

## **Statement of the Open Dialogue Foundation on the working session I: Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Digital Age**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am saddened that yet again we need to speak about Poland.

The Polish government is escalating its war against dissent. The Open Dialogue Foundation happens to manage the country's largest online political community, "SokzBuraka", a pro-democratic civil society hub with over 1 million followers. This Facebook page, just as the Foundation, is a constant thorn in Law and Justice's foot, monitoring and criticising the increasingly-authoritarian government's actions with satire and educational content.

The authorities have replied to our fully-legal activities not only with never ending propaganda attacks via their public media channels, but also with disinformation and hate attacks through their social media troll farms.

With the recent intensification of their campaign against civil society, Law and Justice initiated numerous investigations and legal proceedings against the page's administrators, with the most drastic being the recent arrest of the Chair of our Supervisory Board, Bartosz Kramek, by secret services. For 2 weeks now he remains in pre-trial detention - a political prisoner in an EU Member State. No matter that the charges against him had already been refuted 3 times by courts, back when they were presented against his wife and our President, Lyudmyla Kozlovska, who was similarly unlawfully expelled from the EU as retaliation for her husband's activities. The charges are also a copy-paste from post-Soviet regimes, so "financial fraud" and "acting against the interest of the state", with no proof presented.

Indictments have also been filed against the leaders of the Polish Women's Strike, Marta Lempart, Agnieszka Czerederecka and Klementyna Suchanow. We expect other civil society leaders to be next.

The authorities are trying to silence critical voices with methods straight from Russia, Kazakhstan or Belarus, inducing a chilling effect on civil society. We request that the OSCE monitors these cases of political persecution and publicly condemns them on the international arena.

Thank you.