



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on August 20, 2021

## Polish Region Votes to Stay “LGBT-Free” Despite Risk of Losing EU Funds

A Polish regional assembly has decided to preserve itself as an “LGBT-free zone” in spite of receiving a warning from the European Commission and threats of having more than €2.5 billion (\$2.9 billion) cut from European Union funding.

On Thursday, the regional council in Poland’s Małopolska province, aka Lesser Poland, voted against an opposition motion to revoke a 2019 resolution that declared the predominantly Catholic area as being free from “LGBT ideology,” Polish media [reports](#). The measure banned the promotion of homosexuality and other deviated sexual identities in public spaces such as schools. The 2019 resolution [states](#):



The sejmik [parliament] of the Małopolskie Voivodeship expresses its strong opposition to the emerging public activities aimed at promoting the ideology of LGBT movements, the goals of which violate the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by acts of international law, undermine the values protected in the Polish Constitution, and interfere with the social order.

spooh/iStock/Getty Images Plus  
Krakow, capital city of Lesser Poland Voivodeship

The resolution also declared “support for the family based on traditional values and defense of the education system against LGBT propaganda that threatens the proper development of the young generation.”

On July 15, the European Commission demanded the authorities of Małopolska region to revise the resolution that presumably “violates fundamental rights of LGBTIQ people,” as it [launched](#) “infringement procedures” against [Hungary](#) and Poland.

If local governments do not repeal the measure “limiting” LGBT propaganda within two months, the European Commission threatened to suspend the payment of current funds as well as €2.5 billion from the 2021-2027 budget to the country. The liberal lawmakers at the region were troubled by the prospect of losing funds, and [tried](#) to persuade their conservative colleagues to repeal the 2019 resolution. “There is concrete information that says that the European Commission has plans to reach



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for a very dangerous tool which is blocking negotiations on the new EU budget, blocking the current budget, and blocking EU funds for promoting the region,” [complained](#) deputy speaker of the parliament Tomasz Urynowicz.

The ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party, however, declined the proposition. Jan Duda, chairman of the regional council, said the European Commission, which he referred to as “barbarians,” does not know Polish national conditions, and is unaware of the public opinion on the issue. “Some barbarians want to strip us of the funds that are crucial for our families to live well,” he [said](#) during parliamentary debates. “This is money that we deserve, it’s not some kind of charity.”

Duda added that “We have to remind the societies of Europe that we have a 600-year-old tradition of tolerance” that comes to the Polish people “with mother’s milk,” while the European tradition of “tolerance” is just 30 years old. “Perhaps EU politicians do not know what Christian values are,” Duda suggested. “We want to promote an attitude of responsibility, it does not mean fighting or persecuting someone who acts irresponsibly.” He went on to emphasize the resolution’s goal was to promote personal responsibility, not to discriminate against sexual minorities. He also stated that for some “do what you want” may sound like a “good rule,” but in fact it may be harmful, especially for young people. “You can take drugs and roll in the mud for two days. [But] as responsible people, we want to warn against adopting an ideology that promotes irresponsible behavior,” Duda concluded.

The resolution is also strongly supported by the Roman Catholic Church. “Freedom has its price. This price includes honor. Freedom can’t be bought with money,” Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski [said](#) during a Sunday sermon while warning of the “battle between the Virgin Mary and her followers against neo-Marxist LGBT ideology.” Jędraszewski stressed that it is God who rules history, not “money or bad ideologies, [to] which one succumbs due to fear or opportunism.”

Polish Member of the European Parliament and LGBT activist Robert Biedroń did not see the issue this way, as he unloaded on the local council for “throwing €2.5 billion down the drain.” “Once again, the hatred and anger of PiS turned out to be more important than the good of citizens, and they will suffer the most from this decision,” he said in a [tweet](#).

According to an “Atlas of Hate” [map](#) created by European LGBTQ activists, a third of local municipalities in Poland have adopted “pro-family” resolutions aimed “against LGBT propaganda.” Those areas are described by the LGBTQ advocates as “hostile spaces for anyone who is not heterosexual” or committed to the “natural family.” The European Parliament has [condemned the resolutions](#), saying they are discriminatory and undermine LGBT rights. [Reportedly](#), Poland’s Podkarpackie province lost €1.7 million in European Economic Area and Norway Grants funding last year after its regional assembly passed a resolution against “LGBT ideology.” Some other localities could not stand up to such pressure, however. The town of Kraśnik, in eastern Poland, [dropped](#) its “LGBT-free” status in April after being threatened with the loss of a lucrative EU grant.

Since July 2020, the European Union has denied funding from the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund to municipalities that have adopted “LGBT-free” resolutions, which are stated to violate the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Currently, Poland is the only EU member state to have an [opt-out](#) from the Charter of Fundamental Rights.



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