

# HR HELSINKI FOUNDATION for HUMAN RIGHTS

36<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
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Item 6  
UPR outcomes-Poland

Delivered by Małgorzata Szuleka, Lawyer and advocacy officer, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland

## **Distinguished delegates, Your excellences,**

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights welcomes the adoption of the report on the UPR of Poland. The report includes a number of important recommendations that the Polish government supports including: implementing the judgements of ECHR concerning access to abortion and continue policies for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

We do regret, however, that a number of recommendations were not accepted by the Polish government.

In Poland, the **constitutional crisis is still on-going**. The crisis poses a serious threat to all check and balance mechanisms as well as undermines the protection of the rule of law. Still, the Constitutional Tribunal is under political influence, two of its judgements of 2016 has not been published and the President of Poland has not sworn into office three judges legally appointed by the previous governing majority in October 2015.

We also remain concerned about protection of freedom of speech information in **public media**. As a consequence of changes adopted in 2016 the governing majority has increased its control over the process of appointing the management of the public broadcasters. In practice, the public broadcasters are under wide political supervision.

The operational space for NGOs in Poland is **shrinking**. Last week, the Parliament adopted the law on the National Institute of Freedom which changes the process of distributing public funds for NGOs. This law poses a systemic threat to the independent operation and development of NGOs in Poland.

## **Distinguished delegates, Your excellences,**

We would like to express our hope that the accepted recommendations will be properly implemented, however we remain concerned about the process of democratic backsliding which we have been observing for over year and a half.

We would like to use this opportunity to urge the international community to continue its efforts in monitoring the situation in Poland.

Thank you for your attention!