



"IUSTITIA"

Polish Judges' Association

Office: ul. Przyokopowa 33, 01-208 Warszawa, e-mail: biuro@iustitia.pl, www.iustitia.pl,

Phone: +48 22 535 88 31, fax +48 535 88 32

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Dear Colleagues Lawyers!

For the last couple of years in Poland the government and the legislature have systematically attempted to limit the independence of courts and the independence of judges. They also did much to expand their influence on functioning of the judiciary.

December 2019 has brought a quite new set of challenges for judges in Poland. They can be called the most difficult in the entire history of the judiciary so far after 1989. Those are: the intense activity of the Disciplinary Commissioner for judges, bringing disciplinary allegations to judges connected with their rulings or even outright for their issuing, the growing slander campaign against judges, unprecedented attacks of the executive branch representatives against the First President of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court Judges, who are dealing with the issues related to the implementation of the November 19, 2019 Court of Justice of the European Union judgment, and last but not least – done on December 20 the adoption by the Sejm (First Chamber of Polish Parliament) the act amending the act - Law on the system of common courts, the act on the Supreme Court and some other acts, done in a quick path as the MP (members of the parliament) draft bill, made even more severe during the parliamentary works. All this adds up to a system of pressure on the judiciary, unheard of and unimaginable in the circle of civilized states, and pushing us ruthlessly away from Western European civilization.

Over the past 15 years, we have proudly functioned as European lawyers, making the arduous effort of harmonizing national law with European law in the field of jurisprudence. Our daily work has been and is the work of lawyers who respect these guiding principles of law, which are the cornerstone of the European Community. Meanwhile, the adoption of the proposed

changes, combined with the intensification of repressive measures against judges, is an attack on the rights of all Citizens in Poland. At the same time, it will call into question our functioning in the European Union, obviously threatening the coherence of our Community. We cannot watch it idly.

That is why we appeal to all judges and representatives of other legal professions in European countries: **support us with your presence during the march in defense of the rule of law on January 11, 2020 at 15.00 in Warsaw!**

Together with us, show your disagreement with the destruction of the rule of law rule fundamental for all European countries! Support our protest against the attacks on the fundamental right of every citizen: the right to an independent and fair court deciding cases in accordance with the law understood as a harmonious system of European and national law. Stand with us in this special moment!

It is said that democracies die in silence. However, there are times when silence has the power of shouting thousands of people and where words are unnecessary. All you have to do is be with us. At this very moment, we are all becoming links in a great chain that can help stop the attack on the independent judiciary in Poland, the consequence of which will obviously be the weakening of the European community.

Therefore, let's stand side by side! Let's walk together in silence **in Warsaw from the Krasiński Square at the Supreme Court to Wiejska Street** next to the building of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland dressed in gowns/robes that are a symbol of our service to the law and societies of Europe. Let us show that the values and principles of the rule of law are the foundations of the profession of every lawyer, regardless of national borders. We strongly emphasize that the march is apolitical, it is not an affirmation of any political force in the country, nor is it intended to criticize the actions of any particular political party. Its sole purpose is to make the legislative authority aware of the dramatic consequences of the entry into force of laws passed in Parliament and of repressive measures taken against representatives of the judiciary in Poland.

Let us do everything so that this is not the last moment when judges will be able to publicly express their protest in defense of the values they serve with their entire professional life without fear of consequences.

We invite every lawyer caring about Europe-wide values to participate in the march in Warsaw, January 11th 2020. We start at 15.00 at Krasiński Square, just in front of the Supreme Court.

On behalf of the Polish Judges Association,

Prof. UŚ dr hab. Krystian Markiewicz
President of National Board
of the Polish Judges Association IUSTITIA

