

AGREEMENT FOR THE RULE OF LAW

Warsaw, 25 March 2022

The President

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On the occasion of your visit to Poland, at a time full of tensions and threats, we, the representatives of Polish civil society, would like to express our appreciation and gratitude for the role that the United States of America has played in defending democratic values and security in Europe. We are convinced that your visit comes at a time of historic change. It will surely be remembered for a long time.

A little over a century ago, in similar circumstances, Poland was given the role that has today fallen to the heroically fighting Ukraine. In Poland, we remember well the support of the United States at that time – vast amounts of financial aid, training of volunteer army personnel, and finally the direct participation of American pilots in particular. Today, we appreciate both the similarly great support that your administration is giving to Ukraine in its fight, and the enormous, skilled diplomatic effort that has resulted in the surprising unity of the free world and its resolute response to brutal lawlessness and cruel violence.

Ukraine is fighting in defense of human rights and civil liberties, in defense of freedom of speech, the rule of law and democracy – the same values that have been the foundation of the United States of America for almost 250 years. In Poland, those values have been under constant threat for the last six years, not because of the war, but because of unconstitutional changes introduced by those in power. These changes are very similar to the ones that initiated the moral collapse of Russia, the tragic result of which we are now experiencing: the politicization of the judiciary, attacks on the free press (including TVN), attacks on independent culture and minorities, ignorance of verdicts given by international tribunals, and the invigilation of citizens and political opponents. All this is being done by the state authorities – the same ones with which today the defense policy of Europe and the West needs to be negotiated.

As representatives of the Polish civil movement of protest against those changes, who are now totally devoted to helping our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, we urge you not to lose sight of those symptoms of Putinization in Poland. We fought for the rule of law legally, before international tribunals. We, the democratic Poles and independent judges, have won over 20 cases. All we want is for those in power to abide by these legal court rulings. However, even as all of Poland is looking forward to your visit to Warsaw, those in power in Poland have ignored those judgments, rejecting in Parliament the only draft law prepared by civil society aimed at halting the devastation of the rule of law. We hope that respect for the fundamental principles of law will be a condition for the international dialogue that is taking place today. While times of tension and conflict create a temptation to postpone these principles, we firmly believe that today it is impossible to put them off, as this is exactly what Ukraine is fighting for! Today's war is ultimately about these very same principles.

This terrible war has to lead to politics becoming more human and more concerned with the basic values inscribed in the beautiful wording of the constitutions of both our countries, as well as the Ukrainian constitution.

We do have hope. We do believe in good and in a good future. We know that you share those hopes with us. We see this through your words and your actions, and we welcome them with gratitude.

NGOs and civic movements creating Agreement for Rule of law

