



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Poland
Title:	Newly appointed Ombud appoints his deputy responsible for equality issues
Date:	24 September 2015
Expert:	Łukasz Bojarski
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	For the first time Ombud appoints a deputy responsible only for equality issues
Ground of discrimination:	All grounds
Source:	National Equality Body
Field:	N/A
Applicable law:	N/A

Content

Policy development: The 5 years term of the office of Prof. Irena Lipowicz, the Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich (Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection) that serves also as an Equality Body in Poland expired in July 2015. For the first time the so-called civic candidate was announced and supported by 67 NGOs, Dr Adam Bodnar, vice-president of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. In fact NGOs organized whole campaign that aimed at convincing decision makers to take his unofficial candidature into consideration, they established webpage, Facebook profile, sent letters to MPs¹. Among those NGOs there are many organizations focusing on equal treatment issues. For the first time the (unofficial) candidate was widely debated, there were a number of media reports, interviews and debates organized. He was also attacked a number of times for his personal views on LGBT issues (mainly same sex marriages and adoption). The wide social support convinced MPs that have the right to put forward an official candidate. Dr Adam Bodnar was elected by both houses of Parliament as a new Ombud in July (July 24, by Sejm) and August (August 7th, by Senate) and on September 9, 2015, he took his oath and the office.

On this occasion new Ombud presented two new deputy Ombuds. One of them is Dr Sylwia Spurek who was presented as a deputy responsible for the equal treatment issues (this will be also her official title). She is to take her office on the 25th of September².

Key points of analysis: It happens for the first time that special deputy Ombud for equality issues is appointed and it clearly shows that this part of the Ombud mandate (Equality Body) will be underlined. Both, new Ombud Dr Adam Bodnar and new deputy Ombud Dr Sylwia Spurek have a long record of engagement in the field of equality, equal treatment and non-discrimination.

¹ See the page "Our Ombud" - <http://naszrzecznik.pl> with the list of organization, program of the new Ombud and other relevant news (Last accessed 22/09/2015).

² There are currently 3 deputies: Stanisław Trociuk, deputy since 2002 and second new deputy Krzysztof Olkowicz.

It is also unprecedented that the Ombud has been chosen this way – as an unofficial civic candidate first, then as the official candidate.

Internet link source:

<https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/dr-adam-bodnar-rpo-vii-kadencji> Last accessed on 22.09.2015