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Women's Rights: Poland

Polish government intends to withdraw support for Istanbul Convention

The Polish Minister for Social Affairs, Labour and Family has today announced their intention to withdraw Poland's signature from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The convention, commonly referred to as the Istanbul Convention, was signed by Poland in 2012 and ratified in 2015. It requires states to take measures to combat domestic violence and forms of gender-based violence.

On 25 November, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the European Parliament gave a very strong signal across party lines, calling on Member States to no longer block the ratification of the convention by the European Union.

The European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee is preparing a letter to the Polish authorities, condemning the plans of the Polish government to withdrawal from the Istanbul convention.

Responding to the news, Greens/EFA MEP and Coordinator of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality **Terry Reintke** said:

"A withdrawal from the Istanbul convention has never happened before and it is a harrowing sign for our common battle to end violence against women. It is essential that we now stand with the Polish women to strongly oppose the plans of the government to yet again infringe upon the fundamental rights of women in Poland. We are counting on Member States to remain steadfast and not allow Poland to block EU ratification of the Convention within the Council."

Greens/EFA MEP and Coordinator of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality **Ernest Urtasun** added:

"This latest threat to the rights and safety of women in Poland is deeply alarming. The current Polish government has consistently sought to undermine fundamental rights, and turning against the Istanbul Convention would send a disturbing message to Polish women about their ability to feel safe from violence."

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