

# #WOLNE #SĄDY

The **Free Courts Foundation** is a small, non-governmental and non-profit organization founded by a group of Polish lawyers. As professionals, realizing the significance of harmful changes introduced in the Polish legal system, leading to the politicization of the independent courts, we undertake various activities in the area of upholding the rule of law in Poland.

The Foundation's objective is to increase knowledge and strengthen the independence of courts and judges, as well as conducting activities in support of the rule of law, as well as the broadly-understood protection of human rights, civil liberties and counteracting discrimination.

The Foundation pursues its goals primarily through educational activities related to increasing knowledge in society about the key nature of the independence of judges for a law-abiding and democratic state, activities related to the promotion of a civic society, as well as supporting the development of non-governmental organizations and the idea of volunteering, activities promoting the protection of freedom and human rights especially related to promoting the freedom of speech, free exchange of thoughts and ideas, as well as equal treatment and prevention of discrimination on the grounds of identity, sexual orientation and gender, as well as information, journalism and publishing activities.

## #FreeCourts Foundation





**Sylwia  
Gregorczyk-Abram**

Attorney-at-law and social activist, works with NGOs on developing a civic society and protecting the rule of law and systemic changes in the justice system. Co-founder of the Justice Defence Committee (KOS) and Free Courts Civic Initiative that monitor and record political pressure on judges and lawyers, providing them with legal support.

She regularly participates in legislative processes in the Polish parliament as an expert in the parliamentary Constitutional Governance and Reform of the Justice System groups. She regularly takes part in European Commission meetings, where she presents a civic and expert view of the changes taking place in the Polish justice system. Co-organizer of many demonstrations and protests in defence of the rule of law and repressed judges since 2017.

Sylwia represents national and sexual minorities, refugees, victims of violence and police brutality before courts. She also represents Supreme Court judges before the EU Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights in key proceedings on the independence of courts and judges.

Originator and executor of the "Constitution Week" civic campaign, an educational project held regularly in schools throughout Poland, for raising Constitutional and human rights awareness among children. Responsible at Clifford Chance in Warsaw for the pro bono practice since 2006.



**Maria  
Ejchart-Dubois**

A lawyer, has been with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, the largest NGO in Poland, for over 20 years. She is a joint founder of the Free Courts Civic Initiative and the Justice Defence Committee (KOS), where she has been holding the role of coordinator and has been representing it since 2018. President of the Management Board of the Zbigniew Holda Association since 2015. She has been co-organizing dozens of demonstrations and protests in defence of the rule of law and repressed judges since 2017.

She is a member of the Ombudsman's Social Council and co-chairperson of the Committee of Experts of the National Torture Prevention Mechanism. She has been coordinating the Innocence Programme since 2003, which deals with miscarriages of justice and wrongly convicted people. She is the only Polish member of the European Innocence Network.

Maria regularly participates in legislative processes in the Polish Parliament as an expert, including in the work of the Constitutional Order and Justice Reform parliamentary groups and as an expert of the Sejm Justice Committee on the verification and evaluation of the activities of the Prison Service.

She has been working as a human rights trainer and expert in Poland and abroad for many years. She is an expert in proceedings before courts in Great Britain and Ireland on the observance of human rights and the possibility of providing appropriate medical care at Polish penitentiary units in extradition cases of Polish citizens. She is the author of numerous reports on the observance of human rights in Poland. She is a co-author of the academic monograph "Life imprisonment. The killer, his crime and his punishment."

## About the Free Courts Foundation

The core of the Free Courts Foundation is the four lawyers who founded this group, who are the originators and performers of all its activities. Since the very beginning of the rule of law crisis in Poland, we have been focusing on opposing the violation of the separation of powers, the rule of law and the constitutional order by the ruling majority.

We are constantly working towards ensuring that the courts are independent - preparing films, live broadcasts, infographics, and reports (more than 1000 published materials in 4 years), as well as organizing conferences, debates, protests, and demonstrations.

#FreeCourts co-founded the Justice Defence Committee (KOS) in 2018, the organization that represents and helps repressed judges of the ordinary courts, judges of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court, as well as prosecutors.

Members of the Free Courts Foundation prepare legal opinions and are experts in parliamentary working teams in Poland, e.g., on Constitutional Governance and the Rule of Law, as well as on the Reform of the Judiciary, as well as providing expert opinions to MEPs.

Attorneys from the Foundation appear in the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg in proceedings initiated by preliminary ruling requests regarding the independence of the judiciary, including with regard to the National Council of the Judiciary. For example, we represented Supreme Administrative Court judge in case C-585/18 - A.K. (Independence of the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court) which ended with a very important and ground-breaking ruling from 19 November 2019.



**Paulina  
Kieszkowska-Knapik**

Attorney-at-law. Specializes in pharmaceutical and medical law, advises companies and industry organizations on healthcare law, especially the Pharmaceutical Law, the Reimbursement Act and the Act on Medical Activity. She has been recommended for many years by Polish (Rzeczpospolita and Dziennik Gazeta Prawna) and international (Chambers Europe, Who's Who, PLC Which Lawyer) rankings as the best specialist in pharmaceutical law in Poland.

She is a co-founder of the Lege Pharmaciae Foundation, an NGO that analyses and publicly debates on legal regulations in the healthcare sector and prepares new regulations guaranteeing the efficient functioning of the healthcare system in Poland and giving patients equal access to healthcare services financed with public funds. Paulina works with the Civic Legislation Forum at the Stefan Batory Foundation on the introduction of European law-making standards in Poland. She advises patient organizations pro bono, including the Alivia Foundation, the Polish Patients Federation and the National Forum for Rare Diseases.

She is a member of the Dialogue Forum, co-initiator and organizer of the #SolidarityinTruth campaign, co-founder of the Free Courts initiative and member of the Zbigniew Hołda Association. She won the Woman of the Bar contest in 2017; she is the winner of the 2016 Lawyer of the Year award in the precedent-setting cases category of the Rzeczpospolita ranking, awarded to her for handling cases for patients pro bono in disputes with the Ministry of Health over the refusal to provide reimbursement.



**Michał  
Wawrykiewicz**

Attorney-at-law, a legal representative in cases of key importance to the rule of law in Poland, both before the Polish ordinary courts, administrative courts, Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court, as well as the Court of Justice of the EU and the European Court of Human Rights. He represents Polish judges who are known for their brave, unyielding stance in defending fundamental values, including Waldemar Żurek, Beata Morawiec, Paweł Juszczyzyn, Igor Tuleya and Małgorzata Gersdorf.

He is also an expert and consultant in legislative processes regarding the creation of statutory laws, e.g. for the Sejm's Bureau of Research or for the Marshal of the Polish Senate, as well as an expert in Sejm groups. He was an expert for the LIBE Committee in the European Parliament in the process of preparing a report on the state of the rule of law in Poland. He has taken part in public hearings at the European Parliament several times, taking the floor there as an expert. He was invited to the Dutch Parliament in 2020, where he was an expert witness at a public hearing on violations of the independence of the Polish judiciary. He frequently appears in the Polish and foreign media as a commentator, as well as in various expert bodies (social organizations, think tanks, debates and congresses) on matters of the rule of law.

Together with Attorney Sylwia Gregorczyk-Abram, he is currently handling Judge Waldemar Żurek's and Judge Paweł Juszczyzyn's cases before the CJEU. Together with Attorney Sylwia Gregorczyk-Abram and Maria Ejchart-Dubois, he is handling a case before the ECtHR filed by Judge Igor Tuleya in December 2020.

Our lawyers are involved in matters of major social importance regarding fundamental civil rights and freedoms. We were one of the organizers of protests against the so-called "Holocaust Law" under the common project of many NGOs called #SolidarityinTruth. We also successfully handled the famous case of the "LGBT-free zone" stickers published by "Gazeta Polska" before the court.

We represented Professor Małgorzata Gersdorf, former First President of the Supreme Court in the case against Stanisław Piotrowicz from the Law and Justice party (currently judge of the Constitutional Tribunal), who called judges "thieves", as well as Professor Wojciech Sadurski in a well-known case regarding freedom of speech, who was being sued by the Law and Justice party for calling them an organized criminal group. Professor Sadurski won the case.

The Foundation's founders also regularly present the position of the Polish legal community on the government's activities leading to the demise of the rule of law in Poland, in Brussels, in the EU institutions.

The Free Courts Initiative has been awarded The European Parliament's "European Citizen's Prize" in 2020 for exceptional achievements in giving concrete expression to the values enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.





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