Press release | 15.11.2017

First step towards Article 7

Rule of law in Poland

The Greens/EFA group is calling for the European Parliament to take the first step towards potential Article 7 proceedings against Poland (1). The call comes in a motion for a resolution, tabled by Greens/EFA, EPP, ALDE, ECR and GUE/NGL, which was supported by the majority of MEPs today. The Greens/EFA group also co-tabled a number of successful amendments on women's rights with GUE/NGL (2).

Greens/EFA co-president **Ska Keller** comments:

"Europe must be united in telling the Polish government that there will be consequences if they continue to leave the path of democracy. The Polish government must stop curbing the independence of courts and judges. If it continues to put courts and judges under political influence, the very principle of the rule of law and the protection of citizens against arbitrariness will be under threat. We cannot allow this to happen in Europe. If the EU allows Poland to act with impunity, those on the far right will only gain further confidence. We cannot allow the undermining of EU law and values to continue.

"The Polish government must end its deeply harmful agenda towards women. From the restrictions against the morning after pill to severe limitations on access to safe and legal abortion, women's fundamental rights are being violated. We call on the Polish government to step back from this dangerous approach and ensure all women and girls have access to proper sexual and reproductive health care."

Greens/EFA co-president Philippe Lamberts comments:

"The rule of law must be respected. The reforms being pushed through by the Polish government are completely counter to EU standards of judicial independence. The Polish government has already refused to implement an order of the European Court of Justice on logging in the Bialowieza forest: this complete disregard for EU law cannot be tolerated. Large-scale logging in the forest must be suspended immediately.

"For democracy to survive, the rights of political opponents and civil society have to be upheld. Restrictions on the right to assembly and increasingly draconian controls on funding for civil society organisations are worrying signs. We stand with all those in Poland pushing for an open, democratic and pluralistic society.

"What is taking place in Poland is worrying for all of Europe as restrictions on individual freedoms are becoming more and more common. The EU should not look aside and we should be taking signs of nationalist

extremism very seriously."

Background

(1) The relevant text from the motion: “Believes that the current situation in Poland represents a clear risk of a serious breach of the values referred to in Article 2 of the TEU; instructs its Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs to draw up a specific report in accordance with Rule 83(1) (a) of its Rules of Procedure, with a view to holding a plenary vote on a reasoned proposal calling on the Council to act pursuant to Article 7(1) of the TEU.”

(2) The Greens/EFA and GUE/NLG amendments included criticisms of the restrictions on access to the emergency contraceptive pill and abortions.

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