPN- Institute of National Remembrance) and corruption (Central Anti-Corruption Bureau)

*Government so far fulfills its expectations*

(based on article Leczenie Snem, Gazeta Wyborcza November 18th)

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## Assessment of Government

- Foreign Policy:** 4
- Improved relations with Russia and Germany
  - More active role in EU and NATO
  - Better image of country in foreign public and media
- EU Funding:** 5
- Poland is leader in receiving EU funding
  - Financial crisis has no effect on inflow of EU support
- Higher education:** 4-
- Implementation of Bologna Reforms
  - Change of habilitation procedure (pre-condition for professorship)
  - Changes to finance of research

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## Assessment of Government

- Political Culture** 4-
- So far only one corruption scandal – Premier immediately responded
  - Generally abstaining from populism
  - Response to provocations by PiS (“poetyka wojenna”)
  - Disharmonies in government coalition
- Anti-crisis policy** 2-
- Tax reduction and social package (“friendly state”) stabilised domestic consumption – prepared still by PiS
  - Negotiation with IMF
  - Support package for enterprises non-existent
- Economic miracle is result of “advantages of backwardness”*

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## Assessment of Government

Justice:	4-
Economics:	3 +
Health:	3
Defense:	3
Pension system	3+
Anti-Discrimination	1
Infrastructure	3

This assessment is by a left-centrist newspaper  
<http://wyborcza.pl/8,75402,7255315.html>

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## ... modernisers don't modernise

- Major change** : change of early retirement  
**But other political programme of Platforma was not realised** – *only few projects are in preparation:*
- Liberalising labour code
  - Reform of Farmers Pension Fund (KRUS)
  - Reforming public finance and taxation system (flat tax)
  - Concluding privatisation
  - Introducing the Euro in 2012
  - Change of political system (majority voting, abolition of Senate)
  - Downsizing administration

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## Why no reforms?

- Obstacles:**
- PSL as coalition partner, with different interests
  - Presidential veto
  - SLD and PiS opposition obstructs policies
  - Financial crisis
- but ...**
- PO eyes upcoming elections (Local governments and President in 2010)
  - PO aims to keep good status in opinion polls
  - Tuks has to play a "presidential" Prime Minister
- Spin (PR) instead of policy**  
*– more Poll-itics than politics*

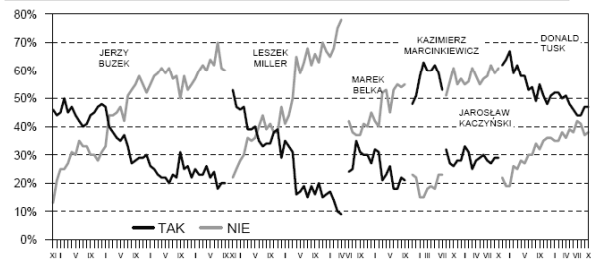
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## Public Opinion on the government

### Are you satisfied with the Prime Minister ...



Pominięto „trudno powiedzieć”

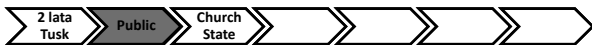
## Public Opinion on the government

Are you satisfied with the Prime Minister Donald Tusk?

Potential voter	YES	NO	Hard to say
PO	90	6	4
PSL	46	39	15
SLD	48	41	11
PiS	15	78	7

How would you vote if elections would be this Sunday?

Potential voter	YES	NO	Hard to say
PO	41	PiS	17
PSL	6	SLD	8



## Public Opinion on the government

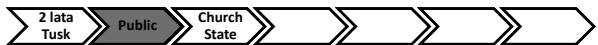
➤ According to the present polls  
PO would win the elections to the Sejm with close to 50% of the seats

➤ Tusk is heading the polls for presidential candidates with **38%**  
Lech Kaczynski **20%**

... but in Poland there is the terrible 3<sup>rd</sup> year in which Prime Ministers lost their support

### Potential problems:

- Effects of economic crisis on labour market
- Handling of H1N1 pandemic
- Gambling affair – Parliament begins investigation in corruption
- other candidates, e.g. centrist Andrzej Olechowski (former PO)



## State Church Relations

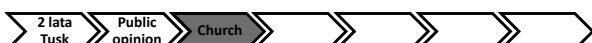
Catholic Church has a problem to find its place in a pluralist democracy

From powerful mediator between opposition and government to ...

- Apolitical institution ?
- Largest NGO ?
- Supporter of one political group (PiS) ?

### Other problems:

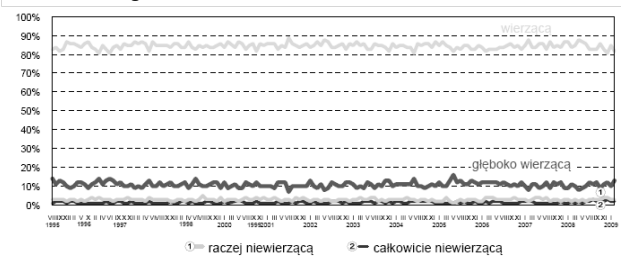
- Pluralism within Church (hierarchy, conservative priests and parishes in the country side, modernisers, ...)
- Church as business organisation
- Polish Catholic Church without JP II



## Believe in Poland

CBOS

Independent of your religious practice, do you consider yourself as a ....  
believer, strong believer, rather non-believer or absolute non-believer



W latach 1989–1994 wskaźniki deklaracji wiary zmieniły się, jednak w porównaniu z aktualnymi nie nastąpiła / tym względzie istotna zmiana

## Catholic Belief in Poland

- Poland is the country with the highest number of people practicing religion in the EU
- In comparison to Spain or Ireland that religious practice among young people has hardly declined
- Catholic Church is the most trusted institution in the society
- In rural area it is essential element of the local community
- Poland exports priests to Western European parishes
- Is Poland missing out modernisation?**
- Catholic belief is essential part of Polish identity
- Self-image of Polish moral superiority
- No relevant secular movement, except Communist party (PZPR)
- Religious doctrine and life style often contradict

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## In vitro

- The main ongoing ethical debate in Poland is on “in vitro” fertilisation, which so far is illegal in Poland
  - Issues:**
  - ‘left-over’ embryos
  - Pre-implantation genetic diagnostics
  - should it be available for unmarried couples, single or lesbian women
  - Who should pay for it?
- The Catholic Church openly rejects “in-vitro” as it separates reproduction from marriage (like contraception)

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## In vitro – Public opinion

Should in-vitro fertilisation be permitted for .... if there is no other possibility

	Yes	No
Married couples	77%	17%
Non-married couples	53%	39%
Single mothers	39%	51%
<b>According to voting preference (married couples)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
PO	88%	10%
PSL	70%	15%
SLD	84%	11%
PiS	60%	39%

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## Radio Maryja

### Facts

- Radio station opened in 1991 founded by Catholic order
- Church media do not have to disclose their sources (arranged in Concordat with Vatican)
- Radio station is managed by Father Rydzik – and is not under the supervision of the Polish bishops
- Financed by donations by the followers (Family of Radio Maria)
- Affiliated institutions** (linked through Foundation Lux Veritas)
- TV Trwam and Nasz Dziennik newspaper and bookshops
- wRodzinie (pre-paid mobile phone operator)
- University for Social Culture and Media in Torun

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## Debate on Radio Maryja

- Programme is very conservative – in societal and political questions
- Station is accused of anti-Semitic statements and promoting Holocaust denial
- Extreme patriotism: Anti-German, anti-Russian
- Station supported openly parties and politicians (was behind the formation of *League of Polish Families*, formation of the coalition PiS-LPR-Samoobrona, in elections 2005-07 open support for PiS)
- Campaigned against Poland's accession to the European Union

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