

Geneva, August 4th, 2020

Soroptimist International of Europe, one of the largest professional women's organization expresses its concern with the intention of Polish government to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention.

Polish Minister of Justice stated that reforms introduced in the country in recent years provide sufficient protection for women. He argues that the convention violates the rights of parents and "contains elements of an ideological nature".

The Istanbul Convention is not ideological, nor political. It is all about eliminating violence against women. It is the first international treaty binding the signatory countries to implement effective measures to prevent violence against women, to prosecute and punish the perpetrators, and to build and provide support mechanisms for the victims. The Istanbul Convention has already improved women's lives across Europe, created an incentive to implement better policies, services and benefits, in Poland it initiated positive changes in legislation and created better services for victims, like 24hr phone helplines.

However, there remains several areas for improvement in Poland, – official 2019 police statistics quote about 90,000 victims of domestic violence, of which 65,000 were women.

As the President of Soroptimist International of Europe, the 33,000 member network of professional women, I believe this Convention avoids the severe regression of women's rights.

We, Soroptimists, strongly oppose the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, human rights violations of any kind should always be adamantly opposed and punished.
We stand up for Women!

Anna Wszelaczyńska



SIE President 2019 - 2021