

# Poland passed anti-American law

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On December 17, the Polish Seimas adopted a law limiting the share of foreign capital in national media.

The document stipulates that foreign companies cannot own more than 50% of the shares.

It is quite obvious that this law is primarily aimed at one of the largest Polish TV companies, TVN. This company is controlled by the United States and is often used to criticize the current government and President Andrzej Duda.

The law was introduced back in September, but was rejected by the Senate. But on Friday, December 17, it was unexpectedly promoted by the committee of the ruling party "Law and Justice".

Now the law has been sent to the president and is awaiting his approval.

If Andrzej Duda signs the law, it could provoke a political scandal with the United States. If the law is passed, a ban will be imposed on organizations outside the European Economic Area from having a controlling stake in Polish media. The law covers the only TV channel – TVN, owned by the American company Discovery.

During the time when the ruling Law and Justice party was in power, Poland has consistently dropped in press freedom ratings. However, Law and Justice representatives argue that the law is aimed at preventing the spread of Russian and Chinese propaganda in the country.

Advocates of the law note that Poland is not the only one who limits the share of foreign capital in the national media.

Many European states do this. Regarding the TVN channel, it is believed that it can avoid nationalization. Since Discovery owns it through a subsidiary located in Holland.

The US Embassy in Poland immediately expressed its concern. "The USA is very disappointed with the current passage of the media law in the Sejm. We expect President Duda to act in accordance with previous statements and use his power to protect freedom of speech and business", the US ambassador said in a statement.

When urging President Duda to act on earlier statements, the American Embassy must have been referring to the President's August speech. Then Duda announced that he could veto the law. He called the law controversial and said that Poland "must weigh our interests" before making a decision.

The presidential veto can only be overturned by a majority of votes (not less than three-fifths) in the Seimas. That in the current situation is unlikely.

Representatives of the American company Discovery said that "the results of the surprise vote in the Polish parliament should deeply concern any enterprise that invests in Poland, and everyone who cares about democracy and freedom of the press. As a result of this vote, Poland risks directly undermining the values that linked Poland to Europe and uprooting the foundations of Polish-American relations".

Former US Ambassador to Poland Daniel Fried went further and spoke about the threat of "American-Polish solidarity in the face of Putin's threats to Ukraine".

President Duda must make a big decision. He has 21 days to pass the law. Duda can sign the bill, veto it, or send the document to the Constitutional Court to check its compliance with the Constitution.

Poland is in a deplorable relationship with the EU. Now a

serious scandal with the United States may occur. If the law is adopted, the consequences can be very serious, up to a change in the direction of the country's foreign policy.

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