Second Congress of the Lawyers of Poland, Poznań 2019

On the 1st of June, 2019 the Second Congress of the Lawyers of Poland took place in Poznań. The Congress’ main goal was to unite Polish lawyers of various careers in defence of Polish Constitution, independence of judges and the rule of law. Over 1000 lawyers attended.

The Congress was inaugurated by the host’s speeches by judge prof. Krystian Markiewicz – President of the Association of Polish Judges IUSTITIA, Jacek Trela – President of the Polish Bar Council and Maciej Bobrowicz – President of the Bar of the Attorneys.

Judge prof. Krystian Markiewicz among others criticized the politicians of the government: “Instead of insulting and spitting on the judges, talk to the people, instead of spending money to humiliate us, take care of legal education and decent life of court staff” and stressed that: “The law, and especially the Constitution, should unite people because it is the foundation on which our state is based. If this foundation weaken, we can be prone to plunge into complete chaos.”.

Mr. Bobrowicz stressed that: “As long as there is faith in our profession, the law always triumphs”.

President of Polish Supreme Court – Małgorzata Gersdorf and the Commissioner of Human Rights – Adam Bodnar and the Mayor of the city of Poznań – Jacek Jaśkowski took the floor then.

President of Polish Supreme Court – Małgorzata Gersdorf in her speech addressed the current activity of Polish Supreme Court and stressed relevance of the case – law of the European Courts regarding deteriorating situation in Polish judiciary.

Polish Ombudsman Mr. Adam Bodnar celled forth the matter of the perspective of a citizen in court: “We ought to look at the justice system from the
perspective of a citizen who wants justice in court. Think about how he feels, is everything working out for him in court. He also brought forth the matter of obeying the law by the government: “For Poland to become a beating heart of Europe (reference to ruling party election slogan), she must obey the Constitution again”.

Mayor of the city of Poznań – Jacek Jaśkowiak said that “This attack (on the judges) turns out to be much simpler than we might have expected few years ago. It happens with approval of a large part of the society. However, this acceptance does not result from real support for lawlessness, lying, hatred, clientelism or statism (...) I have no doubt that if there weren’t judges’ hard, courageous and determined attitude, our country would now be, after nearly four years of government’s destructive and anti-democratic policies, in a place completely different”.

Congress was attended by a special guest – judge Yavuz Aydin from Turkey and a refugee, who spoke about the critical situation in his country.

In the second part of the Congress there were held panel discussions attended by eminent Polish professors of law on the topic of real reform of different branches of Polish law and developing of the independence of judges.

In the end of the Congress it was stressed that today’s tasks of lawyers was not only to practice law, but also to educate the public about law and democracy. Participants expressed too the deep concern about what would happen to the rule of law in Poland if the ruling party is elected for yet another term.

To sum up, the Congress showed that Polish lawyers could stand together opposing the unlawful actions by the ruling party.