



28<sup>th</sup> August 2020

## **LGBT Ireland appeals to Irish Ministers and MEPs to condemn anti-LGBTI+ movement in Poland and support call to release Polish LGBTI+ activist Margot Szutowicz**

Over the past two years, LGBTI+ people in Poland have come under sustained and increasing attack by politicians, religious leaders and other public figures. This has come in the form of dangerous and false framing of LGBTI+ people as a threat to children and Christianity. This intentional framing has created an environment normalising anti-LGBTI+ sentiment, both amongst the public and in institutions, as evidenced by the anti-LGBTI+ resolutions, declarations and charters adopted by numerous local governments in Poland over the past year.

On Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020, Margot Szutowicz was arrested in connection with draping a rainbow flag over a public monument, for causing damage to a van carrying homophobic slurs and getting into a scuffle with the driver of the same van. Sources claim these vans have been driving around Polish cities since 2018, spreading hate-speech and misinformation about the LGBTI+ community. Margot has received a two-month pre-trial detention and was detained without access to a defence lawyer. Polish lawyers have noted that far more serious crimes receive lesser punishment.

The European Parliament LGBTI+ Intergroup, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Council of Europe SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Unit have all called for Szutowicz's immediate release and LGBT Ireland have requested Irish Ministers and our Members of European Parliament join in on this call and condemn the anti-LGBTI+ movement in Poland. Ireland and the EU must stand up against State sponsored homophobia to uphold the integrity of the EU principles of equality and non-discrimination so that no EU citizen is in danger of being humiliated, threatened, or incarcerated because of their LGBTI+ identity.

Ends.