

Research against Global Authoritarianism

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International Report

Poland: The Alarming Rise of the Far-Right (Rafal Pankowski)

Poland: The Alarming Rise of the Far Right By Rafal Pankowski ('NEVER AGAIN' Association)

On 1 August 2025, a group of men unfolded a banner and ignited flares in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. The action was supposed to commemorate the anniversary of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, the largest anti-Nazi armed rebellion by a resistance movement during World War II. The demonstrators from Poland, however, were definitely not anti-fascist activists and the stunt was meant as a provocation. The group was led by Slawomir Mentzen, a leader of the Polish far-right political party Konfederacja (Confederation), see his post on X here.

Konfederacja itself is currently a coalition of two groups: Nowa Nadzieja (New Hope) led by Mentzen and Ruch Narodowy (National Movement) led by Krzysztof Bosak. According to sociological data, Konfederacja is mostly supported by young men. As a candidate in the Polish presidential election on 18 May this year, the 38-year old Mentzen received 14,81 percent of the popular vote. He is notorious for the “5-points” platform he had announced during a European Parliament electoral campaign in 2019: ‘We stand against Jews, gays, abortion, taxation and the European Union’.

Today, three MEPs from Mentzen’s faction sit together with AfD as members of the Europe of Sovereign Nations group. MEPs from Bosak’s faction are members of the Patriots of Europe group together with Marine Le Pen’s National Rally (RN - Rassemblement National) and Viktor Orban’s Fidesz, among others. While Mentzen’s New Hope is mostly focused on radical free-market demands, Bosak’s National Movement is motivated by a radical ethno-nationalist ideology and it claims the tradition of the Polish far-right nationalist movement going back to the 1920s and 1930s. Today, Konfederacja competes with the right-wing populist Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc, PiS) on who owns the xenophobic anti-refugee and anti-immigrant agenda.

Anti-Immigration competition

On 19 July 2025, Konfederacja organized anti-immigrant rallies taking place simultaneously in 80 cities and towns all over the country, mostly attended by football fans, often expressing openly racist slogans. In the city of Kielce, the demonstration was joined by Janusz Walus, the Polish-born killer of Chris Hani, the anti-apartheid icon and leader of the South African Communist Party in 1993. Walus had been recently released from jail in South Africa and returned to Poland where he is a popular figure on the far right. His presence at the demonstration was met with applause from the crowd.

Konfederacja and PiS competing on anti-immigrant agenda

PiS responded by announcing its own big rally against migration to be held in Warsaw on 11 October this year. It also supported the “citizens’ patrols” hunting for refugees near the Polish-German border. PiS was the party of government during the 2015-2023 period and nowadays it is the main party of opposition to the centrist government of Donald Tusk.

The PiS candidate Karol Nawrocki – a nationalist historian, a former boxer and football hooligan – won the presidency in the second round of the election held on 2 June 2025. The election was strongly influenced by the global Trump camp. Nawrocki’s victory was preceded by the publicized international CPAC meeting in Poland on 27 May, during which he was endorsed by, among others, Trump’s Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem. Donald Trump himself had hosted Nawrocki in the White House during the campaign on 1 May. In the European Parliament, PiS is a part of the European Conservatives and Reformists together with Giorgia Meloni’s Brothers of Italy.

Split within the Konfederacja

Shortly before the presidential election, there was a split in Konfederacja which lost one of its three main leaders, MEP Grzegorz Braun who decided to run independently on behalf of his own extreme-right party, Konfederacja Korony Polskiej (Confederation of the Polish Crown). Much to the shock of many observers, Braun received 6.34 percent of the vote and came fourth in the race, beating, among others, the Speaker of Parliament, Szymon Holownia, and two socialdemocratic candidates.

Braun is arguably one of the most extreme political figures in contemporary European politics, espousing radically antisemitic, anti-Muslim and anti-LGBT views. For years Braun has promoted conspiracy theories about Jews taking over Poland, called for violence against LGBT people, and incited hatred against Ukrainian refugees on social media under the slogan “Stop Ukrainianization of Poland”.

On 12 December 2023, Braun committed a physical attack on the celebration of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah in the Polish Parliament, using a fire extinguisher. On 27 January 2025, he disrupted a minute of silence at the European Parliament’s Holocaust remembrance ceremony. In July 2025, he repeatedly questioned the fact of usage of gas chambers in Auschwitz by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Braun has adopted the fire extinguisher as his campaign emblem and a symbol of violent antisemitism. He sits as an independent in the European Parliament, but he has called for the creation of a “global fire-extinguisher front”.

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