

The International, Foreign and Social Policies of Poland

Polish international and foreign policy

- Transatlantic relationship very important for Poland
- Views America as the guarantor of security through NATO (Trump is challenging this)
- Committed member of the EU – cooperates with Baltic countries and also has the Weimar Triangle cooperation (Poland, France, Germany)
- Supports the Eastern Partnership program of the EU
- Is a member of the V4 group – currently in conflict with Hungary over closeness to Russia
- Supports European integration of Ukraine and opposes Russian aggression

Economic diplomacy

- Main goal is to support Polish medium sized and large businesses on foreign markets
- Promotes economic interests
- Wants to attract foreign investment
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs offers entrepreneurs the opportunity to participate in official foreign visits

Eastern policy

- Poland supports the Eastern expansion of the EU
- Supports the EU integration of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia
- Polish-Ukrainian cooperation is strong because of common history, similar traditions
- Polish priority is restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine
- They want Russia to bear political and financial responsibility for the war
- Continue to support Russian civil society and pro-democracy groups
- Will not send troops to Ukraine, provides training and logistics for military support and 80% of aid goes through Poland

Geopolitical changes

- Trump administration has caused geopolitical changes
- This is transforming Polish foreign policy
- Poland sees the changes as a collapse of old paradigms especially concerning transatlantic partnership and the United States' approach to Russia
- Poland wants increased security, more developed European military capabilities, strong transatlantic ties
- Wants US military presence in Poland – there were talks of the US withdrawing troops

Social policy

- Managed by the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy
- Balances welfare with active labor market integration
- Family support program: called Rodzina 800+ (Family 800+), monthly cash benefit per child regardless of income up to 18 years old
- Very wide circle of family support programs to support having more children and sending children to school
- Maternity leave 20 weeks mandatory paid, plus 14 weeks for the mother post-birth. Paid at 80-100% of average salary. Can be extended with 41 weeks of parental leave. At least 14 weeks has to be used by mothers. The rest can be split with the father. Otherwise fathers receive 2 weeks of paternity leave. Employers cannot terminate contract while on maternity or parental leave.

Health care in Poland

- Hybrid system, public and private
- Public services are free but have long waiting times so many people turn to private health care providers
- Basic care is free in public healthcare but many medicines and dental care have to be paid for
- Poland has one of the lowest numbers of nurses and doctors in the EU compared to the population. This is a great challenge for the system. It is also one of the reasons why there are long waiting times

Pension system in Poland

- Mandatory three pillar structure paid by employee and employer
- Public, private and voluntary savings
- Minimum pension after a certain number of service years
- Retirement age is 60 for women, 65 for men
- Similar to Hungary, rising life expectancy and shrinking working age population means that future pension value will drop