Poland: unprecedented attacks on the rule of law and civil society organisations must be stopped

Written declaration No. 641

This written declaration commits only those who have signed it

The state of the rule of law in Poland is a matter of growing concern. The current parliamentary majority (created by the Law and Justice party) and the government have been undermining the independence of the judiciary. In December 2016, the Constitutional Court was deprived of the actual power of judicial review.

Large social protests in July 2017 resulted in the vetoing of two unconstitutional laws on the judiciary by President Duda. Regretfully, the law on common courts was passed, subjecting the courts to the control of the Minister of Justice. New draft laws proposed recently appear to threaten the independence of the Supreme Court and the National Council of the Judiciary once again.

Civil society organisations critical of the State authorities (including the Committee for the Protection of Democracy, Citizens of Poland, Open Dialog Foundation, women’s rights NGOs) have been under pressure (including the use of police, surveillance and fiscal control) over the last months.

We call on the Polish government to restore the constitutional order and stop harassment of civil society.

Signed (see overleaf)
Signed¹:

SCHENNACH Stefan, Austria, SOC
ANDERSON Donald, United Kingdom, SOC
BARNETT Doris, Germany, SOC
BRASSEUR Anne, Luxembourg, ALDE
CORSINI Paolo, Italy, SOC
D'AMBROSIO Vanessa, San Marino, SOC
FABRITIUS Bernd, Germany, EPP/CD
FRIDEZ Pierre-Alain, Switzerland, SOC
GATTI Marco, San Marino, EPP/CD
GRIN Jean-Pierre, Switzerland, ALDE
HERKEL Andres, Estonia, EPP/CD
HIGGINS Alice-Mary, Ireland, SOC
JOHNSON FORNARVE Lotta, Sweden, UEL
KROSS Eerik-Niiles, Estonia, ALDE
LAHAYE-BATTHEU Sabien, Belgium, ALDE
LOUCAIDES George, Cyprus, UEL
MAHOUX Philippe, Belgium, SOC
MASSEY Doreen, United Kingdom, SOC
OMTZIGT Pieter, Netherlands, EPP/CD
PREDA Cezar Florin, Romania, EPP/CD
SANDBÆK Ulla, Denmark, UEL
SCHWABE Frank, Germany, SOC
SUTTER Petra, De, Belgium, SOC
VEN Mart, van de, Netherlands, ALDE
WURM Gisela, Austria, SOC
ZAVOLI Roger, San Marino, FDG

Total = 27

¹. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
   EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
   FDG: Free Democrats Group
   SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
   UEL: Group of the Unified European Left