

PRO-DEMOCRATS IN THE POLISH COMMUNITY WENT TO THE POLLS

Voting by the Polish community living abroad in the parliamentary elections 2019 was a positive surprise. Not only the number of voters doubled since the previous elections in 2015, but 93 per cent of the 'new voters', made their votes for pro-democratic options. It shows that the Polish communities living abroad have an underestimated and not fully exploited pro-democratic potential.

In the article published before the elections, I was asserting that the Polish community living abroad, is more liberal than we think. The problem is in that, the liberal part is discouraged to participate in the elections while the radical fraction manage to mobilise their Polish electorate. We see this all the time in the press; "Results of the parliamentary elections 2019, voting abroad, PiS wins in the United States", or "How the Poles voted abroad?", "PiS wins decisively in the USA", all of which mislead the readers.

The votes of the Poles living in America, form only 9 percent of all votes abroad and are spread unevenly. PiS decisively loses in the West of USA. Its winning position is owed mainly to the large Polish community living in Chicago and New York. This, however, is exceptional. Generally, 60 per cent (old and new) votes abroad were cast for Citizens' Coalition (KO) and the Left! The result could have been more favourable for the pro-democratic parties, if the Poles abroad were not discouraged to vote abroad by their compatriots in Poland.

Pro-democratic potential of the Polish community was shown during organisation of KOD (Committee for the Defence of Democracy). Poles living abroad formed one of the largest groups in this organisation. Not only did they succeed in delivering pro-democratic results, but also the turnout was almost doubled. 316160 Poles living abroad voted. Number higher by 141355 since the previous elections (174805 in 2015).

Traditionally, Poles living abroad voted for the candidates from the Warsaw region. Unfortunately, their votes were diluted in this huge constituency. I wonder why nobody has never had an idea to create a separate constituency for the Poles living abroad, with their own Polish list of candidates. There are constituencies in Poland where fewer votes were counted than outside of Poland. To have their own representatives in the Sejm and their own senator, would allow for greater attention to the issues concerning Polish communities around the world and would use the potential existing in these communities. There are, after all, 20 million Poles living abroad!

Let's have a careful look at the results. I am particularly interested in the group of "new voters", who did not vote in 2015. In the recent elections, 87 per cent of them voted for the Citizens' Coalition or the Left. PiS gained

from them just 14 per cent.

Pro-democratic trend is more prominent in the elections to the Senate where the 'new voters', 93 per cent of whom voted for the candidates who criticized PiS for their authoritarian rule, voted for Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (KO) or Paweł Kasprzak (Obywatele RP) and only 7 per cent of them voted for Marek Rudnicki (PiS).

Results of the voting by Polish Communities abroad To the Senate in 2015

Candidates	number of votes	percentage
Barbara Borys-Damięcka (PO)	57 510	34,35
Katarzyna Elżbieta Pawlak (Independent)	31 479	18,80
Pro-democrats in total	88 989	53,15
Anna Maria Anders (PiS)	78 452	46,85
Total of qualifying votes	167 441	100,00

Results in the elections to the Senate in 2019

Candidates	number of votes	percentage
Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (KO)	173 431	56,13
Cezary Paweł Kasprzak (Obywatele RP)	46 660	15,10
Pro-democrats in total	220 091	71,23
Marek Rudnicki (PiS)	88 915	28,77
Total of qualifying votes	309 006	100,00

New voters in the elections to the Senate in 2019

Kategoria	2015	2019	new voters	percentage
Pro-democrats	88 989	220 091	131 102	92,61
PiS	78 452	88 915	10 463	7,39
Total of qualifying votes	167 441	309 006	141 565	100,00

I don't know what percentage is needed to say that almost all of the 'new voters' among Poles living abroad have pro-democratic preferences, but I think that we are close.

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