

European Manifesto of the Civic Platform in the 2014 European Parliamentary Election

Abstrakt

Vo voľbách v roku 2014 do Európskeho parlamentu v Poľsku zvíťazila Občianska platforma. Získala podporu 32,13 % platných hlasov voličov. Počas volebnej kampane strana ohlásila svoj program, ktorý nazvala: Silné Poľsko v bezpečnej Európe. Európsky manifest Občianskej platformy. Predstavuje ciele európskej politiky najsilnejšej politickej strany v Poľsku, ktorá od roku 2007, spoločne s koalíčným partnerom Poľskou ľudovou stranou, vládne krajine.

Kľúčové slová: Európska únia, Poľsko, voľby, politické myslenie

Abstract

In Poland the Civic Platform won the majority of vote in the 2014 European Parliamentary election. It polled 32.13% of the valid votes. During the election campaign, the party launched its manifesto, which is called: Strong Poland in a secure Europe. European manifesto of the Civic Platform. It represents the objectives of the European policy of the strongest political party in Poland, which, together with the coalition Polish Peasant Party, has been governing the country since 2007.

Key words: European Union, Poland, elections, political thought.

THE CIVIC PLATFORM OF REPUBLIC OF POLAND

The Civic Platform (Polish: Platforma Obywatelska – PO) was founded in Gdańsk on 24 January 2001. Its founders, jokingly called “three tenors” were: Andrzej Olechowski (Hübner, 2011, p. 2737), Maciej Płażyński and Donald Tusk. In the early years of its existence, it functioned as a movement of citizens comprising political activists from different political groups (inter alia: the Freedom Union, Social Movement for Solidarity Electoral Action, the Conservative People’s Party, the Real Politics Union), independent members as well as social and socio-political organizations (for example: associations: Young Democrats, Citizens for the Republic) (Paszkiwicz 2004, pp. 75-76; Kowalczyk

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2005, p. 123). Not until 5 March 2002 the group was registered as a political party under the name of the Civic Platform of the Republic of Poland (Polish: Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej PORP) (Wykaz 2015). The original statute of the party of 2001 provided that the highest authority of the newly formed organization was the Parliamentary Club with its Presidium acting as the Board. Those members who polled the most vote in the elections in the province could become the presidents (in the party structures) in the regions, whereas those who received the highest number of votes in the constituencies were to become the Vice-Presidents of regions. However, during the party registration in 2002 court considered this structure as unacceptable and undemocratic (Paszkiwicz 2004, p. 77). It was decided then that the Convention acted as the highest governing body of the party, and any member of the party could be appointed a representative to the Convention. (see also Statut, pp. 2-3, 14-18).

The PO took part in the parliamentary elections for the first time in 2001. It gained the second result (12.68% of the vote) (Przyłęcki 2012, p. 244). Following these elections, Maciej Płażyński became the chairman of the PO Parliamentary Club, Donald Tusk, Paweł Piskorski and Jan Maria Rokita became the deputies of the chairman, and Grzegorz Schetyna became the Party Secretary. Zyta Gilowska and Bronisław Komorowski were members of the club presidium (Historia 2015).

In 2005 parliamentary elections the Civic Platform secured 24.14% of the total valid vote (see also Migalski 2007, pp. 199-200). However, it became the major political party in the country only after the following parliamentary elections in 2007 and 2011. It received respectively 41.51% (2007) and 39.18% (2011) of valid votes in the elections to the Sejm (the lower house of the Polish Parliament) (see also Brodzinska-Mirowska 2012, pp. 163-181; Kubicki, 2013, p. 177).

In 2007 the Civic Platform and the Polish Peasant Party (Polish: Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL) formed the coalition, which has governed the country up till now. (Sadecki 2009, pp. 323-326, 334; Grabias 2011, pp. 203-211). In total, two PO-PSL coalition government offices were formed. These were headed by the Prime Minister Donald Tusk (2007-2011 and 2011-2014), who in the years 2003 to 2014 concurrently held the position of the chairman of the Civic Platform (Kowalczyk 2006, pp. 101-102). For the period 2014-2015 a new PO-PSL coalition government was formed. Ewa Kopacz has been the Prime Minister since 2014. She also holds the position of the chairperson of the PO.

It should also be noted that following the Smolensk air crash in 2010 the candidate of the Civic Platform - Bronisław Komorowski was elected to the office of President of the Polish Republic (Świetlik 2010, pp. 195-249; see also Kubicki, 2012, pp. 164-165). His chances of being re-elected in the presidential election in 2015 are very high.

The Civic Platform in Poland has succeeded in winning all European Parliamentary Elections so far (see table 1). Polish Members of the European Parliament representing the PO as well as the Polish Peasant Party belong to the Group of the European People's Party (Jarocki Molendowska, Zaremba, 2014, p. 33). It should also be noted that in 2009-2012 Jerzy Buzek of the PO held the position of the Chairman of the European Parliament, whereas since 2014 Donald Tusk has been the President of the European Council.

Table 1. The results of the Civic Platform in European Parliamentary Elections

Year of the Election	Percentage of valid votes	Number of mandates
2004	24,10	15
2009	44,43	25
2014	32,13	19

Source: author's own study based on data from the National Electoral Commission.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION 2014

By order of the President of the Republic of Poland of 19 February 2014 direct election of members of the European Parliament for the eighth term of office took place on May 25 of the same year (Postanowienie 2014, pp. 1-3). Earlier, the decision of the European Council of 28 June 2013 provided that the Polish would elect 51 Polish MEPs in 2014 (Decyzja 2013, pp. 57-58). The Civic Platform (PO) and the Law and Justice (Polish: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość PiS) obtained the same number of 19 seats. It should be noted, however, that of these two parties the PO received slightly higher support. In addition, candidates of other election committees: the Democratic Left Alliance - Labour Union (Polish: Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej - Unia Pracy), the New Right of Janusz Korwin-Mikke (Polish: Nowa Prawica - Janusza Korwin-Mikke) as well as and the Polish Peasant Party became the members of the European Parliament (see table 2).

Table 2. The results of the European Parliamentary Election in Poland in 2014

Election Committee (EC)	Percentage of valid vote	Number of mandates
EC Civic Platform	32,13	19
EC Law and Justice	31,78	19
Coalition EC Democratic Left Alliance - Labour Union	9,44	5
EC New Right of Janusz Korwin-Mikke	7,15	4
EC Polish Peasant Party	6,80	4

Source: Obwieszczenie 2014, pp. 2-3.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CIVIC PLATFORM ELECTORAL PROGRAM OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2014 ELECTIONS

For the purposes of the election campaign for the European Parliament in 2014 the winning election committee of the Civic Platform launched its manifesto, which was titled: *Strong Poland in Secure Europe. The European Manifesto of the Civic*

Platform (Polish: *Silna Polska w bezpiecznej Europie. Europejski manifest Platformy Obywatelskiej*). It consists of 16 pages and is divided into two main parts. The first, general, is an introduction. It is composed of three paragraphs and the conclusion, which deals with *The Fundamental Assumptions*. The second part entitled *The Pillars of the European Manifesto of the Civic Platform* consists of 6 sections entitled as follows:

- *Security of Europe, Power of Poland*
- *Competitiveness, Economic Governance and Financial Market*
- *Policy of Cohesion*
- *Internal Market, Social Policy and Employment*
- *Environmental Protection and Public Safety*
- *Legal Regulations*

Each of these sections is further divided into paragraphs, which present the aims of the European policy of the Civic Platform.

In terms of volume and complexity of its structure, this manifesto is extensive and is the most typical programme document considering the existing election material of the Civic Platform. It presents the position of the party on selected issues and its planned actions at European level. In the 2004 elections to the European Parliament PO launched European manifesto of the Civic Platform, which consisted of a 9 described issues (Słodkowska, Dołbakowska 2005, pp. 35-39; Peszyński 2007, pp. 58-59). However, in the 2009 election this party produced only about one-page document entitled: *Priorities of the EPP-ED* (Słodkowska, Dołbakowska 2010, pp. 161-162). That document, however, was accompanied by an extensive summary of the work of MEPs of the Civic Platform and the Polish Peasant Party (Słodkowska [2], Dołbakowska 2010, pp. 162-198).

The first part of *The European Manifesto of the Civic Platform* of 2014 lists the achievements and successes of PO on the forum of the Union, including the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the matter of the so called roaming, or remembering the person of Jerzy Buzek – the President of the European Parliament in 2009-2012. In the second part it proposes the idea of setting up the Energy Union is mentioned (see also Lewandowski, Radomski, Tomaszewski, 2012, pp. 176-177). As far as this area is concerned, the manifesto also raises the need to diversify energy supplies in the EU and to sign an agreement on energy supplies, especially gas, with the United States. The important role of coal in energy security system in Central and Eastern Europe was also emphasized. Strengthening the role of the European Energy Community, which includes the EU and Balkan countries, Ukraine and Moldova was another objective. The Civic Platform also announced enhanced measures to make the EU rules allow for the safe use of energy resources such as shale gas.

As far as agriculture is concerned PO will promote the production of healthy food and support for young farmers in the EU (see also Stanowiska 2014). In the field of banking sector the Civic Platform calls for further restructuring of the EU banking sector and the work on the Single Deposit Guarantee System (SDGS). The manifesto also deals with the issue of the so-called budget of euro zone as a potential factor that may result in increased competitiveness of the Union. At the same time, however, the party advocates for the development of EU cohesion policy. Traditionally, PO opts for the

free movement of people and goods within the framework of the EU, as a prerequisite for the development of the Community. Therefore, the party promises to work on, inter alia, simplification of the rules of the EU trade law. The manifesto also calls for the promotion of flexible forms of work.

In the document, PO also advocates the accession of Poland to the euro zone. Furthermore, the issue of the euro zone as the EU decision-making centre was discussed. However, the document states that the countries, which do not belong to the euro zone should still have an impact on decision-making in the EU.

Strong European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty shall act as the main pillars of Polish security (see also: Wojcik 2008, pp. 208-214). The manifesto calls for strengthening the European Security and Defence Policy as the European pillar of NATO. The Civic Platform also advocates for strengthening cooperation between the EU and the US, in which the negotiations on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) having been carried out since 2013 may play an important role (see for example TTIP 2015).

The manifesto also emphasizes the important role of a coherent EU foreign policy, especially in the area of the Eastern Partnership and transatlantic cooperation. In order to achieve this goal, it proposes strengthening the External Action Service of the European Union (see for example Komunikat 2005). The Civic Platform advocates for a policy of openness and EU enlargement to the East. It stresses out that the prospect of enlargement can be an effective source of strength to modernize states in the process of transformation. Therefore, the considered manifesto proclaims the need to support pro-democratic and political transformations in neighboring countries, particularly in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. It calls for strengthening energy security in these countries and relaxing the EU visa regulations for the citizens of these countries. It also follows a strong belief that the European Union should support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. In addition, the Civic Platform advocates for strengthening the position of Euronest – Parliamentary Assembly of the Eastern Partnership (see also Będkowska 2011).

The European manifesto of the Civic Platform concludes with the promise of an active participation of the Civic Platform MEPs in the works of the Committee on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament as well as working towards the elimination of unnecessary regulations. It has been argued that Europe should make laws only in those areas that can not be regulated at the national level. Thus, the limitation of the European Union's legislative activity in trivial matters outside its competence, for example relating to people's lifestyle was announced. Besides, the need to complete the reform of the European Court of Justice in order to increase its effectiveness and shorten processing times was stressed.

Generally, it can be also noted that an access to programme documents produced by the Civic Platform is frequently thwarted. It is even hard to access the recently issued manifestos on the official website of the party. However, this party has been in the coalition government with the Polish Peasant Party for two terms of office. It also received the greatest support in the elections to the European Parliament in 2014. Therefore, in order to facilitate access to the *European Manifesto of the Civic Platform I* decided to present its brief description as well as the publication of its text.

Appendix

The translation of the original text:

Silna Polska w bezpiecznej Europie.

Europejski manifest Platformy Obywatelskiej

[p. 1] Strong Poland in Secure Europe.

The European Manifesto of the Civic Platform

[p. 3] Part I

1. Currently Poland has been enjoying its best years in European Union. By joining the Union, we achieved the goal, about which earlier generations could only dream - we became a part of safe, prosperous Europe.

Today as an active country of European Commonwealth - we seize our historic chance. The enterprise and hard work of Polish people make our motherland become a safe country. The country, which commands respect from European allies. The country, which is a guarantor of the systematic improvement of the quality of life of its citizens.

For many years the Civic Platform has been consistently demonstrating its effectiveness on the European forum. Our party, just like the majority of Polish people, has always presented its unambiguous pro European approach. It is the European solidarity, which has been and still is perceived not only as a great chance of the faster development of Poland, but also as one of the sources of our safety.

Experiences of the last years show that when Europe demonstrates solidarity and the countries of the Union cooperate with each, we can always expect successful results of our actions. Thanks to this cooperation we managed to overcome the latest economic crisis. Other countries from the post communist block are still joining the EU thanks to solidarity. Now, Ukraine has entered the common European path, by signing the political part of the Association Agreement, which was also the result of our consistent commitment for the benefit of our eastern neighbours.

[p. 4] Our effectiveness in Europe can be seen not only in our words, but first of all in our actions. Five years ago we promised our electors that a Pole would become the head of the European Parliament – and professor Jerzy Buzek was elected the president of the European Parliament. Three years ago the first in the history of Poland presidency of the Council of the European Union was successfully completed. In 2011 we gave our electors the promise to guarantee 300 billion zlotys for Poland from the Union budget. And it happened – we negotiated the total sum of over 440 billion zlotys, of which 300 billion zlotys for cohesion policy.

Civic Platform MEPs were co-authors of changes in EU rules that translate into tangible benefits for citizens. Thanks to these millions of Poles travelling in Europe pay lower bills for using mobile phones abroad (i.e. roaming), while nurses and midwives

immigrating for work can be sure that their qualifications (diplomas) will be recognized in any EU country. These were also Civic Platform MEPs who managed to influence the European Parliament position on the issue of Ukraine. As a result of our efforts it not only openly expressed its support for Ukraine in its European perspective but also strongly condemned the Russian aggression.

Civic Platform politicians are the most effective Polish representatives in the European Parliament.

2. A strong and effective European Union is in the strategic interest of Poland. It is important to us that the EU institutions serve the citizens. A real sense of European community and solidarity not only among the countries but also among Europeans is another key issue. This does not mean that we give up on our own traditions. However, we believe that being a Pole is not in contradiction with being European. This is not a choice of “either-or”: either Pole – or European. These are the concepts which complement each other: Pole and European.

Today, in the era of international uncertainty, Europe, which is still facing the effects of the economic crisis, nationalist trends are coming to the fore. Therefore now, more than ever, our common challenge is to maintain a strong Union of 28 countries and strengthen the position of Poland in European community. We know that building a strong position of our country in the EU is not the denial of Europe. By saying that we want to go to the European Parliament, we do not mean to destroy it from the inside. We see our task in the co-creation of it, and this attitude is shared by the majority of Polish people.

In order to fulfill this duty and using the experience gained, the Civic Platform is getting a competent and worthy team ready for work in Europe. The team, which guarantees the protection of Polish interests at the same time giving support to the whole Union.

[p. 3] 3. At the same time, we must remember that the Union and the strong position of Poland are not given once and for all. Russian-Ukrainian conflict has showed that our security has to be strengthened each day – on the basis of NATO, on the basis of the Union, but primarily on the basis of prudent and long-term government policies, such as the creation of an integrated and efficient energy union. The financial crisis of recent years has forced deep integration of the euro zone. Many European politicians want the euro zone to become “the EU center of decision-making” – at the expense of the unity of the whole Community.

Our ultimate target is to adopt the European currency, however over the next few years, it will not be possible, for both political (lack of parliamentary majority capable of changing the constitution of Poland), as well as economic reasons.

Today it is in our best interest not to abandon the efforts to adopt the common currency, but to search for effective ways to influence the European policy at a time when we are not yet a member of the euro zone.

The European Union is our common good – for many Poles it is a dream of a stable,

secure future, which today is being realized before our eyes. Let us not give up the European Union in the hands of those who can squander this historic opportunity of Poland. We should remember, the more European solidarity and cooperation, the stronger and safer Poland can become. The Civic Platform is the guarantor of a strong and secure Poland in Europe.

Basic assumptions

The future of Poland is inextricably linked to the future of the European Union. Our belief that the power of our country lies in strong and secure Europe is reflected in our political program for the next few years.

Below are the basic assumptions concerning the ideas and actions of the Civic Platform in Europe.

Poland is part of the transatlantic community. Strategic decisions related to the Polish accession to NATO 15 years ago and to the European Union 10 years ago were deeply thoughtful and irreversible. There is no better or safer alternative.

Polish priority is to strengthen the European Union as an effective and efficient organization acting in the interests of the states and their citizens. In difficult times of economic crisis and weakened sense of security the task [p. 6] of Poland is to strengthen the Union, rather than destabilize it. To propose solutions that make the EU stronger. The European energy programme initiated and promoted by Poland is an example of such concept.

Poland and Poles enjoy the benefits of being part of the European family on a daily basis. Therefore, we are and will remain the supporters of the principle of openness and enlargement of the European Union, as a zone of security and stability, in the East. Our experience shows how powerful is the driving force of the real prospect of integration with the EU. The prospect of enlargement can be an effective source of strength to modernize states in the process of transformation.

Today we want to share this experience with our eastern neighbours, who want to be members of the European family. No one except for themselves can or should decide about their future.

Good Polish political position in the EU is largely due to the good condition of our economy and its resilience to the crisis. We can see how important is our internal policy for the effectiveness of European policy. Therefore, the decisions we make in Poland should support and enhance our credibility in Europe.

[p. 7] **Part II**

The pillars of the European Manifesto of the Civic Platform **Security of Europe, power of Poland**

Recent events in Ukraine have highlighted the importance of the membership in the

European Union for the safety of Polish people. For the past 10 years, representatives of the Civic Platform systematically and consistently have pursued the Union's foreign policy. Thanks to these actions Poland today can seek help from its partners and allies. In the next term we will continue to work for the security of Poland and our region.

What are our goals?

1. Creating the Energy Union

Reliability of energy supplies is a basic pillar of security of any country. In the next term we will seek legal solutions promoting diversification of supply and energy sources and strengthening the powers of the Union's external energy policy. Our goal is to create the Energy Union based on six pillars.

Firstly, participation in contract negotiations with external suppliers of energy.

[p. 8] Secondly, strengthening solidarity among countries in the event of denial of access to energy sources. Europe needs to know where it will take its gas supplies from, whether there is enough storage space, and where there are no gas network connections.

Thirdly, providing funds for the construction of energy infrastructure from the EU budget at the maximum acceptable level of 75 percent.

The fourth foundation of the Energy Union has to be the use of the resources of fossil fuels available in Europe, including coal and shale gas. To the east of the EU coal is and in the coming years it will remain a synonym of energy security.

The fifth pillar of our concept of the Energy Union is signing new agreements with external suppliers of energy, especially the United States.

The sixth base of the Energy Union plan is to ensure the safety of our neighbors. Already existing European Energy Community (apart from EU its signatory countries are the Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova) should be strengthened.

2. The EU's Neighbourhood Policy

We believe that a stable neighborhood is a guarantee of security of the EU and Poland. In the new term of the European Parliament, we will continue to work on strengthening political and economic ties with the Eastern Partnership countries neighboring the European Union. Supporting democratic processes and reforms in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia will be our priority.

We are convinced that the EU should adopt the position of support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, show its solidarity in the face of external threats, offer economic aid, technical assistance and relax visa and education requirements. The key solutions will result in strengthening energy security of our neighbors – for example by introducing reverse flow pipelines.

Our goal is also to help in the process of integration of other countries of the Eastern Partnership, especially those which will sign the association agreement with the EU

(Moldova and Georgia) or border on Poland (e.g. Belarus). We will intensify efforts to strengthen Euronest - Parliamentary Assembly of the Eastern Partnership, which supports political and economic integration processes as well as the development of parliamentary democracy. We will use the Polish experience and institutional arrangements for the benefit of a quick and full implementation of the EU association agreements with the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

[p. 9] **3. Security and defense policy of the EU**

Poland is also a strong due to the strength of its allies and alliances to which it belongs. Close cooperation and complementary relation between the European Union and NATO, as well as strengthening the European Security and Defense Policy as the European pillar of NATO are key objectives for Polish interests. Among our priorities is to increase the military capabilities, interoperability, command centers and defense industries cooperation.

4. The UE-USA partnership

Stable and thriving economy is essential to ensure safety. During the next term of the European Parliament we will actively participate in the ongoing negotiations the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement (TTIP). TTIP agreement will strengthen the economic potential of our community, opening up new opportunities for the Polish economy. Our goal is also to protect the vital interests of the Polish agreement: industry, agriculture, protection of personal data, and to provide gas exports from the US to Europe.

5. Reliable and effective representation of Poland in the European Union

Tasks that the European Union is faced with, require well-functioning institutions. The foundation of the European Union is strong and impartial European Commission, meeting the expectations of the Member States and the European Parliament, which, together with the Council of Europe is compliant with European law and is the guarantor of democratic control of the decisions taken at the EU level.

We will support this strategy direction and the necessary coherence of European foreign policy, at the same time strengthening the European External Action Service [EEAS] and the external activities of the European Commission, especially in the field of the Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership and transatlantic relations. We know how important to our business is the position of Polish officials and diplomats in the structures of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and the EEAS. In the following term we are going to focus our efforts on increasing opportunities of Polish people for employment and promotion in decision-making positions.

[p. 10] **Competitiveness, economic governance and financial market**

In recent years the European Union has carried out a number of reforms to strengthen and modernize its economic foundations, in particular the Community system of economic governance. However, not all problems have been resolved. Another term of the European Parliament is also going to be devoted to further development of the Economic and Monetary Union, increasing competitiveness and financial sector reform. Members of the Civic Platform are going to participate actively in these works - so as to protect the interests of the Polish economy and other countries in the region.

What are our objectives?

1. The reform of economic governance

The biggest challenge we face today is to maintain the capability of Member States outside the eurozone to influence the directions of the reform of the Economic and Monetary Union [EMU]. Further cooperation mechanisms, which are going to be created under the reform of the EMU have to remain open to the voluntary participation of the countries outside the euro zone. The strategic objective of Poland is to make our voice heard, and our economic interests – be reflected in the reforms of the EMU.

Civic Platform MEPs will also participate in the works focusing on the social aspect of the EMU. Social indicators (unemployment, risk of poverty and social exclusion, etc.) should be included in the list of macroeconomic indicators, signaling the possible macroeconomic imbalance. The experience of crisis shows that considering the social aspect will result in minimization of selfishness and populist trends in Europe, thereby making the EU more coherent and secure.

One of the first issues, which the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament will need to address after the European Parliamentary elections, will be further restructuring of the banking sector. This applies to the entire financial sector, which should contribute to the economic growth of the EU. The European Parliament will also be involved in the development of the Single Deposit Guarantee System (SDGS). Polish solutions which prevented our country from the financial crisis may be a reference point for the work on the EU forum.

[p. 11] 2. Improving competitiveness and reform policies supported by the European budget

Europe's competitiveness will constitute the strength of the community. Eurozone crisis has shown that those countries, which have not managed to deal with the global competition, have caused some economic risk to other countries in the Community. Therefore, the issue of raising Europe's economic competitiveness, while respecting

national competences in this area, will be one of the most important challenges of the coming term.

In the coming years, the discussions in the European Parliament are also going to focus on a new instrument of convergence and competitiveness (CCI), commonly referred to as “the budget of the euro zone”. It is going to be a mechanism of an agreement between the EU and the Member States, in order to support economic reforms and the competitiveness of the member states.

Polish experience of structural reforms of the last 25 years may become a source of inspiration for Europe. Possible new financial mechanisms, which will provide support for the necessary reforms, should be open to the participation of the countries outside the euro zone.

The policy of cohesion

Similarly to other pillars of the European Union, also cohesion policy requires continuous improvement and adaptation to new economic and social challenges. The success of the negotiations over the European Union budget for 2014-2020 (which was achieved due to the contribution of the government, the commissioner for financial planning and the Civic platform MEPs) does not mean that the European Parliament is no longer involved in the work of the EU cohesion policy. The role of the MEPs having experience in this field will be crucial. This applies both to the implementation of this policy and the works on the next reform in the context of the review of Multiannual Financial Framework planned for 2017.

What are our objectives?

1. Further work to improve the effectiveness of European funds

Our task will be to continue the already begun works on the new legislative provisions for cohesion policy for 2014-2020, including the rules of public-private partnerships and policy support for revenue-generating projects.

[p. 12] 2. Responsible management of EU funds

Our aim is to ensure that the money received from Brussels will be spent in an effective way. It is of key importance to monitor the implementation of the policy in the EU Member States, in particular in Poland. Our priority will be the cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Poland and taking action to make the best use of the funds available for Poland.

3. Preparing for the next budget share

Cohesion policy will remain our priority. The Civic Platform considers the review of the Multiannual Financial Framework of a seven-year EU budget to be particularly important in terms of content and finance. It is also of key importance to prevent any attempts to reduce the funding for the cohesion policy. Our goal is to prepare the basis of a new EU budget after 2020. Thanks to our effectiveness any attempts to weaken the cohesion policy undertaken in recent years have failed.

Internal market, social policy and employment

Job security and stability is a prerequisite for social security and stable future. Years of financial crisis have been used to strengthen mechanisms that support employment. In the next term of the European Parliament, Members of the Civic Platform will continue to support reforms designed to enhance security and stability in the labor market.

What are our goals?

1. Strengthening the internal market

Polish economy benefits from a share in the EU internal market. Social consequences of the economic crisis have resulted in challenging the acquisitions of the internal markets in some EU countries. In some EU countries free movement of people has been the subject of disputes and criticism. As a result, there is pressure to change EU legislation governing the social security system - which can affect the restriction of fundamental freedoms.

[p. 13] Members of the Civic Platform disapprove of such attempts. We will consistently advocate for strengthening the internal market and its four basic freedoms as the foundation of the European Union.

2. Support for young

In times of crisis entering the labor market can be challenging experience, especially for young people. We want young people to acquire skills that would later help them meet the needs of the labor market. Our goal is to help graduates start in life through a system of internships and practices and wider use of the Erasmus +. We also want to encourage entrepreneurs to give employment to young employees, who do not have much work experience.

3. Introducing simple solutions for entrepreneurs

Small and medium-sized enterprises are the basis for the well functioning economy. In the next term the goal of the Civic Platform is the introduction of further administrative solutions for businesses. We will promote and support entrepreneurship and self-employment. We also want to support secure and flexible forms of work, allowing continuous development of one's careers, and the reconciliation of work and family life (i.e. flexicurity), which will result in an increase in domestic demand.

4. Support for people going abroad and the returning ones.

Starting or changing jobs is often associated with travelling abroad. The Civic Platform wants to support mobility as part of professional careers. We will work towards the abolition of the practical and legal obstacles to the free movement of workers within the EU. At the same time we want to create incentives for those who return to their country with experience and capital.

5. Senior activation

Demographic changes influence the situation in the labour market. In the next term we will work towards activation of people over 50. We will also promote the use of their knowledge and skills. In the context of pension reforms as well as later retirement age in many EU countries, promoting the idea of staying longer in the workforce is crucial.

6. Financial aid of the Union

Introducing any changes in the labour market is not possible without adequate financial support. Our goal is the efficient use of funds under the [p. 14] of the EU budget and EU instruments such as the Structural Funds (including in particular the European Social Fund), the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived or the European Union Solidarity Fund.

Environmental protection and public safety

In the coming years climate policy will be another important topic of debate and decisions of the EU institutions. We are going to persuade our partners, that the EU climate commitments can not ruin the European economy and reduce our energy security. We are convinced that environmental protection can be reconciled with economic and social interests.

What are our goals?

1. Environment and Climate

At next year's climate conference in Paris, the EU must provide a single, common position. If climate policy is to be effective, all the major economies of the world, not only the European Union, have to get involved in it.

We believe that investments in new, clean and energy-efficient technologies can result in long-term benefits for the European economy. These, however, require the support of Europe.

We can guarantee that the EU rules will allow for the safe use of energy resources (such as shale gas). We will also work on the reform of regulations on waste disposal restrictions, water conservation and biodiversity.

2. Food safety

Residents of the European Union must be sure that the food which is served on their tables, is safe and healthy. Therefore, in the European Parliament we will work on a better enforcement of food legislation. Our goal is to, inter alia, introduce stricter control, more severe penalties for counterfeiting, better food labeling (information about the origin of the goods, processing and packaging), etc.

[p. 15] We know that good quality food can be produced only by competitive, modern agriculture. Therefore, we will promote the development of rural areas. We want particularly to increase support for young farmers.

3. Healthy society

Health is one of the conditions for economic prosperity. Although the area of health care is within the competence of the Member States in the European Parliament, we will support (within the competence of the EU) various types of activities that increase the level of health security, for example: European programs of prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles, health and safety, etc.

Legal regulations

A strong European Union also ensures good, transparent European law tailored to the needs of its residents. We know how much responsibility for its creation rests on MPEs and therefore we have been strongly involved in the work of the Committee on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament for 10 years. Also in the next term we intend to influence the shape of EU rules especially in the area of civil and commercial law, which is the basis for the functioning of the unitary market. We are also working towards increasing citizens' sense of security in the area of law.

What are our goals?

1. Removing unnecessary regulations

Europe should make laws only in those areas that can not be better handled at national level. Limitation of the Union's legislative activity in trivial matters, outside its competence and relating for example to people's lifestyle, should be one of our goals for the next five years. Also rules concerning the assessment of costs incurred by the European economy, associated with the implementation of a regulation should be tightened.

2. Equal rights for all

Our priority is to ensure that all EU citizens have equal access to justice and the guarantee of a fair trial, regardless of country of origin.

[p. 16] 3. Simple rules for entrepreneurs

Economic development depends on the rules that should be simple and transparent for entrepreneurs. In the next term the Civic Platform will advocate for simplification of the rules of the EU trade law, a reform of the procedures concerning bankruptcy and small claims. Our priority will also be a further reduction of the administration procedures for small and medium-sized enterprises and the standardization of business confidentiality rules.

4. Easier solutions to resolve disputes, ETS reform

An important element of the legislation is also the simplest possible settlement of disputes. The Civic Platform will actively support efforts to ensure faster and more predictable procedure in cross-border cases in civil, commercial and criminal matters, while ensuring the legal protection of the weaker party. We will also advocate for completing the reform of the European Court of Justice, leading to increasing its efficiency and shortening case processing time.

Source: Silna 2014, pp. 1-16.

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