

DIRITTI COMPARATI

Comparare i diritti fondamentali in Europa

ELECTION 2025: A MILLIMETRE AWAY FROM A SOLSTICE

Posted on 17 Luglio 2025 by [Maciej Serowaniec](#)

1. The 2025 presidential election will go down in Poland's political history for a long time - not only because of the result, but also because of the atmosphere surrounding the entire voting process. **On 1 June 2025**, as Poles went to the polls in the second round of the election, emotions were running high. It was clear that what was at stake was not just the office of President, but the political and political direction of the country for the coming years.

The battle was between two completely different visions of Poland: **Rafał Trzaskowski**, the candidate of the Civic Coalition and mayor of Warsaw, represented a liberal, pro-European identity - a promise to restore the rule of law, strengthen Poland's position in the European Union and respect human rights. On the other side was **Karol Nawrocki**, historian, conservative, President of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), supported by Law and Justice - a representative of the hard right, emphasising the value of tradition, family, sovereignty and ['rejection of imposed standards from Brussels'](#).

Already before 9pm, exit polls predicted a tie. Ipsos reported a difference within the statistical error - with a slight advantage for Trzaskowski (50.3%). The mood in both camps was thus a mixture of hope and uncertainty. But the further into the night, the clearer it became that **it**

was not Trzaskowski but Karol Nawrocki who had come out on top.

In the final count, the [official results](#) were announced:

- **Karol Nawrocki - 10 606 877 votes (50.89%)**
- **Rafał Trzaskowski - 10 237 286 votes (49.11%)**

This **small margin - less than 1%** - reinforced the tension and **the sense of controversy**. For many, it was a defeat by a hair's breadth; for others, a triumph for the 'silent majority' who staked their claim to a conservative identity.

Even more momentous was the **turnout**, which reached as high as **71.6%** - the highest level since the restoration of free presidential elections after 1989. This is a clear sign that Poles, despite (or perhaps because of) extreme polarisation, are not backing down from participating in democracy. Mobilisation was particularly pronounced in small towns and rural areas - there Nawrocki won over 60% of the support. Trzaskowski, on the other hand, won in large metropolitan areas (Warsaw, Wrocław, Gdańsk) and in the electoral constituencies abroad, where he won over 63% of the Polish vote.

The result confirmed what had been apparent for months: **Poland is a deeply divided country, both politically and culturally**. The east and south voted conservative; the west and centre, liberal. The younger generations - paradoxically - largely swamped the populist-nationalist electorate, indicating a growing disillusionment with '[middle-of-the-road politics](#)'.

On election night, many commentators even spoke of a [geopolitical earthquake](#). For Trzaskowski's supporters, it was a moment of lost opportunity for further reforms and full reintegration into the EU. For Nawrocki's camp, it was a 'regaining of the presidency', after ten years of presidential mandate by Andrzej Duda, and a confirmation that Poland wants to defend its national identity and 'Christian roots'.

2. Although confirmed by the official results, Karol Nawrocki's victory in the presidential election of early June 2025 almost immediately became the subject of controversy. Faced with a minimal difference in votes - a mere 369,000 against more than 20 million cast - every irregularity, every

organisational stumble, every 'human error' gained symbolic weight. Rafał Trzaskowski's staff reacted quickly - it was publicly announced that election protests would be lodged, and lawyers associated with the Civic Coalition began to gather materials. Among the reported [irregularities](#) were suspicions of so-called 'invalid votes' in several districts, irregular numbers of ballots issued, alleged errors in online transmissions from election commissions, and unclear circumstances regarding postal voting. In just two weeks, the Supreme Court received a record number of more than 54,000 election complaints. Interestingly, not all of them came from Trzaskowski supporters - voters also filed some on the far right, who suspected that the election had been manipulated 'in favour of a systemic candidate' (as some Confederation activists described Nawrocki). Although the motivations differed, the common denominator was evident: a lack of complete confidence in the electoral process.

The responsibility for resolving this avalanche of protests fell on the Supreme Court's Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs Chamber. This body had itself been the subject of a systemic dispute for years. The ruling majority questioned its independence, while part of the opposition called for its abolition as a 'neo-judicial' body. Paradoxically, it was now the court that was to finally decide the fate of the election that decided the highest office in the state.

In a [decision](#) announced on 1 July 2025, the Supreme Court declared the election valid. At the same time, it found that 21 protests were legitimate, but their scale and nature "did not materially affect the vote outcome". As a check, a recount was recommended for 13 polling stations - representing just 0.04% of all polling stations. For some members of the public this was a reassuring signal, for others it was a symbolic confirmation that the state apparatus was acting within the established script.

In the background of all this, there was growing institutional tension. Although the elections were formally declared valid and OSCE international observers accepted the outcome as ['broadly in line with democratic standards'](#), the public atmosphere remained far from stable. Citizens' trust in the electoral process - already damaged by years of

disputes over the courts, public media and the independence of institutions - was further eroded. In [opinion polls](#), more than 40 per cent of respondents declared that they "do not fully trust the outcome of this year's presidential election", and nearly half favoured a recount "for transparency, not suspicion".

The events of June and July 2025 have shown that elections in Poland - despite their formal correctness - are no longer just a ritual of democracy, but a battlefield for the legitimacy of democracy itself. Nawrocki, who will officially take office on 6 August, will enter the Presidential Palace as the winner of an election whose result - although legally recognised - has left a deep trace of uncertainty in the collective consciousness of society.

3. Although the Polish President does not exercise executive power in the strict sense, his role is by no means symbolic. On the contrary, he possesses several powers that may acquire strategic significance in a political situation. This is what the landscape looks like after the presidential elections of June 2025, which elevated Karol Nawrocki to the Presidential Palace. Entering a period of so-called 'cohabitation' - the coexistence of a president with a government of a different ideological camp - Poland is entering a phase of systemic staggered conflict.

Nawrocki takes office with full awareness of his powers. Already during the campaign, he made no secret that, if he took office, he would use the presidential veto as a tool to defend 'Polish sovereignty' and 'constitutional order'. Donald Tusk's government, despite its parliamentary majority, does not have the three-fifths majority vote to override a presidential veto, which means that any law deemed controversial or ideologically hostile by the head of state can be effectively blocked. The President thus becomes not only an arbiter, but a potential political opponent of the government, entirely legitimate and constitutionally empowered.

This situation takes on particular gravity in the context of the government's planned judiciary reform. After years of conflicts with the European Commission over the independence of the judiciary, the government appointed at the end of 2023 has attempted to create a new institutional architecture to repair the damage from the United Right

governments. The initiative, unofficially referred to as 'Transition 2.0', was intended to rebalance the National Council of the Judiciary, reduce the influence of politicians on judicial appointments and comply with the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

But now, with a president sceptical of EU leverage and with a strong ideological base, these reforms are in question. Nawrocki, as his predecessor threatened to do, may veto them, or, just as threateningly, refer them to the Constitutional Court, which is still dominated by judges associated with the previous government. Although formally, the reforms may be passed by the Sejm, they may never be implemented. Political deadlock is turning into systemic stagnation.

Along with the institutional blockade, there is also the question of the future of the social and moral projects announced by the government. Proposals to liberalise abortion law, legalise civil partnerships or reform the public media are postulates that have largely mobilised the electorate of the Civic Coalition and the Left. However, Nawrocki, strongly associated with conservative and church circles, has repeatedly declared that he will not allow an 'ideological upheaval'. What became memorable was his public burning of a copy of the book 'Gender Queer' - a theatrical gesture, but not without symbolic importance. It is a political act, clearly indicating how he sees cultural issues: as a front in the battle for the nation's soul.

In this context, it is to be expected that any law aiming to broaden the scope of civil liberties, especially those related to sexuality, gender or identity, will be met with a response from the Presidential Palace. At best, with delay; at worst, with a blockade that will be difficult to break through. This conflict also spills over to the European level. The European Commission ties the disbursement of funds not only to economic parameters, but above all to respect for the rule of law. Any move by the new President towards a conservative, Eurosceptic turn will be watched with concern in Brussels. The rhetoric of the campaign, in which Nawrocki repeatedly accused the EU institutions of 'imposing ideology' and ['interfering with sovereignty'](#), was enough to worry his European partners. This concern is also growing in the context of the relationship with Ukraine. Poland has been one of Kyiv's most important allies in recent

years, both militarily and politically. Karol Nawrocki's declarations, however, suggest a change of emphasis: less enthusiasm for Ukraine's further integration into NATO and the European Union, more caution, more reservations. "[We cannot be a front country for other people's wars](#)," the candidate said during the campaign, building up an image of Poland as a fortress that must decide for itself whom and how it helps. In Brussels and Washington, these words were perceived as a signal of a possible weakening of the eastern pillar of European security. The concern is all the greater given that Nawrocki's election has been openly praised by leaders such as Viktor Orbán and Marine Le Pen - figures who regularly undermine the community dimension of European integration. As a result, Karol Nawrocki's presidency could mean a profound reorientation of domestic and foreign Polish politics. It is formed within the bounds of the Constitution, but realistically raises questions about its interpretation. However, something more profound is unfolding in the shadow of this conflict: [a dispute over who we are today as a political community and where we want to be tomorrow as a nation](#).