



INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION Republic of Poland – Presidential Election, Second Round, 1 June 2025

STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The second round of the Polish presidential election was intensely contested, and while fundamental freedoms were respected in the dynamic campaign, the longstanding political polarization and societal divide deepened between the two rounds. Technical preparations were conducted professionally and efficiently, despite some regulatory shortcomings and limited transparency of the decision making of the election administration. Inadequate campaign conduct and finance regulations that enabled the involvement of public officials as well as frequent engagement of third parties in the campaign, including online, detracted from the accountability and integrity of the process. Multiple efforts were deployed to counter disinformation, foreign interference, and inauthentic online activity; however, their effectiveness was weakened by insufficient institutional co-ordination, limited and delayed public communication around the measures taken, and inconsistent responses by social platforms. The only televised debate offered little substantive exchange. The combination of media polarization and biased coverage, including by the public broadcaster, limited voters' access to impartial information and their ability to meaningfully assess the platforms of the run-off candidates. Concerns about the independence of the judiciary persisted, including with respect to electoral matters. On election day, in the limited number of polling stations observed by the IEOM, the various stages of the election process were assessed as well-organized, professional and calm, but as in the first round, the secrecy of the vote was often not adhered to.

While the election-related legal framework is generally applicable to both rounds, there are no specific provisions related to the second round apart from the article establishing which candidates advance to a second round. The legislation lacks explicit articles as to the timeframes for the official second-round campaign period and the ability to challenge the results of the first-round. These shortcomings detract from the overall legal certainty and undermine the right to an effective legal remedy.

The election administration at all levels managed the technical aspects of the election professionally and efficiently. The transparency of its decision-making at the national level, however, remained limited, with the National Election Commission (NEC) holding only one in-person session between the two rounds without notifying citizen and international observers and communication to the public being scarce. Generally, resignations of polling staff in between the rounds did not affect electoral preparations. Voter lists were updated after the first round, and the total number of voters for the second round was 28,848,733.

Both candidates campaigned actively, including online, and the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly were respected during the second-round campaign. The campaign reinforced the entrenched rivalry between the two main political blocs, with increasingly confrontational rhetoric. The run-off was framed as a decisive zero-sum contest over Poland's future direction in terms of both domestic and foreign policy. Divisive themes such as immigration, support for Ukraine, and reproductive rights remained prominent. Although the use of inflammatory and derogatory rhetoric declined noticeably in the second-round campaign, narratives targeting vulnerable groups continued to circulate. Contrary to international good practice and in the absence of explicit legal provisions, there was no clear separation between campaigning and the activities of public officials and no efforts to counteract such practices were made. One citizen observer organization endorsed one of the candidates contesting the run-off, undermining its role as non-partisan and impartial observers.

The late designation of a Digital Services Coordinator shortly before the first round has not yet had a tangible impact on the existing institutional mechanism to detect and counter disinformation and foreign interference. The delayed, inconsistent, and non-transparent handling of a high-profile case involving third-party Facebook ads with undisclosed origins and funding raised concerns about the adequacy and timeliness of institutional responses, potentially diminishing public confidence in the institutions involved. While national institutions and civil society organizations continued to liaise with social networks, the effectiveness of their responses to notifications and escalations continued to vary significantly, resulting in a significant share of flagged content on some platforms remaining unaddressed. While no specific new threats or interference attempts were reported between the two rounds, the Prime Minister announced extension of national security measures in response to ongoing hybrid and cyber threats from the Russian Federation and Belarus.

Campaign finance regulations are applicable to both rounds but do not ensure transparency, accountability and integrity. The law does not require financial reporting, disclosure of total income, including funds transferred from political parties and donations below the threshold, or disclosure of expenditure prior to the first-round election day or between rounds. In addition, ahead of the second round, the insufficient regulation of third-party campaigning, particularly online, combined with the lack of effective oversight and sanctions further exacerbated the existing legal loopholes, undermining voters' ability to make an informed choice. Several third parties, including voter mobilization and election observer associations, campaigned in favour of Mr. Trzaskowski, including online, but were not subject to legal requirements for disclosure of the origins of their income and expenditure. Two of these online campaigns were referred for investigation, on suspicion of foreign funding. The NEC, mandated with campaign finance oversight, is not entitled to act upon alleged violations during the campaign. While this undermines the effectiveness of regulations, the NEC opined that enforcing compliance before election day could be perceived as inconsistent and politically motivated.

The media environment remained highly polarized, as many media displayed pronounced editorial biases which amplified the confrontational campaign, thus limiting voters' access to impartial information and negatively impacting their ability to make an informed choice. Contrary to its mandate, public television, along with private *TVN* and *Onet* often portrayed Mr. Nawrocki in a negative manner, while the coverage of Mr. Trzaskowski was largely uncritical. *TV Republika* displayed a more pronounced bias by covering Mr. Trzaskowski predominantly negatively. The only televised debate between the two candidates lacked effective moderation, reflecting their preference for a direct confrontation, and was used as a platform for mutual accusations rather than offering a meaningful comparison of policy platforms. The broadcast media regulator KRRiT, widely perceived as politicized by IEOM interlocutors, singled out only media critical of Mr. Nawrocki, although its own monitoring revealed imbalanced coverage across the spectrum.

Objections to final election results can be filed with the Supreme Court's Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs within 14 days following their announcement by the NEC. Such challenges are examined in a closed session, undermining transparency and in violation of OSCE commitments and international good practice, particularly relevant when an appeal to the Supreme Court is the only available legal remedy. Concerns regarding the independence of the chamber, which in the view of the European Court of Human Rights is not a tribunal established by law, persisted, potentially impacting on the public acceptance of any decision made by this chamber. Following the first round, no appeals have been filed with the Supreme Court and the NEC received some 40 complaints concerning the first-round election day, which they referred to the relevant bodies.

In the limited number of polling stations observed by the IEOM, the election process was assessed as well-organized, professional and calm. As in the first round, established procedures were generally adhered to, including during the count and tabulation, and while IEOM observers reported no incidents

or serious procedural shortcomings or irregularities from the observed polling stations, the secrecy of the vote was often not ensured, which remains of concern. Where observed, the vote count and tabulation were conducted efficiently and transparently.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Background and Post-First Round Developments

The National Election Commission (NEC) processed results of the 18 May first round of the presidential election efficiently and posted them per polling station on its website, enhancing transparency of the process.¹ The NEC announced the complete first-round results at 10:00 hrs. on 19 May, with Rafał Trzaskowski, supported by the Civic Coalition (*Koalicja Obywatelska*, KO; 31.36 per cent), and Karol Nawrocki, supported by the Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS; 29.54 per cent), advancing to the second round.² The final voter turnout for the first round was 67.31 per cent. All candidates accepted the officially announced results, and no concerns were raised by candidates and other stakeholders as to their validity.

The relatively high level of support for candidates outside the two dominant parties indicated voter interest in a more diverse political spectrum and for alternative voices. The strong performance of far-right candidate Grzegorz Braun prompted concerns among parts of the electorate including with regards to the normalization of inflammatory and discriminatory rhetoric, which could further influence public discourse and societal attitudes toward vulnerable groups.³ Following the first round, several unsuccessful candidates and their respective parties endorsed one or the other of the two run-off candidates.⁴

The second round continued to unfold against the backdrop of deep political polarization and societal divides and lingering questions about legitimacy and independence of some key electoral oversight institutions, in particular judicial ones. The run-off was framed as a zero-sum contest, emphasizing the decisive significance of the election outcome for the country's domestic and foreign policy course, as well as the relations between the president and the government.

¹ Scanned copies of results protocols were uploaded to the NEC website on 23 May.

² Sławomir Mentzen (endorsed by Confederation Freedom and Independence) received 14.81 per cent; Grzegorz Braun (endorsed by the Confederation of the Polish Crown) 6.34 per cent; Szymon Hołownia (endorsed by Poland 2050 and the Third Way) 4.99 per cent; Adrian Zandberg (endorsed by Together) 4.86 per cent; Magdalena Biejat (independent, endorsed by the New Left) 4.23 per cent; Krzysztof Stanowski (independent) 1.24 per cent; Joanna Senyszyn (independent) 1.09 per cent; Marek Jakubiak (endorsed by the Federation for the Republic) 0.77 per cent; Arthur Bartoszewicz (independent) 0.49 per cent; Maciej Maciak (independent, endorsed by the Prosperity and Peace Movement) 0.19 per cent, and Marek Woch (endorsed by Non-partisan Local Government Officials – Poland Unites Us) 0.09 per cent. Invalid ballots accounted for some 0.44 per cent of votes cast in the first round.

³ While most candidates' results were close to predictions from major opinion polls in the final week of the first-round campaign, Mr. Braun outperformed his projected average of 3.5 per cent support. The election result of Mr. Braun was the biggest surprise for 46 per cent of respondents of a SW Research [survey](#) for daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita*.

⁴ Magdalena Biejat and the [New Left](#), Szymon Hołownia and [Polska 2050](#), as well as the [Civic Platform](#) (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO) and Polish People's Party ([PSL](#)), all part of the governing coalition, openly backed Mr. Trzaskowski. Joanna Senyszyn expressed support for Mr. Trzaskowski during the 24 May rally in Warsaw. [Artur Bartoszewicz](#), [Grzegorz Braun](#), [Marek Jakubiak](#), and [Marek Woch](#) expressed support to Mr. Nawrocki. Sławomir Mentzen hosted both run-off candidates for YouTube-streamed conversations on his own channel, presented as an effort to help his voters in deciding whom to support.

Legal Framework

Apart from the provision establishing that if no candidate received the absolute majority of valid votes cast in the first round, the top two candidates advance to a second round, there are no specific provisions in the Election Code related to the second round. However, the legal framework from the first round is generally applicable to both rounds, including the timeline for technical preparations for voting, the composition and functioning of the election administration, voter registration, and media coverage.

Despite prior ODIHR recommendations, the Election Code lacks explicit articles as to the timeframes for the official second-round campaign period and the ability to challenge the results of the first-round results in case of irregularities or offences affecting the outcome.⁵ These shortcomings detract from the overall legal certainty and undermine the right to an effective and timely legal remedy.⁶ The NEC took no action on these matters and did not pass any instructions or decisions to address second-round issues as in their opinion the first-round guidelines are sufficient. In addition, the insufficient campaign finance regulations, including lack of reporting requirements before the second round and absence of third-party campaigning provisions, detract from transparency and impinge on voters' ability to make an informed choice.

Election Administration

The election administration, headed by the NEC and the National Election Office (NEO), commenced preparations for the second round shortly after announcing the first-round results, approving the template for the second-round ballot and updating the electoral calendar on 19 May. This was the only in-person session the NEC held in between the two rounds, but unlike for the first round, citizen observers were not provided with a live broadcast link, and the ODIHR LEOM was not invited to attend. The transparency of the decision-making at the national level thus remained limited. In addition, communication to the public on preparations between the two rounds was scarce. As for the first round, the technical aspects of the second round were managed professionally, efficiently and within legal deadlines.

All 44 electoral committees registered for this election retained the right to have Precinct Election Commission (PEC) members appointed for the second round. In some cases, PEC members who resigned had to be replaced, but repeat trainings were organized only if considered necessary by the respective NEO delegate office.⁷ Generally, PEC resignations did not affect electoral preparations. The NEC guidelines to the PECs for the preparation and conduct of election day remained valid for the second round.

Voter registration is passive, and voter lists are updated on a continuous basis, including between the two rounds. Any changes to the voter lists requested before the first round were also automatically applicable to the second round, unless the voter explicitly requested a change before the second round. The total number of voters for the second round was 28,848,733. Voters who wished to be added to the voter list of a polling station abroad or on a ship or platform under the Polish flag could request to do so until 27

⁵ Complaints can only be filed after the announcement of the final election results. Complaints against results of the first round are considered premature and declared inadmissible on formal grounds.

⁶ Paragraph 5.10 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) states that everyone shall have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity. Article 2.3(a) of the 1966 [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR) states that "any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy...". Guideline II.3.3. of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters requires an effective system of appeal.

⁷ The ODIHR LEOM was informed of repeat PEC trainings only in the case of Constituency Election Commission (CEC) 10 in Chełm, CEC 19 in Nowy Sącz and CEC 27 in Opole.

May.⁸ A record number of some 695,000 voters registered to vote abroad. Voters with disabilities and those over 60 years could request a postal ballot (by 22 May) or to vote by proxy (by 23 May). Changes to voting location in country and applications for absentee voting certificates (AVC) for the second round were possible up until 29 May.⁹

In line with its mandate, the election administration released voter education videos for the second round, with Polish sign interpretation, related to casting a valid ballot, reporting irregularities, changing the voting location, and respecting the campaign silence period. Moreover, some voter mobilization campaigns run by civil society organizations (CSOs) became more visible in between rounds. One observer organization, the Committee for the Defence of Democracy (KOD), published a statement endorsing Mr. Trzaskowski, undermining its role as non-partisan and impartial observers.¹⁰

Only candidate proxies nominated on behalf of the two run-off candidates could observe the second round, as could citizen and international observers. As for the first round, candidate proxies and citizen observers only needed to provide a letter by their nominating entity, in a NEC-approved template. International observers could request new accreditations from the NEC between the two rounds.

Campaign Environment

In the absence of explicit legal provisions on the start of the second-round campaign period, the two run-off candidates remobilized swiftly after the announcement of the first-round results and continued campaigning until the beginning of the 24-hour campaign silence period ahead of election day.

The second-round campaign marked a return to the dominant political dynamic centered on the long-standing rivalry between the Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO) and PiS, with both sides competing for the votes of a divided and ideologically fragmented electorate. Narratives sharpened and became increasingly confrontational, with divisive themes such as immigration, and support for Ukraine remaining prominent.¹¹ While no broader gender issues were addressed by the two candidates, the topic of reproductive rights continued to feature. Although the use of inflammatory and derogatory rhetoric declined noticeably in the second-round campaign, narratives targeting migrants, ethnic and religious minorities and anti-Ukrainian content continued to feature in the wider discourse of the political right, including online.

Distinctions between campaigning, political parties' activities, and the performance of public functions remained blurred. Shortly after the first round vote, President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Donald Tusk renewed their endorsements of Mr. Nawrocki and Mr. Trzaskowski, respectively.¹² Public officials at various levels and on both sides of the political spectrum provided endorsements and support to the

⁸ In addition to 31,627 polling stations in Poland, 511 were set up abroad, and 5 on ships and platforms.

⁹ The total number of requests for postal voting was 12,093, for voting by proxy 42,090, for AVCs 571,999 and 1,341,609 voters requested change of voting location.

¹⁰ The KOD published on [Facebook](#) on 22 May and then on [their official webpage](#) on 23 May a statement in support of Mr. Trzaskowski. The [Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations](#) states that "Non-partisan election observation and monitoring by citizen organizations is impartial towards all political parties, candidates and those in favor of or opposed to any issue or initiative presented in a referendum".

¹¹ On 28 May, upon proposal by the government, the Sejm extended the temporary suspension of the right to seek asylum at the Belarusian border, citing ongoing hybrid threats, with 366 votes for and 17 against. On 30 May, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski [announced](#) the launch of an awareness-raising campaign abroad, aimed at deterring irregular migration by warning potential migrants from Africa and Asia against misinformation spread by smugglers and emphasizing that Poland's borders are effectively protected.

¹² On 19 May, President Andrzej Duda [stated](#): "It is no secret that I supported Karol Nawrocki. I still support Karol Nawrocki". On the same day, Prime Minister Donald Tusk appealed for votes for Mr. Trzaskowski in an X [post](#), asking voters to decide if they wanted "paralysis of power and chaos" or "justice and common good".

candidates through street campaigning, speeches at campaign events, media appearances, and on social networks.¹³ The backing and organizational support by the two main and other political parties of the two candidates' campaigns remained pronounced, including through grassroots mobilization, event coordination, and vigorous social network promotion.¹⁴ As noted in connection with the first round, the absence of efforts on the part of political actors to clearly separate campaigning from other activities is contrary to previous ODIHR recommendations, legal requirements, NEC clarifications, and international good practice and is further exacerbated by the lack of timely enforcement of these principles during the campaign.¹⁵

The fundamental freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly were respected. Candidates sought greater visibility through banners and billboards compared to the first round and held additional campaign events across the country, including two large parallel marches in Warsaw one week before election day. Campaign events proceeded peacefully and largely unobstructed, but reports of destruction of campaign material remained high.¹⁶ Campaign events observed by the ODIHR LEOM between the two rounds drew diverse audiences, with roughly equal representation of women and around 27 per cent of young people among the attendees. Both candidates actively appealed to young voters. Women initiatives actively campaigned in support of both candidates.

Some foreign officials and public figures endorsed the candidates during the campaign. Romania's president-elect Nicușor Dan and George Simion, the runner-up in the recent presidential election, endorsed Rafał Trzaskowski and Karol Nawrocki, respectively, including through in-person participation in their campaign events. The United States Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, speaking at the 27 May Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Rzeszów, expressed support for Karol Nawrocki.

Social networks continued to serve as a key channel for campaign communication and voter outreach, primarily featuring general messaging but increasingly marked by mutual criticism. Both candidates' accounts saw a considerable increase in audience engagement during the second-round campaign, reflecting intensified efforts, heightened public interest, and growing online reach. Average weekly engagement with Mr. Trzaskowski's and Mr. Nawrocki's posts reached nearly 490,000 and 505,000 respectively, more than doubling the first-round average in both cases.¹⁷

¹³ Almost all ministers, 24 out of 27, expressed support and campaigned for Mr. Trzaskowski, including on social networks. At the local level, among others, mayors of [Kielce](#), [Lublin](#), [Rybnik](#), and [Sosnowiec](#) endorsed Mr. Trzaskowski at events or through social media. On the other hand, the mayor of [Stalowa Wola](#), the Marshals of [Małopolskie](#) and [Świętokrzyskie](#) Voivodships, as well as the chairperson of the [Podkarpackie Regional Assembly](#) campaigned for Mr. Nawrocki, some through social media accounts as public officials.

¹⁴ On 23 May, the chairperson of PiS Jarosław Kaczyński [published](#) a letter addressed to all party representatives calling for maximal mobilization and involvement in campaigning. PiS representatives in Bydgoszcz were [inviting voters](#) to a 19 May campaign event of Mr. Nawrocki in the city. Representatives of governing coalition parties, including national and local-level public officials and party representatives, held joint press conferences in [Białystok](#), [Bydgoszcz](#), [Lublin](#), and [Rzeszów](#) appealing for votes for Mr. Trzaskowski. Local structures of both parties mobilized supporters across Poland, including through social media, and facilitated transportation to the 25 May marches in Warsaw.

¹⁵ See NEC clarification of [31 March 2025](#). Based on NEC clarifications dated [4 March 2024](#), cases of lack of clear distinction between campaigning and public functions may be subject to post-electoral review and could result in the rejection of a financial report of the respective committee or criminal responsibility. Paragraph 4.2 of the [ODIHR and the Venice Commission Joint Guidelines on Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes](#) requires the law to "provide for a clear separation between the exercise of politically sensitive public positions, in particular senior management positions, and candidacy".

¹⁶ The police informed the ODIHR LEOM that as of 29 May, they received 1,570 complaints on destruction of banners and posters.

¹⁷ According to a Batory Foundation [report](#), during the campaign period up to 25 May, Mr. Nawrocki purchased the highest number of ads (over 2,100) on Meta and Alphabet, with total spending exceeding PLN 1.7 million and generating 135 million views. Mr. Trzaskowski, despite purchasing only 470 ads and spending reaching PLN 1.1 million, clearly led in reach, with 258 million views.

The late designation of a Digital Services Coordinator shortly before the first round has not yet had a tangible impact on the existing institutional mechanisms to detect and counter disinformation and foreign interference. This continued to translate into insufficient co-ordination and public communication, including no reports and aggregated data on measures and activities by different institutions being released. The handling by responsible public institutions, including the Science and Academic Computer Network (NASK), of a case involving third-party paid Facebook ads of unclear origins and funding shortly before the first round raised concerns (see also *Campaign Finance*).¹⁸ In particular the delayed and contradictory public communications and the lack of transparency regarding findings and measures taken, raised questions about the nature and timeliness of the response and ran the risk of diminishing public confidence in the institutions involved. While state institutions did not report any specific new threats or interference attempts between the two rounds, Prime Minister Tusk announced on 29 May the extension of national security measures in response to ongoing hybrid and cyber threats from the Russian Federation and Belarus, citing the need to counter growing foreign interference in the electoral process.¹⁹

The Rapid Response System under the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation was used during this election and welcomed by ODIHR LEOM interlocutors participating in it as a unique multi-stakeholder format for tackling content contrary to platforms' policies and posing election integrity risks.²⁰ However, the absence of public information about its activities limited public understanding of its role and impact.

Various national institutions and civil society organizations continued to liaise with Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) through dedicated channels, "trusted flagger" mechanisms and user reporting, flagging cases of perceived illegal content, inauthentic behaviour, and incitement to hatred, as well as providing fact-checker content labeling. The effectiveness of platform responses to notifications and escalations continued to vary significantly, with disinformation appearing more challenging for platforms to address than inauthentic behaviour involving fake accounts, bot networks, or artificial amplification.²¹ Among VLOPs monitored by the ODIHR LEOM, based on NASK data and expert interlocutor assessments, while the highest number of cases flagged were related to content on Facebook, X stood out as the platform with the weakest national stakeholder engagement and the lowest rate of action on flagged issues, resulting in a significant share of flagged content on the platform remaining unaddressed.²²

¹⁸ See the related [announcement](#) by NASK from 14 May.

¹⁹ See the Prime Minister's [post](#) on X of 29 May.

²⁰ When activated, the [RRS](#) allows for a swift exchange of information between signatory civil society organizations and online platforms to flag content or trends that may threaten electoral integrity for prioritized handling and envisages direct participation of the European Commission.

²¹ A 29 May [report](#) by a group of expert organizations illustrated that, despite repeatedly flagging content spread by accounts associated with sanctioned Belarusian state media aiming to influence the presidential election, platforms including YouTube, X, and Facebook failed to take sufficient action. The material remained accessible to EU audiences, highlighting what the authors view as a breach of obligations under the DSA. The Association Never Again shared with the ODIHR LEOM several examples of social media content reported to YouTube, Facebook, and X for inciting hatred, including a 27 April [post](#) framing a job offer for foreign workers as a threat linked to Muslim migrants, noting that no action had yet been taken by the platforms. The Community Notes system, used by X as its primary tool for addressing disinformation and intended to add context through user-contributed input reflecting diverse perspectives, was assessed by ODIHR LEOM civil society interlocutors as having been of only marginal use in this campaign's context, falling short of demonstrating its effectiveness.

²² According to data provided by NASK upon request by the ODIHR LEOM and analysed by the mission, between 1 January and 19 May 2025, NASK processed 2,921 cases of content deemed contrary to social network policies and national legislation. Of these, 1,873 were considered warranted and reported to platforms, with the largest share (42 per cent) concerning Facebook. Notably, 71 per cent of all reported cases were related to the first-round election weekend (16–19 May). During this period, TikTok demonstrated the highest responsiveness, resolving or moderating 81.6 per cent of flagged content, while X had the lowest response rate, leaving 95.6 per cent of flagged items unaddressed. Additionally, NASK reported 14,890 accounts, mostly on X, linked to inauthentic co-ordinated behaviour, scams, and impersonation.

Campaign Finance

Campaign finance regulations are applicable to both rounds. An amendment to the Election Code in 2023 clarified that the expenditure limit (PLN 24.6 million in this election) includes both rounds, which disadvantages the frontrunners since they need to maintain a budget for a possible second-round campaign.²³

The second-round contenders continued fundraising through their dedicated campaign funds and disclosing donations exceeding PLN 4,660 on their websites, as required by law. From the start of the campaign and until 30 May, Mr. Trzaskowski disclosed donations totaling PLN 7.6 million, and Mr. Nawrocki PLN 4.3 million.²⁴ Representatives of both electoral committees informed the IEOM that they also raised a significant amount of donations below the disclosure threshold. The law does not require financial reporting, disclosure of the total income, including funds transferred from political parties and donations below the threshold, nor disclosure of expenditure prior to the first round or between rounds, undermining transparency and reducing voters' ability to make an informed choice.²⁵

Contrary to international standards and prior ODIHR recommendations, the law does not regulate third-party campaigning.²⁶ Ahead of the second round, this insufficient regulation, particularly online, combined with the lack of effective oversight and sanctions further exacerbated the existing legal loopholes. Several third parties, including civil society organizations, engaging in election observation and voter mobilization activities, conducted campaigns incurring significant expenditures, including online, in favour of Mr. Trzaskowski.²⁷ These third parties are not required by law to disclose the sources of income and expenditure, undermining transparency, accountability, integrity of campaign finances and voters' ability to make an informed choice.

From 16 April until 14 May, two new Facebook profiles paid a total of approximately PLN 500,000 for 136 video ads on Facebook in favour of Mr. Trzaskowski and against Mr. Nawrocki and Mr. Mentzen, outspending the candidates themselves.²⁸ NASK identified these Facebook ads and referred the matter to the Agency for Internal Security (ABW) for investigation, on suspicion of foreign funding; the case is pending.²⁹ Several IEOM interlocutors raised concerns that the authorities' response was delayed and ineffective. Meta informed the ODIHR LEOM that it did not block these accounts and these ads, as they did not breach its community standards nor national legislation.³⁰ On 20 and 21 May, parliament held

²³ Approximately EUR 5.78 million; 1 PLN equals 0.23 EUR.

²⁴ See the disclosed donations of [Mr. Trzaskowski](#) and of [Mr. Nawrocki](#).

²⁵ According to Paragraph 261 of the [2020 ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#), "It is good practice to require [...] reports providing oversight bodies and the public with preliminary information on campaign incomes and expenses of parties and candidates several days before election day".

²⁶ Article 6 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' [Recommendation Rec\(2003\)4 on common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns](#) provides that "[r]ules concerning donations to political parties, with the exception of those concerning tax deductibility referred to in Article 4, should also apply, as appropriate, to all entities which are related, directly or indirectly, to a political party or are otherwise under the control of a political party".

²⁷ For instance, Akcja Demokracja paid for 600 digital billboards and published three online ads, including on Meta and Google, the Committee for Defence of Democracy [advertised](#) that they rent a train and organised bus transportation to transfer individuals from Katowice to Warsaw for Mr. Trzaskowski rally on 25 May; the company "Fat Frogs Media" [paid](#) PLN 131,000 for Google ads. The Spontaneous Civic Platform printed and paid for [billboards](#) and banners portraying Mr. Trzaskowski positively and Mr. Nawrocki negatively.

²⁸ Based on the Facebook Ad Library, from 16 April until 14 May, [Wiesz Jak Nie Jest](#) (You Know How It Is Not) paid PLN 321,484 for 104 ads, and [Stół Dorosłych](#) (Adults Table) paid PLN 165,958 for 32 ads while Mr. Nawrocki's electoral committee paid PLN 288,896 and Mr. Trzaskowski's committee PLN 227,027.

²⁹ On 15 May, the [NASK Disinformation Analysis Center](#) published on its website that "it has identified political advertisements on the Facebook platform in Poland, which may be financed from abroad". A campaign management company, the [Estratos Digital GmbH](#), sent a letter to [Wirtualna Polska](#) stating, *inter alia*, that its main investor is the US-based [Higher Ground Labs](#), and that the ads were paid by an NGO client in Poland.

³⁰ See the [Meta Community Standards](#) on Ads about social issues, elections or politics.

extensive discussions on the issue of the Facebook ads, debating the effectiveness of the campaign finance legislation, including pertaining to online political advertising and oversight. Another Facebook account ran campaign ads in value of PLN 388,000 paid by a civil society organization allegedly using foreign funds.³¹ While Meta applies, by means of an automated process, spending limits to advertisers, the implementation of internal rules by a social platform is outside the current scope and capacity of the campaign finance oversight body.³² PiS filed two complaints to the NEC and the prosecutor's office, alleging that these Facebook ads constitute illicit foreign funding of Mr. Trzaskowski's campaign.

The NEC, mandated with campaign finance oversight, is not entitled to act upon alleged violations during the campaign. The NEC has six months to review the campaign finance reports, which are due three months after election day. While lack of oversight during the campaign undermines the effectiveness of regulations, the NEC opined that enforcing compliance before election day could be perceived as inconsistent and politically motivated. By law, third parties campaigning cannot be sanctioned, including for use of illicit foreign financing in the campaign. The NEC informed the ODIHR LEOM that it would impose fines on electoral committees, in case third party campaigning took place with their consent.

Media

Following the official announcement of the first-round results, public *Telewizja Polska (TVP)* conducted consultations on organizing debates with the two candidates contesting the second round. These consultations resulted in legally required debate being organized on 23 May by *TVP*, in co-operation with private television channels *Polsat* and *TVN*.³³ The debate format featured a journalist from the daily tabloid *Super Express* as moderator, with candidates posing questions directly to each other. The moderator's role was limited to timekeeping, as requested by the candidates and did not involve substantive editorial moderation, resulting in an exchange marked by mutual accusations and criticism of each other's political affiliations.³⁴ Thus, while providing the contestants with a platform, the chosen format did not facilitate a meaningful substantial discussion on contestants' programmes, reducing voters' ability to fully understand their options.

Public television provided both contestants with free airtime for political advertisement, as required by the Election Code. Although the time was allocated outside of primetime, limiting the potential audience, both contestants made extensive use of it.³⁵

The National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT), a five-member media regulatory body mandated to safeguard freedom of speech and public interest, was widely characterized by ODIHR LEOM interlocutors as politicized.³⁶ On 22 May, the Supreme Audit Office (SAO) published a report of an audit covering KRRiT's activities between 2016 and 2024, which established systemic violations in the media

³¹ Based on the [Ad Library](#), the Facebook account 'Choose Future' (Wybierzmy Przyszłość) paid PLN 220,000 from 18 until 24 May while it paid PLN 804,000 from 24 April until 28 May.

³² Article 2.7. of the [Council of Europe Recommendation \(2022\) 12](#) on electoral communication and media coverage of electoral campaigns provides that "States should ensure, using co-regulatory measures, that online platforms offer access to political advertising space in a fair and non-discriminatory manner and charge everyone the same prices for the same services. States may also consider updating any rules governing political advertising during the electoral period to encompass online advertising".

³³ Three conservative television stations – *TV Republika*, *wPolsce24*, and *TV Trwam* – also organized an outdoor debate program on 28 May on the main square in Końskie, broadcast live across all three networks. Mr. Trzaskowski chose not to attend, which resulted in the program becoming an outdoor rally in support of Mr. Nawrocki.

³⁴ *TV Republika*, when retransmitting the debate, supplemented it with headers that were labelling *TVP* as "propaganda" and targeting their senior management.

³⁵ The Election Code requires public broadcasters to provide the second-round contestants with a total of 6 hours on television and 8 hours on radio, to be distributed evenly during the last nine days of the campaign. *TVP* provided free airtime during the morning and afternoon, outside of primetime.

³⁶ Article 30.2 of the [Audiovisual Media Service Directive](#) of the European Union requires Member States to "ensure that national regulatory authorities or bodies exercise their powers impartially and transparently".

regulator's review of complaints, enforcement of penalties, and allocation of licenses, as well as withholding of payments to public media.³⁷ On the same day the KRRiT chairperson during a press conference denounced the report as disinformation. The SAO subsequently submitted a notification of suspected offence to the Prosecutor's office, against the chairperson individually and against the chairperson and three other KRRiT members collectively.

KRRiT's ongoing monitoring of news and current affairs programmes on public *TVP* and private *TVN*, *Polsat*, and *TV Republika*, initiated on 18 March, concluded that the first three broadcasters favoured Mr. Trzaskowski and criticized Mr. Nawrocki, while *TV Republika* showed the opposite bias. On 19 May, the KRRiT chairperson issued a statement criticizing only the negative coverage of Mr. Nawrocki on *TVP*, *TVN*, and *Polsat*, urging these broadcasters to uphold impartiality and balance.³⁸

Media polarization intensified during the second-round campaign, as most outlets demonstrated pronounced editorial biases, amplifying the confrontational campaign.³⁹ Although public *TVPI* and *TVP-Info* dedicated comparable amounts of prime-time news coverage to both candidates, they engaged in partisan reporting despite their public service duties, mainly covering Mr. Nawrocki in a neutral or negative manner, particularly in regular reports on his alleged connections to organized crime.⁴⁰ A similar trend, but marked by a more critical tone, was observed on private *TVN* and *Onet*, which dedicated 1.3 and 1.5 times more coverage, respectively, to Mr. Nawrocki than to Mr. Trzaskowski, with this coverage being predominantly negative or neutral on *Onet*, or largely negative in tone on *TVN*.⁴¹ By contrast, Mr. Trzaskowski was mainly covered positively or neutrally on *TVPI*, *TVP-Info*, and *TVN*, and largely neutrally on *Onet*. *TV Republika* displayed a more pronounced bias, devoting nearly twice as much coverage to Mr. Trzaskowski as to Mr. Nawrocki, predominantly negative in tone and focusing on accusations of misuse of his mayoral office and lack of integrity.⁴² By contrast, *Polsat* and *Interia* maintained relative editorial independence, although Mr. Nawrocki faced more frequent criticism compared to his opponent.

Election Dispute Resolution

Objections to final election results can be filed with the Supreme Court's Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs, which rules on their validity within 14 days following their announcement by the NEC, by a voter, the electoral representative of a candidate, and the NEC chairperson.⁴³ Challenges must contain a request to declare the election invalid, the specific allegation, and supporting evidence. Complaints are reviewed in a non-trial proceeding by three-judge panels, which issue decisions

³⁷ The SAO [audit](#) was [commissioned](#) by the parliament on 26 July 2024, and [released](#) on 22 May 2025.

³⁸ In the [statement](#), the KRRiT chairperson also indicated that failure to comply may result in imposition of a fine of up to 10 per cent of the annual revenue of the media outlet or suspension of its broadcasting license.

³⁹ Between 20 and 30 May, the ODIHR LEOM monitored the primetime broadcasts (18:00–23:00 hrs.) of *TVPI*, *TVN* and *Polsat*, as well as two-hour slots of news channels *TV Republika* (19:00–21:00 hrs.) and *TVP-Info* (21:00–23:00 hrs.). The mission also monitored the political and election-related sections of [onet.pl](#) and [interia.pl](#).

⁴⁰ Article 21 of the Broadcasting Act requires the public broadcasters to provide programs characterized by pluralism, impartiality, balance, presenting diverse opinions and viewpoints. Council of Europe Committee of Ministers [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2007\) 15](#) requires member states to “adopt measures whereby the media which are owned by public authorities, when covering election campaigns, should do so in a fair, balanced and impartial manner, without discriminating against or supporting a specific political party or candidate”.

⁴¹ On 27 May, a representative of Mr. Nawrocki announced that the latter had filed civil and criminal lawsuits over reporting by *Onet*.

⁴² Furthermore, between 20 and 24 May *TV Republika* supplemented the overwhelming majority of their programming with the message “Smugglers’ Mafia Surrounding Tusk Government” and images of Prime Minister Tusk and Mr. Trzaskowski.

⁴³ The NEC submits a report on the election results to the Supreme Court no later than 14 days after their announcement. Based on the NEC's report, as well as the panels' opinions on any complaints, the Chamber decides on the validity of the election results within 30 days of the publication of results.

assessing the legitimacy of allegations as well as an assessment of whether the alleged violation affected the election outcome.

As a general rule, challenges are examined in a closed session in which only the judges are present, excluding the presence of the parties to the case. A challenge may be referred for examination in a public session, at the discretion of the court, where the parties, public and media may attend. The criteria for holding a public session are not spelled out. This practice does not provide the appealing party the opportunity to be heard and undermines transparency, in violation of OSCE commitments and international good practice, which are particularly relevant when an appeal to the Supreme Court is the only available legal remedy.⁴⁴

Concerns have been raised about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs, due to controversy over the appointment of judges and the establishment of the chamber in 2018. This has led to many IEOM interlocutors questioning the independence of this chamber, especially after the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) found that the chamber does not meet the criteria of a tribunal established by law.⁴⁵ However, controversies remain whether the ECJ decision applies to the application of Polish domestic law, like the Election Code, or only to interpretations of EU law.⁴⁶ Legal expert opinion is also divided on the applicability of the European Convention of Human Rights to the resolution of electoral disputes concerning presidential elections.⁴⁷ Although the ECtHR has never found that the convention applies to presidential elections, it has left open the possibility that rights under the convention, including the right to a fair trial by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law, could be applied to judicial remedies in electoral matters.⁴⁸ The controversy appears to have led to a reduction in public trust in the judiciary, which may impact on the public acceptance of any decision made by this chamber.

⁴⁴ Paragraph 12 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) provides that “proceedings may only be held in camera in the circumstances prescribed by law and consistent with obligations under international law and international commitments”. Paragraph 100 of the Explanatory Report of the Venice Commission’s [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) states: “The appeal procedure should be of a judicial nature, in the sense that the right of the appellants to proceedings in which both parties are heard should be safeguarded”. In paragraph 30 of the Urgent Report on the Cancellation of Election Results by Constitutional Courts, the Venice Commission [stated](#) in relation to procedural rights in electoral disputes that “The hearing must be public, as the transparency of electoral dispute procedures is very important to ensure trust in the electoral process”.

⁴⁵ See [Dolińska-Ficek and Ozimek v. Poland](#), ECtHR, Applications Nos. 49868/19 and 57511/19, Judgment of 8 November 2021, where the European Court of Human Rights held that the Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs does not constitute a “tribunal established by law” due to systemic irregularities in the judicial appointment process. See also [Case C-718/21, L.G. v. Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa](#), in which the European Court of Justice held that “the panel of judges of the Chamber of Extraordinary Control and Public Affairs does not constitute a ‘court or tribunal’ within the meaning of Article 267 TFEU”. Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) allows national courts to refer questions on the interpretation or validity of EU law to the CJEU. This procedure, known as a preliminary ruling, ensures uniform interpretation of EU law.

⁴⁶ See [Case C-718/21, L.G. v. Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa](#).

⁴⁷ See the ECtHR’s [Anchugov and Gladkov v. Russia](#), Nos. 11157/04 and 15162/05, §§ 55–56, 4 July 2013. However, as regards the election of the Russian President, the Court reiterates that the obligations imposed on the Contracting States by Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 do not apply to the election of a Head of State (see [Baškauskaitė v. Lithuania](#), No. 41090/98, Commission decision of 21 October 1998; [Guliyev v. Azerbaijan](#) (dec.), No. 35584/02, 27 May 2004; [Boškoski v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#) (dec.), No. 11676/04, 2 September 2004; [Niedźwiedz v. Poland](#) (dec.), No. 1345/06, 11 March 2008; and [Krivobokov v. Ukraine](#) (dec.), No. 38707/04, 19 February 2013). See also decision by the ECtHR of 19 November 2020 in case [Bunikowski v. Poland](#) where the ECtHR found inadmissible a challenge to the results of the 2020 Polish presidential election relying on the above referenced case and other case law based on Protocol 1, Article 3 and Article 6, as the alleged violation of the right is outside the range of rights and freedoms *guaranteed* by the convention and the protocols.

⁴⁸ On this issue, in Paragraph 45 of its Report on Election Dispute Resolution, the Venice Commission [stated](#) that “Regardless of which body decides on the validity of election results, the law must guarantee procedural safeguards, such as impartiality (...)”.

Prior to the second election day, no complaints were filed with the Supreme Court. The General Prosecutor's Office reported receiving 41 election-related complaints as of 18 May. The largest number of cases concerned damage to electoral materials (11 cases); hate speech (9 cases); abuse of office (6 cases); and public insult (5 cases).⁴⁹ According to the police, 320 reports of potential election-related criminal conduct were made on 18 and 19 May, all of which remain under investigation.⁵⁰ So far, the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsperson) received 32 applications related to the first round of the election, concerning violations of the principle of equal opportunities in the campaign, logistical and organizational aspects of conducting the election (e.g. problems changing the polling place, failure to be included in the correct voter list), and accessibility of polling places for voters with disabilities.

The NEC received some 40 complaints concerning the first-round election day, which they referred to the relevant bodies. Twenty-five were about the actions of PECs and were forwarded to the respective CECs who have jurisdiction over this matter. Five complaints about PECs removing a member were received; the NEC found no grounds to question the PECs' actions. Eight complaints about polling stations not being accessible were forwarded to the respective NEO office for possible changes before the second round.

Election Day

The IEOM observed opening, voting, counting and tabulation in a limited number of polling stations around the country; however, in line with the methodology for limited election observation missions, it did not undertake a systematic or comprehensive assessment of election day proceedings.

In the polling stations where opening was observed, procedures were generally followed, and voting started on time. Voting, as observed throughout the day, was assessed as well-organized, professional and calm. As in the first round, established procedures, were generally respected, including with regards to voter identification and IEOM observers reported no incidents or serious procedural shortcomings or irregularities from the observed polling stations. However, they noted again that, contrary to international standards, the secrecy of the vote was often not ensured, due to the polling station layout or placement of voting screens, but also because many voters did not fold their marked ballot before placing it in the transparent ballot box. Several cases of group voting were also observed. Most polling station observed were accessible to persons with disabilities. In response to claims that AVCs could be used to vote multiple times, the NEC on election day publicly clarified that AVCs have serial numbers and are retained by PECs and that security features prevented the use of copied AVCs.

In the polling stations observed, women were well-represented among PEC members. IEOM observers noted only a limited presence of candidate proxies and citizen observers. The IEOM did not encounter unauthorized persons in the polling stations observed, nor did it observe cases of interference in the work of PECs.

The vote counts observed by the IEOM were assessed as transparent and efficient, and were generally conducted in line with prescribed procedures. No disagreements over ballot validity were noted, and the PECs observed had no problems completing the results protocols. Where observed, the early stages of tabulation were assessed as well-organized, professional and transparent, with efficient intake of election materials and verification of protocols and were conducted in line with established procedures.

⁴⁹ Twenty-eight individuals have been identified as suspects, including candidates in four cases and journalists in two. Nine cases were dismissed for lack of evidence of a crime being committed.

⁵⁰ These included crimes under both the Criminal and Election Code, such as improper drafting of an electoral document and destruction of electoral documents (18 reports); taking the ballot paper outside the polling station (13 reports); disturbing the peace (24 reports); damage or removal of campaign material (93 reports); and illegal campaigning during the silence period (163 reports).

The NEC announced on its website a turnout of 71.6 per cent, 4 percentage points higher than in the first round. It started posting preliminary election results from abroad just after 21:00 hrs., and from within Poland at around 21:30 hrs. on election night and posted aggregated results in the early hours of 2 June, contributing to transparency.

The NEC informed on election night that police had reported a total of 365 offenses and misdemeanours related to election day, including campaigning during the silence period, illegal transfer of personal data by photographing AVCs, damage and destruction of campaign materials and banners and attempts by voters to remove ballots from polling stations.

***The English version of this report is the only official document.
An unofficial translation is available in Polish.***

MISSION INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Warsaw, 2 June 2025 – This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is the result of a common endeavour involving the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The assessment was made to determine whether the election complied with OSCE commitments, Council of Europe standards, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, and with national legislation. Each of the institutions involved in this International Election Observation Mission has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. This assessment should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions published on 19 May, following the first-round election day.

Dunja Mijatović is the Head of the ODIHR LEOM, deployed from 11 April. Iulian Bulai is the Head of the PACE delegation.

This Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions is delivered prior to the completion of the electoral process. The final assessment of the election will depend, in part, on the conduct of the remaining stages of the electoral process, including the count, tabulation and announcement of results, and the handling of possible post-election day complaints or appeals. ODIHR will issue a comprehensive final report, including recommendations for potential improvements, some months after the completion of the electoral process. The PACE will present its report in its fourth part-session on 29 September.

The ODIHR LEOM includes 13 experts in the capital and 16 long-term observers deployed throughout the country. On election day, 42 observers from 24 countries were deployed across the country, including 34 observers deployed by ODIHR, as well as an 8-member delegation from the PACE. There were 52 per cent of women among observers.

The IEOM wishes to thank the authorities of the Republic of Poland for the invitation to observe the elections, and the National Election Commission, the National Election Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance. The IEOM wishes to also express their appreciation to other state institutions, candidates, political parties, media and civil society organizations, and international community representatives for their co-operation.

For further information, please contact:

- Dunja Mijatović, Head of the ODIHR LEOM, in Warsaw (+48 724 530 146), until 10 June;
- Katya Andrusz, ODIHR Spokesperson (+48 609 522 266), or Martina Barker-Ciganikova, ODIHR Election Adviser, in Warsaw (+48 695 654 060);
- Sylvie Affholder, PACE Head of Elections Division (+33 7 60 19 75 05).

ODIHR LEOM Address:

Postępu 17A, Adgar Plaza A, 2nd floor, Brain Embassy
02-676 Warsaw, Republic of Poland
telephone: +48-724-530 146; email: office@odihr-leom.pl