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REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE “CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ELECTORAL SYSTEMS: TYPES, FUNCTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS”, WROCŁAW, 13–14 MARCH, 2017

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On March 13–14, 2017, the Institute of Political Science of the University of Wrocław organized and hosted a conference on electoral systems in cooperation with the Citizens' Movement for single-member constituency Citizens' Movement for the Single-member Constituency (Ruch Obywatelski na rzecz Jednomandatowych Okręgów Wyborczych). The conference was attended by more than 60 scientists representing almost all universities in Poland and many guests from the world of politics and media. The honorary patron of the conference was the President of Wrocław, Rafał Dutkiewicz.

The conference started with a plenary session devoted to the functions of electoral systems. The debate was attended by Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Antoszewski (University of Wrocław), Prof. dr hab. Mikołaj Cześniak (SWPS University), dr hab. Bartłomiej Michalak (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń) and dr hab. Waldemar Wojtasik (University of Silesia). Participants engaged in a heated debate about which types of electoral systems, whether majority or proportional, allow greater fulfillment of the demands placed on the electoral system, namely: providing representation to diverse social groups, encouraging citizens to participate in elections and choosing an effective government.

In the afternoon of March 13, a very interesting debate among politicians representing different political groups took place. Members of European Parliament, senators and political party leaders discussed the proposals of the reform of the electoral system in Poland. A discussion entitled “The electoral system – proposals for Poland” was led by Przemysław Gałecki (Polish Radio Wrocław). The debate was preceded by a brief lecture by Prof. dr hab. Krzysztof Skotnicki (University of Łódź) dedicated to the possibility of limiting the number of terms of the executive bodies in local governments.

The first day of the conference ended with a gala dinner, during which the discussion on the issues raised earlier was still taking place.

The conference proceedings on March 14 were divided into two parts. The second day of the conference began with plenary lectures by Prof. dr hab. Antoni Kamiński (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw) and Prof. dr hab. Tomasz Kuzmierski (University of Southampton). In their lectures, they presented two interesting topics: the relationship between the political system, electoral law and political culture and the functioning of British local government.

The conference ended with eight discussion panels, during which issues related to electoral systems and their implications for local political scenarios (Panels I and II), solutions used in electoral systems in the world (Panels III and IV), historical sources of Polish electoral systems (Panel V) and the determinants, consequences and methods of analyzing the effects of electoral systems (Panels VI–VIII) were discussed.