



### Polish Women's Strike post-electoral press release

#### **Protested in 2020, then voted in 2023 – women and youth bring electoral victory to Polish opposition over the right wing, populist government of Jarosław Kaczyński and Mateusz Morawiecki.**

The official results of parliamentary elections in Poland are in – the authoritarian, rightwing „Law and Justice” party led by Jarosław Kaczyński gathered only 197 seats in Polish parliament, and even with the neonazi Konfederacja party (18 seats) will not be able to form a government. It means that the power goes to opposition, led by Donald Tusk, and consisting of Tusk's Civic Coalition (centrist), The Left and Third Way (center-right), that will form a coalition with a solid majority of 248 seats in 460-seats parliament.

In 2019, the voters' turnout in parliamentary elections in Poland for women was just 61,5%. For people aged 18-29 it was much worse: 46,4%. And it's those two groups record high mobilization that took away the power from Kaczyński's authoritarian government in 2023. In these elections, the voters' turnout for women reached record high 73,2% (12% +), and for young people it was 68,8%, meaning over 22% increase!

One of the major blows to authoritarian Polish government were twice dealt by women organizing for their basic rights. First, in 2016, with the first Polish Women's Strike („black protest”), when protests stopped the draft bill aiming to totally ban abortion. Then in 2020, another attempt to ban abortion resulted in the biggest scale protests since the fall of communism in Poland – 100 days in over 600 cities. This time it was the young generation that took to the streets, as every one in three persons aged 18-29 took part in the protests.

That is why the slogan of Polish Women's Strike pro-vote campaign was „Vote for Abortion!”, as it aimed to convince those who protested for abortion rights – to go and vote. The campaign also consisted of the „you deliver – we deliver” offer, stating, that if the recipients of the campaign will go and vote for pro-abortion candidates, Polish Women's Strike will step up to conclude the legislative process. That is doable – as the Left and Civic Coalition support legalizing abortion by respectively 97% and 94%. The Third Way electorates are also in favor (84% Poland2050 and 78% Polish People's Party), though the barrier are the parties' leaders, who – against their electorates' wishes – support abortion being banned.

**Marta Lempart, PWS leader:** Women voted. Young people voted. Saving us all from a nationalist government that hated women and everyone else – LGBT+ persons, refugees, persons with disabilities, but also teachers, doctors and nurses, journalists' and scholars etc. Poland is back! And we are on our path to legal abortion – having caused the increase in support for legalization from 37% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 and now, having caused the political change – among the electorates and some (not all) party leaders, and now taking up the legislative change. Watch us!

Message video: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/oWOwyHBbT8A>

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Polish Women's Strike is a civic movement in Poland, started in 2016 with „black protests” against the ban on abortion. Having organized thousands of actions for women's rights, human rights in general, democracy and the rule of law, it is the biggest civic helpdesk-type organization in Poland, serving local leaders, organizers, collectives and initiatives in 600 cities in Poland.