Poland, November 2026: what has been repaired since 2023, and on what footing

Three years after the 2023 election, what has been repaired in the courts and the public media, by what legal means, and what still stands in the way?

Poland **As of 15 November 2026** An independent project by Nevo Goor

Press freedom in Poland has improved markedly since 2023; the Freedom House score is up one point and the corruption score is down one point. The repairs made since 2023 rest mostly on legal footing that a later majority could reverse: ministerial decisions, parliamentary resolutions and a policy of not publishing Constitutional Tribunal rulings. The routes that would give them firmer footing are closed or unused: a judiciary statute was vetoed by the president, a media statute has not been enacted, and the governing coalition lacks both the three-fifths majority needed to override a veto and the two-thirds needed to amend the constitution.

SECTION 1

What changed in 2023

The parliamentary election of 15 October 2023 drew a turnout of 74.38 percent, the highest since the end of communism according to Polish Radio. Law and Justice (PiS) won the most seats, 194 of 460, but three parties that had campaigned against it, Civic Coalition (157), Third Way (65) and the Left (26), together held 248 seats. A government led by Donald Tusk took office in December 2023.

In June 2025 Karol Nawrocki won the presidency with 50.89 percent of the vote against 49.11 percent for Rafał Trzaskowski, and was sworn in on 6 August 2025. Under the Polish constitution, a presidential veto can be overridden only by a three-fifths majority of the Sejm.

SECTION 2

The repair ledger

Each row records what was done, the legal means used, and where it stands. The legal means matter because they decide how easily a change can be undone.

AREA	WHAT WAS DONE	LEGAL MEANS	WHERE IT STANDS
Public media (TVP, Polish Radio, PAP)	Management replaced in December 2023; on 27 December 2023 the companies were placed in liquidation by the culture minister, after the president vetoed a bill that included 3 billion zloty for public media.	Ministerial decision under commercial company law, not a new media statute.	The Constitutional Tribunal ruled in January 2024 that the route used was unconstitutional; the government rejected the ruling. A court confirmed the liquidation of TVP in April 2024, according to Notes from Poland. In January 2026 the government said it wanted a parliamentary vote on a media bill before the summer (Polish Radio); no report of its enactment or veto was found as of 15 November 2026.

Constitutional Tribunal	On 6 March 2024 the Sejm adopted, by 240 votes to 197, a resolution on removing the effects of the constitutional crisis of 2015 to 2023. The government stopped publishing Tribunal rulings.	Sejm resolution (not a statute); executive practice of non-publication.	Contested on both sides. On 30 October 2026 one of the judges elected by the Sejm in 2026, whose oath the president had refused to receive, ordered the one-month suspension of the president and vice-president of the Tribunal. The president of the Republic called this "a forcible takeover of a constitutional body", in the English rendering reported by CNN. According to the International Commission of Jurists (3 November 2026), two groups of judges have issued conflicting orders; the Commission said the suspension, imposed without a fair and appropriate procedure, contravenes international standards on judicial independence. The Commission has also called on the government to publish Tribunal rulings, as has the Venice Commission according to the same source. The Commission further reports that the EU Court of Justice held on 18 December 2025 that the Tribunal did not meet the requirements of an independent tribunal established by law, because of irregularities in judicial appointments in 2015 and 2016.
National Council of the Judiciary (KRS)	A statute restoring the election of judicial members by judges was passed by parliament in January 2026, according to Notes from Poland.	Statute (vetoed); members then selected by the Sejm under the existing 2017 law.	Vetoed by the president on 19 February 2026. In May 2026 the Sejm selected 15 judicial members, 13 of them candidates chosen by judges and two chosen by opposition parties. According to Notes from Poland, this went ahead despite a Tribunal injunction ordering the process halted.
European Union	The European Commission closed the Article 7(1) rule-of-law procedure on 29 May 2024. In February 2024 it adopted acts that, in its words as quoted by Polish Radio, "will pave the way for Poland to access up to EUR 137 billion".	EU decisions.	Completed. Human Rights Watch called the closure of the procedure premature.

SECTION 3

What the measures show

MEASURE	AROUND 2023	LATEST	COGA THRESHOLD
Freedom House, total score (0 to 100)	81 (2023 edition)	82 (2026 edition)	Below 70 would cross a COGA hard gate. Not crossed.
RSF World Press Freedom Index	57th, score 67.66 (2023)	27th of 180, score 75.52 (2026)	Below 50 would cross a gate. Not crossed.
Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index	54 (2023)	53 (2025 index)	Below 40 would cross a gate. Not crossed.
V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index	not compared (see below)	0.64, 36th (2025 data)	No COGA gate on this index.

Press freedom shows the largest move, thirty places in three years. The corruption score has not moved up. V-Dem states that "As of 2025, Poland remains below its 2015 democracy levels". V-Dem values from earlier report editions are not compared here, because V-Dem revises past scores between editions.

SECTION 4

Why the repair sits where it does

Two thresholds in the constitution shape the repair. A vetoed bill passes only if the Sejm "repassed" it "by a three-fifths majority vote in the presence of at least half of the statutory number of Deputies". A constitutional amendment needs "a majority of at least two-thirds of votes". The coalition holds neither. In one override attempt in 2026, on a cryptocurrency bill, 241 deputies voted to overturn the veto where 266 were needed, according to Polish Radio.

With the judiciary statute vetoed, no media statute enacted and amendment out of reach, the repairs have been made through the instruments a government controls on its own: ministerial decisions, parliamentary resolutions and the choice not to publish Tribunal rulings. In law, each of those instruments would also be available to a later majority acting in the other direction, without a new statute.

SECTION 5

How this is read

COGA distinguishes changes made by ordinary law, which the next ordinary majority can undo, from changes written into a constitution, which are harder to undo. That distinction was applied to countries in decline, to describe whether a takeover of institutions could later be reversed. Here it is applied in the other direction, to a repair. By that reading, the repair in Poland sits on the more reversible side, and parts of it sit below the level of statute.

This is a description of legal footing, not a forecast. The distinction has not been tested on recovering countries, and nothing here predicts what a future government will do.

SECTION 6

Method and limits

Facts stated without attribution were checked against at least two independent publishers. Where only one publisher was found, the source is named in the sentence. Index values come from the publisher of each index, and editions are named; values from different editions of V-Dem are not compared, because V-Dem revises past scores. The events of late 2026 at the Constitutional Tribunal were still developing at the time of writing. The word "repair" describes the stated aim of the measures, not a judgment that each measure was lawful; that question is itself disputed. The analysis is the work of a single analyst; the draft was checked against its sources by an independent reviewer before release.

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