

EUROPEAN UNION

'New' Poland is born anti-Catholic

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On 11 December Donald Tusk was elected as the new Polish prime minister by the parliament and on 13 December he swore in the new government before the president of the republic Andrzej Duda. We asked journalist Pawel Lisicki, editor of the weekly 'Do Rzeczy', for an analysis of the Polish situation.

Poland's new prime minister Donald Tusk has promised to return his country "to its

rightful place in Europe". According to him it is time to finish an icy eight-year standoff between Warsaw and Brussels. Sounds good, but what does it practically mean? Donald Tusk has presented his vision of a new, progressive Poland at the heart of the EU, as his government won a vote of confidence in parliament. But he did not explain what "progressive Poland" exactly is. Actually there were plenty of contradictions and inconsistencies in his speech. On one hand he told the Polish parliament that "Poland will regain its position as a leader in the European Union," on the other he added, that "Any attempts to change treaties that are against our interests are out of the question ... no one will outplay me in the European Union".

How is that possible if the attempt to limit Polish position was the main purpose of Brussels? How can Poland "regain" something what she has not lost at all? It is the Brussels which attempts to change the treaties, so how Tusk can say, that he will be both against it and for the better cooperation with European Commission? Tusk is a former president of the European Council, and former leader of European People's Party, so he should have perfectly known what is the real purpose of changes of European treaties. He promised to "bring back billions of euros" of EU funds to Poland, which were frozen due to a dispute between Brussels and the outgoing Law and Justice (PiS) government over rule-of-law concerns. But how is he going to accomplish it without losing the sovereignty?

At the end of November this year the European Parliament voted on the report from the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) of the European Parliament recommending changes to the EU treaties. The document envisages, among other matters, the transfer of more member states' competencies to the EU level, which would, in fact, further reduce their sovereignty. The new areas where the member states would have to hand over their authority and submit to the exclusive competence of the Union are climate and environment.

One can predict then, that Brussels will decide what kind of cars Poles can drive and where they can drive, whether they will have to pay CO2 allowances for heating their homes, and many other matters of consequence. The decisions about climate and environmental issues will be imposed by the European Commission, as is the case in other areas where the EU already has exclusive competence, like for the common trade policy. This will be the most radical version of the green policy, the so-called Green Deal. The draft amendments to the treaties involve lowering the threshold for votes in the Council from 55 percent of countries, comprising 65 percent of the EU's population, to 50 percent of countries, comprising 50 percent of the EU's population. So pushing

through the Commission's proposals will be easier, and blocking anything will be more difficult. Poland would lose de facto veto power. The previous PiS government did not to accept it, but the new one would not oppose.

On top of that, there are new shared competences that actually become EU competences, since the treaty says that the EU has priority to exercise such competences. Member countries can only exercise them to the extent that the Union chooses not to. Among the new shared competences are public health and education. When it comes to health care, for example, the following are mentioned as new areas of shared competences: "public health matters and the protection and improvement of human health, especially cross-border health threats." Since abortion is disguised in the EU under the codename "reproductive health," it will be treated as part of health policy and will be decided as a shared competence, for which the Union has priority. The same goes for the other shared competences mentioned in the draft treaty amendments: forestry, cross-border transport infrastructure, external border policy, foreign affairs, external security, defense, civil protection, industry, and education. Either Tusk will be against it and in that way he would not "bring back billions of euros" of EU funds to Poland or, what seems to be more probable, he gives in and loses sovereign position. To call it "regaining leader position" sounds like a bad joke.

The other point mentioned by Tusk is the "return to democracy". The Polish new prime minister began his speech with a scathing condemnation of the legacy of the PiS years, recalling a strange political tract written by Piotr Szczęsny, a 54-year-old chemist who doused himself in petrol in Warsaw in 2017 and died in hospital 10 days later from the injuries caused by his self-immolation. Tusk said the "manifesto" Szczęsny wrote before his death, attacking the alleged authoritarianism of the PiS government, could replace his speech, and read out a fragment: "I protest against the xenophobia introduced by the authorities into public debate ... I protest against the hostile attitude of the authorities towards immigrants ... I protest against the incapacitation of public television."

But as in case of European policy there is a clear contradiction. On one hand Tusk is declaring the abolishing the PiS authoritarianism, even though he won perfectly democratic election what is not a trademark of authoritarian form of government, on the other mentioning the Manifesto of a suicide he suggested the revenge on PiS. One of the first decisions taken by his government concerned establishment of the three special investigated parliamentary commissions which are to prove the alleged breaches of Law perpetrated by PiS ministers. To make the story more complicated or rather

more ironic it is the same Tusk who declares the policy of national reconciliation.

After condemning the outgoing government, Tusk outlined his own program.

“The time has come for Poland to be happy,” he said. One can suspect that it is another way to suggest the implementation of gender revolution in Poland. In campaign appearances, Tusk promised to introduce more rights for LGBTQ+ people, whatever it means and roll back abortion legislation introduced under PiS. Tusk severely criticized pro-life Polish law, calling it repressive and cruel. It remains unclear though how much the new government will be able to change abortion laws, given elements of its own coalition do not back significant liberalisation. President Duda, who has veto power over the government, remains in office until 2025. It is highly probable, that Duda, a declared catholic, would use this power to protect unborn children.

In his speech to the Parliament Tusk announced that a different climate for Polish women would be felt immediately. “We have developed a programme so that every Polish woman feels a change in the treatment of motherhood, protection of mothers and access to legal abortion”. These words are the height of hypocrisy. In Tusk mind the “protection of mothers and supporting of motherhood” is the same as “access to legal abortion”. To support life means to have right destroy it.

There are many other signs showing, that the new government will be eager to start the new religious war against Polish weakened Catholic church. The minister of education became Barbara Nowacka, a leftist politician, one of the most well-known Polish feminists. She publicly showed her support for gender ideology and she would like to implement it to the schools. Another radical politician in the Tusk’s government is Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk, who became minister of family, labor and social policy. She is a radical activist for LGBT movement. Some years ago she wrote a doctoral thesis “ Reproduction-resistance- empowerment. Radical critic of Education in contemporary western thought”. She is a fervent partisan for free abortion and gender ideology. Tusk has created a new ministry for equality and nominated as the chief another feminist Katarzyna Kotula, one of the leaders of pro-abortion demonstrations. She is also responsible for implementation to Polish penal code a new category of legal provisions, which would punish so called hate speech crimes. Another person responsible for that is Adam Bodnar, the new minister of justice, ex Poland’s human rights commissioner, who has fought for women’s rights or LGBT rights.

There are not only empty announcements but real plans to change the Polish cultural identity. The first decision which was taken by the new liberal-left majority was to introduce the new law which allowed to finance in vitro method from public

money. The purpose of Tusk seems to be clear: the new, happy, European Poland should have nothing to do with the old, catholic and traditional one.