



**Statement on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the General Confederation of Warsaw
January 27-28, 2023**

We recognize the General Confederation of Warsaw as a significant legal and political act guaranteeing freedom of religion in the Republic of Poland. While religiously motivated violence raged in Europe, Poland, not without difficulty, saw the foundations of freedom of religion and conscience being forged in order to prevent bloodshed and to strengthen the principles of social order. We perceive ourselves as heirs of the Confederation and its authors. We see its timeliness in terms of the guarantee of religious freedom, but are also aware of the need to develop its message. The guiding principle of the General Confederation of Warsaw in the domain of religious freedoms should inspire us today, when – in public life and in the media – we are witnessing ever more often hate speech and the lack of an adequate response from the competent authorities.

The importance of the Confederation should be perceived in a broad sense – not only in relation to various Christian denominations, but also to the followers of Judaism, Islam and other religions, as well as in relation to people of no religion – all those who adhere to a system of values based on the inalienable dignity of every human being. The idea that guided the creators of the Confederation can be found in the currently binding Constitution. Its preamble states that "all citizens of the Republic, both those who believe in God as the source of truth, justice, good and beauty, as well as those not sharing such faith but respecting those universal values as arising from other sources, [are] equal in rights and obligations towards the common good - Poland."

Guided by the spirit of the General Confederation of Warsaw, with our experience of over four centuries, including two world wars, we consider it imperative to guarantee the rights of all social groups – both majority and minority groups. Being different can under no circumstances be an excuse for persecution or discrimination. Respecting human and civil rights is a task not only for us as a society – it is also an obligation and is in the interest of the state as such, for it is the basis of social order and peace. Therefore, paying tribute to the authors of the General Confederation of Warsaw, we call on the institutions of the Polish state to be guided in their actions by the will to protect civil rights and freedoms, and thus act to strengthen the civil society.

Imam Rafał Berger, Common Council of Catholics and Muslims, Co-President from the Muslim side

Dr. Ewa Józwiak, Editor-in-chief, "Jednota" quarterly, Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland

Dr. Michał Klinger, Christian Orthodox theologian

Rabbi Małgorzata Kordowicz, Jewish Community of Warsaw

Prof. Stanisław Krajewski, Jewish Co-Chair of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews

Mufti Tomasz Miśkiewicz, Muslim Mufti in the Republic of Poland

Zbigniew Nosowski, Editor-in-chief, "Więź" quarterly; Christian Co-chair of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews

Dr. Sebastian Rejak, Director, American Jewish Committee Central Europe

Bp. Jerzy Samiec, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of the Republic of Poland

Prof. Agata Skowron-Nalborczyk, Common Council of Catholics and Muslims, Co-President from the Catholic side

Rev. Prof. Andrzej Szostek, President, the Catholic University of Lublin (1998-2004)