Strong right wing

First Andrzej Duda unexpectedly won the presidential elections for his Party for Law and Justice (PiS), then the PiS also triumphed in the parliamentary elections. For the first time, no left-wing party is represented in the Polish parliament. The government of Prime Minister Beata Szydlo immediately took advantage of the political imbalance and initiated a series of measures that led to divisions within Polish society, protests and international criticism. Reforms of the constitutional court, state media control and public administration drove young Polish people in particular onto the streets throughout the country. Poland's uncompromising stance on climate change and its refusal to accept refugees met with rejection in the EU. This is probably also why Szydlo is now only deputy to the new Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who is considered more diplomatic than his predecessor and was appointed by PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski. He allegedly had Szydlo dismissed because the aggressive tone towards the EU not only worsened Poland's relations with its neighbours, but also repelled the young population, which could endanger the re-election of the PiS.

Elections

Elections in Poland have not been subject to any restrictions since 1990. The ruling PiS has recently caused a stir with intended changes to the electoral system, but elections in general are free and fair, and equal opportunities for candidates are guaranteed.

Freedom of speech

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by constitutional law and guaranteed in practice, but the media are highly politicized. As of late, employees of the state media supervisory authority are appointed by the Minister of Finance. Massive protests by the population prevented further restrictions on freedom of expression.

Civil rights protection

State institutions protect civil rights. However, the judicial system is inefficient due to lengthy procedures and long pre-trial detention. The merger of the offices of Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General raises doubts about the independence of the judiciary.

Corruption prevention

The government strives to curb corruption. The corruption rampant in the 1990s is a thing of the past. Transparency on parliamentarians' incomes, rules on party funding and a code of conduct are well implemented and work in practice.

Social inclusion

There is a high degree of equality, and the government is trying to narrow the gap between rich and poor. Regional differences have been successfully reduced in recent years, but youth unemployment (26.5%) and the risk of poverty among single mothers are a problem.

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