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Dr. Adam Bodnar
Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich
Aleja Solidarności 77
PL-00-090 WARSZAWA

Dear colleague,

With great concern we, the municipal ombudsman in The Netherlands, have followed the developments in Poland. We are very much worried about the way the Polish government is handling the election procedure for a new ombudsman. For this reason we would like to express our strong support for the statement issued by the Venice Commission on 12 October and adhere to the letter send to you by the International Ombudsman Institution World Board on 16 October.

In the Netherlands the local ombudsman come regularly together to discuss developments, best practices and also the situation of ombudsman in challenging times. During our last meeting we unanimously agreed that it was time to convey our support for you and your institution. It is with great admiration that we see you fulfil the role as an ombudsman and human rights defender.

The present pandemic prevents us from taking more direct action as you so strongly described in your presentation during the webinar organized by IDEA (institute for democracy and electoral assistance) recently. Because indeed, it is in the cooperation between institutions, that lies our strength and the ideal way of learning from each other. As independent and impartial institutions we need each other to be strong and be effective.

Municipal ombudsman form an essential part of the checks and balances in the local democratic process. The local ombudsman too, hold the mirror to the government and must do so, no matter what the opinion of the others involved. We all underscore the human rights and democratic rights embedded in our constitution which are not to be discarded and for which we must stand firm under any circumstances.

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Statement of support

Ons nummer

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Uw bericht / kenmerk

Bijlage(n)

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We take your role in this situation as an example for our own practice and which we will need to follow whenever such times arise. We will follow the developments in Poland very closely and where possible take action.

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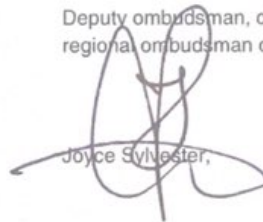
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With warm regards,

National ombudsman of the
Netherlands,


Reinier van Zutphen

Deputy ombudsman, chair
regional ombudsman committee,


Joyce Sylvester,