

20 LAWSUITS AGAINST POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS FOR ATTACKS ON THE OPEN DIALOGUE FOUNDATION

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During a press conference, representatives of the Open Dialogue Foundation (ODF) presented 20 lawsuits filed against politicians, journalists, activists and media organisations in connection with a “mass propaganda campaign” they were supposed to launch against the Foundation.

- **The lawsuits were brought against former senior officials of the Polish government, including Witold Waszczykowski, Joachim Brudziński and Patryk Jaki.**
- **Foundation representatives stated that some absurd allegations were made against them, including accusations of cooperating with Mossad and George Soros.**
- **Onet provides a full list of those named in the lawsuits, together with the amounts of compensation sought and the reasons for the claims.**

The defendants in the lawsuits, which claim PLN 1,695,000 in total, include politicians Witold Waszczykowski, Joachim Brudziński, Patryk Jaki, Krystyna Pawłowicz, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Ryszard Czarnecki, Szymon Szynkowski, Dominik Tarczyński and Maciej Wąsik, journalists Tomasz Sakiewicz, Wojciech Biedroń and Witold Gadowski, as well as TVP, Polskie Radio and Fratria – publisher of the wPolityce portal and *Sieci* magazine.

The Open Dialogue Foundation is engaged in the defence of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the post-Soviet area. It became famous when, during the July 2017 protests in defence of the rule of law in Poland, Bartosz Kramek, the Head of the Foundation Board and privately the husband of the President of the ODF, Lyudmyla Kozlovska, published the manifesto “Let the State Come to a Stop: Let's Shut Down the Government!” on Facebook, calling for civil disobedience against the rule of PiS.

After that, pro-government politicians and journalists began to accuse him of calling for a Polish Maidan based on the bloody events of the Revolution of Dignity in Kiev, in which the Foundation participated with a support mission. A month after the publication, an advanced customs and tax inspection of the Foundation began that continues to this day. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs took steps to suspend the Foundation's Board, but the courts rejected this request.

In August 2018, Poland entered Lyudmyla Kozlovska into the Schengen Information System (SIS), which resulted in her immediate expulsion from the European Union. Kozlovska was detained at Brussels airport on 13 August 2018, and deported to Kiev the following day.

In the following months, several EU countries began to invite Kozlovska in protest against the actions of the Polish authorities. Less than a month after her expulsion from the EU, Kozlovska appeared in the Bundestag at the invitation of a group of German parliamentarians. Two weeks later, she made a speech in the European Parliament in Brussels. Since then she has been invited to many European countries.

At the same time, the Open Dialogue Foundation has taken legal steps to enable Lyudmyla Kozlovska to return to Poland. First, she submitted a request to the Voivodeship Administrative Court in Warsaw to remove her details from the SIS.

In April, the Voivodeship Administrative Court in Warsaw ruled that the decision to enter Kozlovska into the SIS had been made incorrectly because it was based on generic and insufficient information provided by the Internal Security Agency to the Office for Foreigners. Therefore, the court ordered the

Head of the Office for Foreigners to reconsider the case.

In May, Belgium issued a residence card to Kozlovska for five years, meaning that her details would have had to be removed from the SIS anyway. Poland complied with this requirement. However, it has maintained the ban on Kozlovska's entry into Poland.

In September, the Warsaw Administrative Court issued a second decision, this time on granting Lyudmyla Kozlovska the right of permanent residence in Poland, which she applied for in 2018. At that time, the Mazovian Voivode refused to grant her such a right because her name was listed in the SIS. At the hearing, the court confirmed the first decision, stating that on the basis of information from the Internal Security Agency, it was not reasonable to conclude that Kozlovska was a threat to national security, and ordered the Mazovian Voivode and the Office for Foreigners to reconsider her case.

The Foundation is still waiting for court rulings that would enable Lyudmyla Kozlovska to return to Poland.

As the representatives of the Foundation admit, all this time it was being attacked in pro-government media and by politicians of the ruling party. Now, as they say, the time has come to pay for those attacks.

“We have been the target of a massive propaganda campaign, during which absurd accusations were made against us, such as money laundering, criminal activity and even sexual scandals. We were accused of cooperating with Russian intelligence and even with Mossad, and of relationships with George Soros,” said Bartosz Kramek, the Head of the Foundation Board, at the conference. “We have been the victims of hate speech, often in the form of open threats. We have repeatedly announced that legal steps would be taken to defend our good name, and today we are keeping our word.”

The Foundation provided statistical data according to which, since 1 July 2017, there have been 2,271 articles published about it, including 1,560 articles of a negative or very negative nature.

Kramek added that despite the most serious allegations against the Foundation, no formal charges were ever brought against it.

List of persons and institutions being sued by the Open Dialogue Foundation

Below is a complete list of persons and institutions being sued by the Open Dialogue Foundation, along with the amounts of compensation sought and the reasons for the claims. Most of the lawsuits have been filed in recent days.

1. TVP (PLN 200,000) – for slander regarding arms trading, being financed by Russia, possessing Russian passports, having relations with Russian special services, money laundering, being financed by oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov, betraying Ukraine, and planning a *coup d'état*.
2. Polskie Radio (PLN 200,000) – for slander regarding arms trading, being financed by Russia, possessing Russian passports, having relations with Russian special services, money laundering, being financed by oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov, and planning a *coup d'état*.
3. Fratria (publisher of the wPolityce.pl portal and *Sieci* magazine, PLN 100,000) – for slander regarding being financed by Russia, possessing Russian passports, having relations with Russian special services, money laundering, betraying Ukraine, being financed by oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov, and planning a *coup d'état*.
4. Marcin Rey, activist (PLN 100,000) – for numerous entries and interviews given to the pro-government press, in which he accused the Foundation of links with the Russian arms industry and the mafia and the funding of the Foundation by oligarchs Mukhtar Ablyazov and Veaceslav

Platon, and for his report on the Foundation (the report was analysed by Onet in the article “Another attack on the Open Dialogue Foundation. And another embarrassment”).

5. Balli Marzec, activist (PLN 20,000) – for slander regarding being financed by oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov, cooperating with Russian special services, the mafia-like nature of the Foundation's activity, betraying Poland and Ukraine, and attempts having been made on the activist's life.
6. Witold Gadowski, journalist (PLN 30,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation being financed by oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov, and cooperating with Russian special services, and for suggesting that Lyudmyla Kozlovska appeared in the “sex tapes” with oligarch Mukhtar Ablyazov.
7. Tomasz Sakiewicz, Editor-in-Chief of *Gazeta Polska* magazine (PLN 30,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation being financed using Russian arms industry money, and links with Russian services, and for comparing the Foundation to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its pursuit of “German interests”.
8. Marcin Wikło, journalist of the *Sieci* weekly magazine (PLN 300,000) – for publishing the articles “Dirty cash for the Polish Maidan” and “Agents of influence” in *Sieci*, and for numerous acts of defamation in many articles published in *Sieci* and on wPolityce.pl.
9. Marek Pyza, journalist of the *Sieci* weekly magazine (PLN 300,000) – for publishing the articles “Dirty cash for the Polish Maidan” and “Agents of influence” in *Sieci*, and for numerous acts of defamation in many articles published in *Sieci* and on wPolityce.pl.
10. Wojciech Biedroń, journalist of the wPolityce portal (PLN 200,000) – among others, for the publication of the article “Breaking news. Victim of a campaign or an influential provocateur who exploits the weakness of the West? TOP 10 theses exposing Kozlovska” and many other slanderous materials on the pages of wPolityce.pl.
11. Maciej Wąsik, PiS politician, Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (PLN 30,000) – for slanderously accusing the Foundation of calling for the overthrow of the government, conducting hybrid activities, being financed with money from the Russian arms industry, and having links with Russian special services.
12. Szymon Szykowski vel Sęk, PiS politician, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (PLN 30,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation being financed by Russia and regarding it conducting hybrid activities for the benefit of Russian intelligence.
13. Krystyna Pawłowicz, PiS politician (PLN 15,000) – for Twitter entries: from 12 September 2018 – “Germany, by violating the decision of ALERT of its official ally, i.e. Poland, to expel Lyudmyla Kozlovska from Poland and the EU, and by inviting her despite this, as its guest, only confirmed its anti-Polish alliance with Russia and the legitimacy of expelling the person that is so important for Russia from Poland” and from 13 September 2018 – “By the way, WHAT RIGHT does Germany have to organise ‘hearings about the rule of law IN POLAND’ in the Bundestag!? And the Ukrainian Kozlovska, commonly regarded as an agent of Putin, is to be a reliable source of information about ‘fascism’, ‘dictatorship’ and ‘violation of freedom’ in Poland?”
14. Patryk Jaki, PiS MEP (PLN 15,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation being financed by Russia and regarding it conducting activities for the benefit of Russian intelligence.
15. Joachim Brudziński, PiS MEP (PLN 30,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation being financed by oligarchs Mukhtar Ablyazov and Veaceslav Platon as well as by Russia, for references to the “sex scandal” and Twitter entry from 22 April 2019: “Hey, hey, you guys defending the ‘European-Caucasian’ crooks who wanted to ‘shut down the government’, do you know that you are but useful idiots? Did you know that the December ‘miracle of

resurrection' of Mr. D. and candles from Rossmann are all financed with laundered, dirty money? Lusya and her tolerant husband are unlikely to get a Nobel Prize.”

16. Witold Waszczykowski, PiS MEP (PLN 30,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation conducting activities to the detriment of Poland, Moldova and other democratic states, and calling the foundation “an agent of influence”.
17. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, PiS MEP (PLN 20,000) – for slander regarding the Foundation being financed by Mukhtar Ablyazov, Veaceslav Platon and Russian oligarchs, activities conducted for the benefit of Russian intelligence services and an attempted *coup d'état*.
18. Dominik Tarczyński, PiS MP (PLN 15,000) – for slander regarding money laundering, activities for the benefit of Russian intelligence, and anti-state activities.
19. Ryszard Czarnecki, PiS MEP (PLN 30,000) – for slander regarding money laundering, sale of weapons to the Russian navy, conducting activities for the benefit of Russian intelligence, and an attempted *coup d'état*.
20. Tomasz Sakiewicz and publisher of the *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* magazine (PLN 50,000) – for the magazine cover with image of Bartosz Kramek in a German uniform from the Second World War (the case started in 2018, in April was won in the first instance by Bartosz Kramek, and is now pending appeal proceedings).

Link: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tylko-w-onecie/20-pozwow-przeciw-politykom-i-dziennikarzom-za-ataki-na-otwarty-dialog/g4cm4bj>

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