Subject: LIBE Committee concerns about recent developments as regards the situation of the Polish LGBTI community

Dear Minister,

My attention has been drawn to information from several media outlets and reports by civil society organisations indicating that the Polish LGBTI community has increasingly come under attack by a number of politicians and religious leaders during the past months.

The Coordinators of the LIBE Committee have asked me to express the Committee’s concern about these developments.

They have learned about the prohibition of and opposition to equality marches, which may be a violation of the right to freedom of speech and of assembly. A newspaper has spread ‘anti-LGBT’ stickers and several local governments have declared themselves ‘LGBT-free’, allegedly supported by several politicians of the governing majority. Several politicians and religious leaders seem to intentionally associate homosexuality with paedophilia and frame LGBTI people as a danger for children.

A hateful discourse against people identifying as LGBTI risks dividing society and stands at odds with one of the fundamental principles on which the European Union is founded, namely the principle of non-discrimination, in particular on the basis of sexual orientation.
orientation. Moreover, such hateful language coming from public figures may put LGBTI people’s safety and well-being at risk.

As you know and as it is its duty, the European Parliament promotes and defends fundamental rights in the EU including the rights of minorities which are to be protected on the basis of the Treaties and the European Convention of Human Rights, to which Poland adheres. May I recall that the Parliament in its later resolution adopted in January 2019 on the situation of fundamental rights within the EU has condemned all types of incidents of hate crime and hate speech that have occurred in the EU. The European Parliament expressed its concern about the trivialisation of hate speech that can be attributed to some political figures and called for a zero tolerance approach to any discrimination on any ground.

The LIBE Committee, which is competent for civil liberties and fundamental rights, is deeply concerned by the divisive and hateful rhetoric against the LGBTI community in Poland, and calls on the national authorities to ensure that the principle of equal treatment regardless of sexual orientation, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are respected and enforced in respect of this community.

I look forward to receiving information you could provide on these developments and the measures taken to remedy them.

Yours sincerely,

Juan Fernando LOPEZ AGUILAR

CC: Poland Permanent Representation
Mr Andrzej Sadoś
Permanent Representative, Representative to COREPER II