Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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The Polish authorities must take action to eliminate hate speech by politicians and other public figures and ensure the rights to freedom of assembly and expression for LGBTI members of society

Written declaration No. 694

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

We, the undersigned, declare the following:

The years 2018 and 2019 have seen a significant spike in anti-LGBTI rhetoric in Poland, with incidents of hate speech from Polish politicians and other public figures, and over 30 city and regional governments in Poland declaring their localities "LGBT-free zones". Some localities banned Pride activities, such as in Rzeszów in June 2019, or failed to adequately protect Pride participants from violence during marches, as in Białystok in July 2019. Last Saturday, Lublin Pride came under violent attack, having only days before won a legal challenge against a Pride ban imposed by the city's Mayor.

There is a clear correlation between the increase in political rhetoric dehumanising and promoting hatred of LGBTI people, and incidents of hate crime and hate-motivated violence both physically and online. The language used by politicians and public leaders sets the tone for tolerance and acceptance, or for division and hatred. Furthermore, declaring a location "LGBT-free" does not remove LGBT individuals, but instead forces them to live in secrecy and fear – there is no justification for a government to perpetrate a climate of fear and persecution; it is their responsibility to protect and support the human rights of their citizens and everyone within their borders.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

TOMIĆ Violeta, Slovenia, UEL
ÆVARSDÓTTIR Thorhildur Sunna, Iceland, SOC
ÅSEBOL Ann-Britt, Sweden, EPP/CD
BAYR Petra, Austria, SOC
BEN CHIKHA Fourat, Belgium, SOC
BEUS RICHEMBERGH Goran, Croatia, ALDE
BOER Margreet, De, Netherlands, SOC
BRANDT Michel, Germany, UEL
FRESKO-ROLFO Béatrice, Monaco, ALDE
GOÑI Ruth, Spain, ALDE
GURMAI Zita, Hungary, SOC
HUNKO Andrej, Germany, UEL
JALLOW Momodou Malcolm, Sweden, UEL
KOPŘIVA František, Czech Republic, ALDE
KOX Tiny, Netherlands, UEL
LACROIX Christophe, Belgium, SOC
LÓPEZ Eva, Andorra, ALDE
STIENEN Petra, Netherlands, ALDE
TORNARE Manuel, Switzerland, SOC
UCA Feleknas, Turkey, UEL
YENEROĞLU Mustafa, Turkey, NR

Total = 21

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group