



# NEW PERSPECTIVES

WATCHDOG INSTITUTIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FACE OF  
CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

23 November 2022  
conference

Centrum Zielna  
Zielna 37, Warsaw

## PROGRAM

9.30-10.00	<i>Registration of participants</i>	
	<i>Opening of the conference</i>	
10.00 – 10.20	<i>Summary of the project: “Monitoring of the human rights protection system in Poland”</i>	Maciej Nowicki – HFHR’s President of the Board
10.20 – 11.30	1st panel	What watchdog institutions do we need?
11.30 – 11.45	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11.45 – 13.00	2nd panel	How has the rule-of-law crisis changed the civil society?
13.00 – 14.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14.00 – 15.30	3rd panel	Authoritarianism, rule of law, climate crisis, migrations and the protection of human rights

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## 1ST PANEL

### WHAT WATCHDOG INSTITUTIONS DO WE NEED?

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The period between 2015 and 2022 was particularly challenging for watchdog institutions in Poland, such as the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Ombudsman for Children's Rights, the Supreme Audit Chamber or civil society organisations. Institutions and organisations had to find themselves in the new reality resulting from the rule-of-law crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to address challenges caused by the humanitarian crisis in the Polish-Belarusian border and the Russian aggression on Ukraine.

Participants of this panel will try to assess how watchdog institutions and civil society organisations managed to deal with challenges they faced in the abovementioned period.

Panel participants:

- **Prof. Marcin Wiącek**, Commissioner for Human Rights
- **Krzysztof Kwiatkowski**, senator, President of the Supreme Audit Chamber in years 2013-2019
- **Małgorzata Szuleka**, HFHR's Secretary of the Board
- **Katarzyna Batko**, director, Citizens Network Watchdog Poland

Moderator: **Agata Szcześniak**, OKO.press

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## 2ND PANEL

### HOW HAS THE RULE-OF-LAW CRISIS CHANGED THE CIVIL SOCIETY?

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As the rule-of-law crisis in Poland progresses, the space for the civil society continues to shrink. Civil society organisations' impact on decision-making processes and their access to public funds are more and more limited, whereas activists increasingly become targets of attacks in public discourse and face the risk of criminal or civil proceedings related to their work. On the other hand, in the last 7 years civil society in Poland has proven on many occasions that it retained its mobilisation potential to protest against the changes in the judiciary, defend the media freedom or provide help to survivors of the humanitarian crisis on Belarusian border and Ukrainians fleeing from war.

What are the contemporary challenges faced by the civil society in Poland? What do CSOs and activists need to continue their work, in spite of growing challenges and problems?

Panel participants:

- Katarzyna Czarnota, HFHR/Grupa Granica
- Urszula Grycuk, FEDERA Foundation for Women and Family Planning
- Marta Jagusztyn, Forests and Citizens
- Filip Pazderski, Public Affairs Institute

Moderator: Marta Gumkowska, Klon/Jawor Association

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## 3RD PANEL

### AUTHORITARIANISM, RULE OF LAW, CLIMATE CRISIS, MIGRATIONS AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Human rights protection is continuously subjected to new challenges. The rule-of-law crisis, taking over the public discourse by extreme groups, the climate catastrophe and migrations – these are just some of the issues faced by the civil society, state institutions and international bodies.

Is the notion of human rights still capable of mobilizing citizens and institutions to work toward common good? Or do human rights rather remain an unfulfilled promise in the light of these challenges?

Panel participants:

- **Anna Błaszczak-Banasiak**, Director of Amnesty International Poland
- **Joanna Fomina**, HFHR/Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences
- **Maciej Nowicki**, HFHR's President of the Board
- **Prof. Maciej Taborowski**, Institute of Law Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences/ partner at Hoffman, Taborowski & Associates

Moderator: Anna Wójcik, Ph.D., OKO.press