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Freedom House (Author)

Freedom in the World 2024 - Poland

FREE

80

/ 100

Political Rights 33 / 40

Civil Liberties 47 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

81 / 100 Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

Overview

Poland's democratic institutions took root at the start of its transition from communist rule in 1989. Rapid economic growth and other societal changes have benefited some segments of the population more than others, contributing to a deep divide between liberal, pro-European parties and those purporting to defend national interests and "traditional" Polish Catholic values. The populist, socially conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party exerted significant political influence over state institutions and damaged Poland's democratic progress after taking power in 2015 but was defeated by an opposition coalition in the 2023 elections.

Key Developments in 2023

- An alliance of the centrist Civic Coalition (KO), Third Way (TS), and New Left (NL) won a combined majority in the October parliamentary elections. Turnout was the highest recorded since 1989, but the elections were marred by the misuse of state resources and PiS's control of the media landscape. Donald Tusk of the KO was officially installed as prime minister in December.
- In May, Parliament passed and President Andrzej Duda signed a law establishing a committee to examine Russian influence on Poland's

internal security. The committee was originally able to issue sanctions, including effective bans on holding office, without judicial review. An amended law was passed in August after the original law attracted fierce domestic and international criticism, but the committee was ultimately dismissed by the new government in November.

- In December, the Tusk-led government dismissed the supervisory boards of three state-owned media outlets which were accused of functioning as government mouthpieces under PiS. PiS lawmakers objected and President Duda vetoed a budget bill that included public-media funding in response. Later in December, the government said it would liquidate the outlets, allowing it to take more direct control of them.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? 3 / 4

The president is directly elected for up to two five-year terms. The president's appointment of a prime minister must be confirmed by the Sejm, the lower house of Parliament. While the prime minister holds most executive power, the president also has some influence, particularly over defense and foreign policy matters. Incumbent Andrzej Duda, who was supported by PiS, was reelected in July 2020 with 51 percent of the second-round vote. Turnout stood at 68.1 percent.

That election was originally scheduled for May 2020; that April, the government drafted plans to hold that vote with mail-in ballots and have the post office administer it instead of the constitutionally legitimate National Electoral Commission (PKW). The government backtracked on that plan and held the first round that June. Later that year, an administrative court ruled that the prime minister violated the law for engaging in this effort. In December 2023, the Sejm formed a committee to investigate the legality of the PiS government's attempt.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observers concluded that the 2020 election was competitive and well organized but was tarnished by "hostility" and "biased coverage by the public broadcaster," which PiS had effectively transformed into a government mouthpiece. The observers also noted that Duda received an "undue advantage" from campaigning by high-ranking officials including then premier Mateusz Morawiecki. Observers additionally raised concerns over

the persistent use of homophobic rhetoric by Duda, his team, and PiS's media allies.

Donald Tusk of the KO was appointed prime minister in December 2023, replacing Morawiecki. While an alliance including the KO, TS, and NL collectively outpolled PiS in October, President Duda offered PiS the first chance to form a new government. Another Morawiecki-led government was installed in late November but lost a confidence vote in December, allowing Tusk to take office.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected 3 / through free and fair elections? 4

Members of the bicameral Parliament are elected for four-year terms. The 460-seat Sejm is elected by proportional representation and holds most legislative authority. The 100 members of the Senate, the upper house, are elected in single-member constituencies. The Senate can delay and amend legislation but has few other powers.

In the October 2023 parliamentary elections, PiS won 35.4 percent of the vote and 194 Sejm seats. The centrist KO, the centrist-agrarian TS, and the NL won a combined 248 seats and a ruling majority. The electoral threshold was also passed by the far-right Confederation Liberty and Independence (Konfederacja), which won 18 Sejm seats. The KO-led alliance also gained control of the Senate, taking a combined 61 seats against PiS's 34. Turnout stood at 74.3 percent, the highest since 1989.

OSCE observers called the elections competitive and well-managed but noted that PiS benefited from favorable public media coverage and state resources. The PiS government initiated a referendum, held concurrently with the elections, concerning migration, pension policy, and the sale of public assets, allowing it to circumvent some campaign-finance regulations. Turnout for those referendum questions was too low for the results to be carried. The secrecy of the vote was affected by the referendums, as those who chose not to participate had to openly decline the ballot at polling stations. Local outlets belonging to Polska Press, which is owned by state-controlled PKN Orlen, reportedly refused to publish paid electoral advertisements from some opposition parties. OSCE observers additionally reported the use of "intolerant, xenophobic, and misogynistic" language during the campaign.

Score Change: The score declined from 4 to 3 because Poland's then ruling party misused state resources and exerted control over the media landscape to create undue advantages for itself ahead of the October parliamentary elections.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they 3 / implemented impartially by the relevant election management 4

bodies?

Poland's electoral framework and its implementation have generally ensured free and fair elections, though 2017–18 legal changes have increased the potential for political influence over the PKW, which manages elections, oversees party finances, and chooses whether to withhold state subsidies. While courts had nominated all nine PKW members, seven members are now chosen by Parliament. PiS also exerted influence over the member picked by the Constitutional Tribunal (TK), which is currently led by PiS-installed judges.

The Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs (IKNSP), a Supreme Court chamber whose members are appointed by the politicized National Council of the Judiciary (KRS), can validate or reject election and referendum results. The chamber maintains substantial power but is vulnerable to politicization.

Since 2011, despite demographic changes, Parliament has not modified the distribution of seats among electoral constituencies. This results in lower voting power in major cities, especially in the Warsaw constituency, where all votes casted by Polish people abroad were added in the October 2023 polls.

The Election Code was amended in March 2023 to lower the size of electoral precincts and guarantee free transportation for some voters, among other things. The European Parliament criticized the new code, saying it could disadvantage voters living abroad. Opposition parties, meanwhile, said the new code would benefit PiS voters. OSCE observers noted that these amendments incorporated some previous recommendations but were introduced only months ahead of the polls and without meaningful domestic consultation.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, 4 / and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of 4 these competing parties or groupings?

Poland's political parties generally organize and operate freely. PiS and Civic Platform (PO), the latter of which ruled in Poland from 2007 to 2015, had dominated the country's modern party system, but challengers have risen and fallen. The KO, which includes PO and several other parties, has contested elections as an alliance since the 2010s.

The center-right Poland 2050, which was founded in 2020, launched the TS with the Polish People's Party to contest the 2023 polls and won significant parliamentary representation. An agrarian nongovernmental

organization (NGO), AGROunia, registered as a political party in 2022, and aligned with the KO in the 2023 polls. The elections also saw the rise of the Nonpartisan Local Government Activists and One Poland, though they did not win Sejm seats.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 4 / 4

There have been multiple rotations of power among rival parties since the transition from communist rule. Despite the obstacles faced by opposition parties, including propaganda by PiS-controlled public media and legal changes to electoral administration, an opposition coalition won the October 2023 elections and replaced the PiS in government.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 4 / 4

Voters and politicians are generally free from undue interference by outside groups. OSCE observers reporting on the October 2023 elections noted that PiS exerted undue influence through its use of state resources and state-controlled companies. In the weeks preceding the elections, PKN Orlen was accused of lowering energy prices to benefit PiS. In recent years, PiS had used the Justice Fund, a special-purpose fund for crime victims, to benefit candidates belonging to Sovereign Poland, PiS's coalition partner. The government also bypassed campaign-spending limits by organizing "family picnic" events that resembled campaign rallies.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 4 / 4

Women have equal political rights but are underrepresented in national political bodies. Women held 29.6 percent of Sejm seats after the October 2023 elections, a record, and 9 of the cabinet's 27 seats. Female representation in the Senate fell from 24 percent to 17 percent after the October 2023 polls, however.

Ethnic, religious, and other minority groups enjoy full political rights and electoral opportunities. However, LGBT+ people face significant challenges to entering politics and seeing their interests represented in Polish politics in practice. Under PiS, government figures and their media allies commonly espoused homophobic rhetoric.

Electoral lists representing recognized national minorities are not subject to the minimum vote threshold for parliamentary representation.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 3 / 4

Freely elected officials generally determine and implement laws and policies without interference, though PiS leader and former prime minister Jarosław Kaczyński retained significant influence on government affairs even when remaining officially outside of government. Throughout its time in power, PiS sought to limit parliamentary scrutiny of legislation through various means, such as making use of private members' bills that require no consultation or impact assessments; abruptly introducing legislation; and limiting opportunities for the opposition to question or amend legislation.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 3 / 4

Throughout its time in power, PiS altered, lowered, or removed many criteria for staffing of public institutions, allowing for appointments based on party loyalty and personal connections.

In past years, the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) raised concerns about the misuse of public funds by PiS and its coalition partners. NIK chief Marian Banaś, a PiS appointee who later voiced opposition to that party, has himself been investigated over his financial dealings, which he claimed were politically motivated. The perceived independence of the NIK was undermined in July 2023 when Banaś organized a press conference endorsing Konfederacja's proposal to reform the body. In October, the state broadcaster TVP published recordings of Banaś allegedly voicing support for his son's presence on Konfederacja's electoral list, saying that it would prevent Konfederacja from supporting PiS.

In March 2023, a reformed criminal code that imposed higher sanctions for corruption and included new types of offenses entered into force. However, local stakeholders called the changes disproportionate.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 2 / 4

The right to public information is guaranteed by the constitution and by the 2001 Act on Access to Public Information but obtaining records and data from public institutions can be slow and difficult.

PiS refrained from consulting outside experts or NGOs on policy ideas and legislated rapidly while in power, providing little opportunity for debate or amendment.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 3 / 4

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression and forbids censorship, but PiS exerted considerable influence on the country's media sector while in power. PiS purged independent or dissenting voices from public outlets and their governing bodies, assumed a similar level of influence over a media regulator, and shifted advertising to supportive outlets. Under PiS, TVP, the state broadcaster, promoted progovernment messages and sought to discredit the opposition. Libel laws have also been used to harass journalists, with a considerable number of SLAPPs (strategic lawsuits against public participation) being filed in Poland.

PiS used state-run companies to exert control over local media. In 2020, PKN Orlen bought Polska Press, which operates a large number of regional newspapers and online portals, and subsequently dismissed most of the daily newspapers' chief editors. According to a report released by Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in July 2023, outlets affected by PKN Orlen's acquisition suffered a decline in editorial freedom and increasingly published stories favoring PiS.

The National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT), Poland's media regulator, has delayed decisions on broadcasters' license renewals and investigated outlets. In March 2023, for example, it launched an investigation into TVN over documentary about the late pope John Paul II's knowledge of child abuse within the Polish Catholic church. Also in March, PKN Orlen stopped selling copies of the left-wing satirical magazine *Nie* ("No"), which covered the story, from its newsstands. The post office also withdrew the magazine from sale.

In December 2023, the newly elected Sejm passed a resolution calling for the restoration of impartiality in public media. Culture Minister Bartłomiej Sienkiewicz then dismissed the supervisory boards of TVP, Polish Radio, and the Polish Press Agency, and appointed replacements. Sienkiewicz bypassed the National Media Council, a body created by PiS and charged with making appointments, and the KRRiT, which bore that responsibility before legal changes introduced by PiS in 2016. In late December, President Duda vetoed a budget bill that included funding for public media outlets over the Tusk government's actions. In response, Sienkiewicz said he would liquidate the three outlets, a procedure allowing the government to take control of them.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 4 / 4

The state respects freedom of religion. PiS is aligned with the Roman Catholic Church, which wields significant influence in Poland. Religious

groups are not required to register with the authorities but receive tax benefits if they do. Minority faiths are generally able to obtain registration in practice. While there is a formal ban on state funding for church construction, a church can obtain Culture Ministry funding if it includes a museum.

In December 2023, Grzegorz Braun, a Konfederacja lawmaker, used a fire extinguisher to extinguish Hannukah candles displayed in the Sejm. The Sejm's presidium excluded him from proceedings and imposed financial penalties, while prosecutors launched an investigation into his actions.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free 3 / from extensive political indoctrination? 4

While the right to pursue academic research has been upheld by courts, PiS has sought to discredit academics who challenge its preferred historical narrative, particularly with regard to the events of World War II. In April 2023, for example, Professor Barbara Engelking of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) discussed Polish hostility toward Jews during World War II in an interview. Later that month, then education minister Przemysław Czarnek vowed that the ministry would not fund the PAN institute to which Engelking belongs. The ministry reversed course in June, after academics protested the decision.

In 2022, President Duda signed a law creating the Copernicus Academy, which is charged with financing scientific research. In 2021, the PAN had warned that the new academy would duplicate much of its work and threaten its funding.

In 2022, then education minister Czarnek attempted to introduce legislation that would have empowered education officials to more directly influence educational and extracurricular activities in schools. Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that the proposal would have allowed head teachers to be removed by "educational welfare officers" and could have been used to restrict sex education. President Duda vetoed the proposals twice in 2022. The bill was reintroduced to the PiS-controlled Sejm in July 2023 but was not advanced by the time its term ended. The Sejm formed after the October polls declined to take it up.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or 3 / other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 4

People are generally free to engage in private discussions without fear of harassment or detention by the authorities. However, Poland has harsh insult laws, including against offending religious feelings and insulting the president, which have been increasingly used to pursue criminal cases in recent years.

In April 2023, journalist Piotr Maślak, who criticized the treatment of migrants and refugees at the Polish-Belarusian border, was found guilty of defaming Border Guard officers and received a fine. Maślak vowed to appeal. In May, the Supreme Court upheld an appellate court's determination that writer Jakub Żulczyk, who was charged with insulting Duda on social media, did not commit a crime.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 3 / 4

Freedom of assembly is generally respected in law and in practice. Public demonstrations are held with some regularity, though local authorities can limit demonstrations in their districts on grounds of maintaining public order.

Police have been known to use excessive force against demonstrators in recent years. In September 2023, police officers forcibly removed KO lawmaker Kinga Gajewska from a protest taking place outside a meeting held by then prime minister Morawiecki, even though Gajewska had immunity as a member of the Sejm. Also that month, at another campaign event attended by Morawiecki, State Protection Service (SOP) personnel pinned two climate activists who disrupted his speech. A journalist covering the event said an SOP officer damaged her mobile phone.

LGBT+ pride parades have taken place in Poland in greater numbers in recent years, despite authorities' unsuccessful attempts to obstruct them.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights- and governance-related work? 3 / 4

Although NGOs have generally operated without government interference in Poland, public media and top officials have systematically undermined the credibility of rights and governance-related groups in recent years, accusing many of lacking financial transparency and pursuing an opposition-led political agenda. A 2017 law centralized distribution of public NGO funding through a new body, the National Freedom Institute (NIW), which is indirectly attached to the prime minister's office. The NIW went on to disproportionately fund organizations that fit the PiS government's ideological profile.

NGOs were barred from entering the border zone near Belarus during the September 2021–July 2022 state of emergency. In June and October 2023 rulings, courts awarded compensation to activists operating in the border area for their wrongful detention. In September, an activist was charged

with leading a criminal group organizing illegal border crossings and was held in pretrial detention.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 4 / 4

Poland has a robust labor movement, though certain groups—including the self-employed, private contractors, and those in essential services—cannot join unions. Complicated legal procedures hinder workers' ability to strike.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 1 / 4

While in government, PiS asserted control over the judiciary, passing legislation designed to curb the TK's powers and to install progovernment judges on its benches. The PiS government imposed lower retirement ages for the Supreme Court in 2018, temporarily forcing 27 judges out of the chamber. Under measures that took effect in 2018, 15 of the KRS's members would be appointed by Parliament and not elected by fellow judges.

Individual judges have been scrutinized, suspended, or transferred to other courts for questioning the PiS government. In February 2023, that government told the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) that it would not reinstate Warsaw Court of Appeal judges who had been reassigned by that court's president. Those judges had objected to court members who were placed there by the KRS.

The TK also faced instability in 2023. In January, six TK members called on chief Julia Przyłębska to stop down, arguing her term had ended in 2022. Przyłębska declined; she and the PiS government argued that her term was to end in 2024. The six dissenters later delayed hearings on a bill meant to address rule-of-law concerns of the European Union (EU) by denying a necessary quorum.

Warsaw and the EU have engaged in a long-running dispute in recent years, which was partially provoked by the creation of the Disciplinary Chamber (ID) of the Supreme Court. Warsaw ignored the ECJ's instructions to suspend ID activities in 2021, while the TK ruled that the ECJ's interim measures conflicted with the constitution. The ECJ imposed a one-million-euro daily fine on Warsaw beginning that October (the fine was halved in April 2023 and halted in June). The government ultimately closed the ID in 2022 and replaced it with the Chamber of Professional Liability, which opposition lawmakers and some legal experts said was a cosmetic change.

The dispute over the judicial branch has continued; the European Commission (EC) argued that the TK's 2021 findings violated EU law and launched an infringement procedure that December. The EC referred Poland to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in February 2023; in June, the CJEU ruled that the ID was not sufficiently independent and found Warsaw's reforms violated EU law. In December, the TK ruled that the CJEU's penalties originating from the ID affair violated the Polish constitution.

The IKNSP, which is part of the Supreme Court, faced scrutiny during the year. In a June 2023 ruling, the ECJ said that the manner in which it managed judicial-independence matters violated two EU treaties. In December, the CJEU called the IKNSP illegitimate under EU law.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 3 / 4

Defendants generally enjoy due process protections in Poland, though the law allows for extended pretrial detention, and a large backlog of cases exists. The use of pretrial detention significantly increased under PiS.

The PiS government's decision to merge the roles of justice minister and prosecutor general created a "potential for misuses and political manipulation" of the justice system according to the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe.

Legislation introduced in 2016 gave law enforcement agencies broad authority to monitor citizens' communications, including the ability to access metadata without a court order, monitor the movements of foreign citizens without prior court approval, and hold terrorism suspects without charge for up to two weeks. It also contained ambiguous provisions on collecting individuals' data, arresting civilians, prohibiting demonstrations, and blocking internet access.

In May 2023, Parliament passed and Duda signed a law establishing a committee that would examine Russian influence on Poland's internal security between 2007 and 2022. The committee was originally able to issue sanctions, including effective 10-year bans on holding office, without judicial review. The law was heavily criticized as unconstitutional, both internally and abroad. In early June, Duda proposed amendments that would prevent the committee from issuing sanctions and allow individuals to more easily appeal its findings. The amended law was adopted in August and the committee was formed later that month. But in November, the newly elected Sejm voted to dismiss the committee's members. Shortly before that vote, the committee presented a partial report saying that top figures who were then in opposition, including Donald Tusk, should not hold public positions responsible for state security.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 4 / 4

Civilians are largely free from extralegal violence, though incidents of abuse by police have been alleged particularly in the context of antigovernment demonstrations. Human rights groups have reported inadequate medical care and overcrowded cells in prison facilities.

In January 2023, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights reported that inmates at Barczewo prison suffered beatings, intimidation, and waterboarding. As of July, no prison officer involved had been indicted.

The physical safety of the Polish population has generally remained unaffected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? 2 / 4

Women and ethnic minority groups generally enjoy equality before the law.

LGBT+ people face discrimination. While public support for LGBT+ rights has risen in recent years, PiS stoked fears of "imported LGBT ideology" by mounting an intense anti-LGBT+ campaign. By the end of 2020, more than 100 local governments had declared themselves "LGBT-ideology-free" zones or established "family charters," in vague resolutions that rights groups described as hateful toward LGBT+ people. The Supreme Administrative Court ruled against such declarations in 2022 and October 2023 decisions. By November, only 15 such declarations remained in effect.

In July 2023, then justice minister Zbigniew Ziobro released a far-right activist who had been imprisoned for attacking a woman holding a rainbow-colored bag in 2020. Ziobro accused a court of sentencing the activist because she protested against "the promotion of leftist ideology and homosexuality." In December, Duda pardoned the activist.

In 2021, Parliament authorized border guards to forcibly expel migrants who had crossed into Poland illegally, after Belarusian security forces stranded migrants and asylum seekers who crossed the border into Poland. The situation, which the Belarusian regime engineered in an effort to force the EU to reverse sanctions, trapped thousands of people between the two countries. Warsaw's pushback policy continued in 2023 despite court rulings deeming it unlawful. A border wall constructed in 2022 has not stopped irregular crossings; in August 2023, the Border Guard reported that 19,000 people attempted to cross during the year to date. Also in August, Warsaw accused the Belarusian and Russian

governments of sending more people into the border zone. As of December 2023, least 53 people have died in the area since the crisis began.

The national government, local bodies, and citizens have offered significant support to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion of their country. Ukrainians have significant rights, including to the labor market, though stateless persons arriving from Ukraine have less protection. In March 2023, some Ukrainian refugees became responsible for part of housing and food costs due to government funding cuts. As of October 2023 Poland hosted 961,000 non-EU citizens from Ukraine who are beneficiaries of temporary protection.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 4 / 4

People in Poland typically enjoy freedom of travel and choice of residence, employment, and institution of higher education.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 4 / 4

Citizens have the right to own property and establish private businesses. However, a 2016 law imposed onerous restrictions on sale and ownership of agricultural land, ostensibly to protect small-scale farmers. State and religious institutions are not bound by the restrictions.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 3 / 4

In 2021, a TK ruling that abortion in cases where the fetus has a congenital disorder is unconstitutional took effect. Consequently, legal abortion was limited to cases of danger to life or health of the pregnant person and cases involving rape or incest through the 12th week of pregnancy. Under regulations that took effect in 2022, doctors must record pregnancies in a national register. At least six women are known to have died in Poland between 2021 and September 2023 due to complications with their pregnancies and under circumstances where health-care providers did not perform abortions. In December, the ECtHR held that the TK's 2021 ruling violated the "right to respect for private and family life."

Polish authorities have launched investigations against people seeking medical help after miscarriages or medication-induced abortions. In

March 2023, reproductive-rights activist Justyna Wydrzyńska was sentenced to eight months of community service for helping another woman access abortion pills.

Since 2017, contraceptive pills have been available by prescription only. An NIK report found that in many, especially rural, parts of Poland, gynecologists are rare. Many must travel to obtain care, and reliable and timely access to contraception and other sexual-health services is limited.

Same-sex civil partnerships and marriages are not permitted, and same-sex couples are not legally allowed to adopt. Marriage is constitutionally defined “ as a union of a man and a woman,” under the “care and protection” of the state. In December 2023, Prime Minister Tusk said the government would introduce a bill allowing civil unions.

In June 2023, a law introducing economic violence and cyberbullying as forms of domestic violence and expanding the circle of persons affected by its provisions took effect. In August, law enforcement officers became capable of issuing restraining orders and contact bans in domestic violence cases.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from 3 / economic exploitation? 4

The law provides meaningful protections against abusive working conditions and child labor, especially in the formal sector. The authorities work to combat human trafficking, but women and children are still subjected to trafficking for sexual exploitation and foreign migrant workers are vulnerable to conditions amounting to forced labor.

State-owned entities maintain a considerable presence in sectors like banking, often by buying out foreign owners, as the PiS government effectively renationalized parts of the economy. Hiring for senior positions at such firms is often based on political loyalty or connections rather than merit, a longstanding issue that grew more widespread under PiS.

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