

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN POLAND – 21 OCTOBER 2007.

1. Pre-term elections to the Sejm and to the Senate (to the Parliament) were held on 21 October 2007. Elections were ordered by the President of the Republic of Poland as a result of Sejm's resolution on shortcoming of its term of office.

According to the resolution of the Constitution, Sejm may shorten its 4-years term of office by passing a resolution. Shortening the term of office of the Sejm simultaneously mean a shortening of the term of office of the second chamber of the Parliament – Senate. In the event of shortening the term of office the President of Republic of Poland is obliged to order elections to be held on a day falling no later than within the 45 day period from the day of the official announcement of Presidential order on the shortening of the Sejm's term of office.

2. Elections were conducted by elections authorities definite in the election act: National Electoral Commission (consisting of 9 judges, each 3 from Constitutional Tribunal, Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court); 41 constituencies (composed of 366 judges of common court and 25 476 ward election commissions (composed of 201 294 voters indicated by political parties)
3. 25.476 polling stations were established in general, 29.903 – on the country's territory, 205 – abroad (41 more comparing to elections in 2005) and 7 polling stations on boards of maritime vessels (2 more polling stations). Among 23.903 polling stations established in the country, 1178 were established in hospitals, social welfare institutions and 183 in penal institutions and arrests.
4. Under procedure required by electoral law, voter's roll was prepared in communes. The number of voters registered nationwide was 30.311.716, and the number of voters registered by counsels abroad was – 190.637. Generally voters registration was prepared correctly.
5. Pursuant to the Constitution the bodies authorized to put forth the candidates for deputies and senators are political parties (coalitions of parties) and groups of voters, which according to the statutory requirements are establishing electoral committees and are notifying National Electoral Commission. National Electoral Commission has been notified about establishing 56 electoral committees, and rejected notification of 5 committees due to insufficient number of supporting signatures, at least 1000 signatures of citizens eligible to vote. Among 51 electoral committees entitled to stand for elections, 28 were electoral committees of political parties, 1 coalition of parties and 22 committees of group of voters.
6. 296 constituency candidate lists were registered, with 6.196 candidates submitted (for 460 seats in the Sejm) to run for the Sejm. 10 electoral committees (out of 51 entitled) submitted candidate lists for deputies.

385 candidates (for 100 seats in the Senate) were registered by 29 electoral committees to run for the Senate.

7. Voting in general was conducted properly, polling stations were opened from 6.00 to 20.00. Prolongation of voting took place in 50 polling stations. In some instances it was a result of events and circumstances of organizational and ordinal nature, in most cases, however, it was caused by, in afternoon hours, temporary deficiency of ballot papers. Interruption of voting for that reason and consequently prolongation of voting happened primarily in big cities – Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań, Gdańsk and lasted in respective districts around few and few dozen of minutes.
8. In the course of electoral campaign National Electoral Commission addressed mainly public media (television and radio) on necessity of complying with rules of equal chances for candidates and electoral committees in their new programmes and in their own programmes.

A high level of politicization in the media environment was also observed by Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe's Election Assessment Mission (OSCE EAM). However in generally in the opinion of the Mission: - *The 21 October Parliamentary Elections in Poland demonstrated pluralistic electoral process, founded on a high level confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the electoral administration, supervised by National Electoral Commission. Doubts and challenges yet remain in ensuring effective independent oversight of the public media coverage. Registration of candidates and party lists was inclusive, offering voters a wide and genuine choice. The campaign was vigorously contested and polarized, but marked by occasional partisan interventions by institutions of the State.*

9. In the frame of cooperation and exchange of experience National Electoral Commission invited representatives of central electoral authorities from Lithuania, Federation of Russia, Latvia, Ukraine and Slovakia. They visited selected ward election commissions in Constituency no 17 in Radom city and no 19 in Warsaw, they met with members of Constituency election commissions and also with members of National Electoral Commission.
10. The campaign was accompanied with wide interest of national and international media. Related by over 30 national radio and TV stations and print media. International media was also present: German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian – inter alia: Television RTL, ARD, Television Italia, Spanish Television, Reuters, French Radio, Television Belarus, Russian Television, Russian Newspaper, Ukrainian Television, Ukraina Nowyje Wiesti and international guests – OSCE observers, Foundation of Polish-Czech-Slovakian Solidarity, representatives of Transparency International Georgia.
11. Elections results present as follows:

- 1) Elections to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland

- a) turnout – 53,88%
- b) in the allocation of seats participated and obtained by 5 electoral committees, 4 of them reached required threshold (5% for political parties and 8% for coalitions of parties):
  - Law and Justice 166 seats
  - Civic Platform 209 seats
  - Polish People's Party 31 seats
  - Lefts and Democrats Coalition 53 seats

And Electoral Committee of Voters German Minority, exempt from the national threshold – 1 seat

- 2) Elections to the Senate of the Republic of Poland

- a) turnout – 53,88%
- b) the seats obtained by candidates submitted by 2 electoral committees of political parties:
  - Law and Justice 39 seats
  - Civic Platform 60 seats

and Electoral Committee of Voters Cimoszewicz for Senate 1 seat

Warsaw – Constanza, September 2008.