

The consequences of strengthening the political position of municipal council in Poland following changes in local government law introduced in 2018

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Abstract

The objective of the paper is to present the consequences of strengthening the political position of municipal council in Poland following changes in local government law introduced in 2018. The system and organization of territorial self-government, both in Poland and in other countries (both the West-Anglo-Saxon model, and the North-Scandinavian model) is subject to constant transformation. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries many countries decided to carry out reforms inspired by the idea of leadership. The transition from the collective executive at the local level to a strong, directly elected mayor, proved to be a popular solution. Experiments with the strengthening of the executive branch at the municipal level were undertaken, among others, by Scandinavian countries and England. The presidential model in the local government was introduced in several Central and Southern European countries (Slovenia, Romania, Italy, Greece), including Poland (in 2002). In the paper was used the institutional and legal method, the comparative method and the behavioural method. The tools and permissions introduced by the amendment of self-government acts, i.e. i.e. *The Act of 11 January 2018 on amending certain acts to increase the participation of citizens in the processes of electing, functioning and controlling certain public bodies*, which is in force from the term 2018-2023, and aims at providing systemic and practical strengthening of the municipal council's position in relation to the executive body: the introduction of an obligatory committee of complaints, proposals and petitions; introducing the obligation to submit a report on the condition of the municipality by its head (municipality administrator, mayor, president of the city); the granting of additional competences of the chairman of the municipal council. The role of municipal councils, in which the executive body has the majority did not increase, while in the case of municipalities with cohabitation, especially conflicted ones, it increased, causing destabilization of the local governance process. The implemented tools have deepened the polarization of municipal bodies. The vote of confidence for the head of municipality and the assessment of the report on the condition of municipality by the councillors affects the work of the executive body only in municipalities with conflict. Competences of the head of the board in the scope of works of the council over the employees of municipal offices improved the work of councillors, where cohabitation occurred. The complaints, proposals and petitions committee rejects, or makes difficult the positive handling of complaints/proposals/petitions regarding the work of the head of the municipality in the municipalities where it holds the majority in the council.