

H.E. Mr. Donald Tusk
Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland
The Chancellery of the Prime Minister
00-583 Warszawa,
Al. Ujazdowskie 1/3
Poland

Brussels, 9 November 2012

Dear Prime Minister Tusk,

I am writing to you to express our concern about the statement made by your Minister of Treasury, Mr Mikołaj Budzanowski on 4th October to the Polish Press Agency and repeated later in an interview with the daily newspaper Rzeczpospolita on the 8th October. The Green10 brings together ten of the largest European environmental organisations and networks, with a membership of over 20 million people.

In reaction to the appeal made by a non-governmental organisation ClientEarth against the expansion by the Polish Energy Group (PGE) of a coal-fired power plant in Opole, Minister Budzanowski publicly challenged the activities of ClientEarth claiming that "[it] acts against the interest of the State (...)." The Minister also added that "This kind of organisation should accept that there are limits to its activities. In my opinion they have passed their limit. If I were ClientEarth (...) I would reconsider doing any further work against PGE."

These statements represent an unprecedented attack on a civil society organization from a high-level government representative.

By equating the interests of private companies with those of the Polish State, Minister Budzanowski's comments display a disturbing disrespect for the role of civil society in Poland.

The Constitution states that the Republic of Poland shall protect the right to create and operate citizens' movements, voluntary associations and foundations, and that public authorities shall support citizens' efforts in protecting and improving the quality of the environment. In addition, the Aarhus Convention, ratified by Poland, introduces the right of NGOs to challenge decisions affecting the environment before administrative bodies and courts.

We therefore believe that you as Prime Minister, as a regular defender of the principles and the importance of democracy, should also defend a transparent dialogue with representatives of non-governmental organizations. We urge you to respond publicly and unambiguously to the Minister's statement. A failure to respond on your part will be understood by those in civil society as a tacit agreement by you of the words of your minister.

Yours sincerely,



Genon K. Jensen,
Executive Director, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
On behalf of the Green 10 EU Directors

Green 10 EU Directors:

Angelo Caserta, Regional Director of the European Division – BirdLife International

Wendel Trio, Director – Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe

Anelia Stefanova, Director – CEE Bankwatch Network

Jeremy Wates, Secretary-General – European Environmental Bureau

Agnieszka Komoch, acting Director - Friends of the Earth Europe

Jorgo Riss, Director – Greenpeace European Unit

Genon K. Jensen, Executive Director – Health & Environment Alliance

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Jos Dings, Director – The European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E)

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