

## **The European allotment gardeners give support to their Polish colleagues**

On 6th October the letter below, has been sent to :

- 1) Mr Sz. P. Bronislaw Komorowski, President of the Polish Republic
- 2) the Prime Minister of the Polish Government
- 3) the Minister of Infrastructure
- 4) the Speaker of the Senate, (Higher House of Parliament)
- 5) the Speaker of the Sejm, (Lower House of Parliament)
- 6) Mr Sz. P. Stanislaw Dąbrowski, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
- 7) Mr Prof. dr hab. Andrzej Rzepliński, President of the Constitutional Court

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OPEN LETTER - Luxembourg, 6th October, 2011

The Office International du Coin de Terre et des Jardins Familiaux asbl (International Office of Allotment and Family Gardens) based in Luxembourg is an organization of 15 national allotment and leisure garden federations with more than 3.000.000 affiliated leisure gardeners from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, Sweden, The United Kingdom and Japan.

A delegation of our Organization and national federations from Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and the United Kingdom participated in the deliberations of the II Congress of the Polish Allotment Garden Federation, held on 22th September 2011 in Warsaw. We witnessed a huge dedication of four thousand representatives of family gardens coming from all over Poland. We also listened with interest to the views on allotment gardening presented by the representative of the Polish President, members of the Government, members of Parliament, senators, local politicians, as well as the political parties, trade unions and social organizations.

During the Congress the Polish gardeners spoke with a united voice in favour of the need for the existence and development of allotment gardens in Poland. They appraised the current law (legislation) on family allotment gardens as the best legal document in the 110 year history of the Polish allotment movement. The participants of the Congress positively assessed the activities of the Polish Allotment Garden Federation (PZD). During the Congress the participants referred with great respect, sympathy and recognition to the achievements of the Polish allotment gardeners, their gardens and organization. The allotment gardening system created in the law (legislation) on family allotment gardens was highly praised and the legal validity of this Act was confirmed. All the participants of the Congress declared their full support for the PZD and their willingness to defend the current law (legislation) and the rights of the Polish gardeners associated in the PZD.

The International Office of Allotment and Family Gardens highly values the Polish allotment garden movement. The Organisation of Polish allotment gardeners has been member of our International Office since 1927. During the last 21 years, after returning to join the International Office, the PZD has significantly contributed to the development of the allotment garden movement in Europe, sharing their traditions and experiences. The European appreciation of the Polish movement was demonstrated by the appointment of the PZD President as President of the International Office of Allotment and Family Gardens from 2005-2008.

Therefore, the International Office does not understand the present situation of such a renowned Polish allotment garden movement.

We cannot understand why the public authorities do not appreciate the Polish Allotment Garden Federation, which in the times of the Polish crisis from 1981-1989 built new gardens on a surface area of 14 thousand hectares, which allowed to allocate allotments to 360 thousand families.

We are not able to understand why the law (legislation) on family allotment gardens, which is esteemed by the European movement, as well as welcomed by the gardeners and implemented in the gardens, is subjected to control by the Constitutional Tribunal and recognized by Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in its entirety as an unconstitutional act.

We cannot understand how such a legislation can be rejected, considering that during the II Congress this law was met with a full support and acceptance by allotment gardeners, parliamentarians and local officials.

The International Office followed the preparation for the enactment of the law on family allotment gardens, was satisfied with its acceptance in the Parliament and also tracked the implementation of its provisions. In Europe this act is widely considered to be one of the best laws governing the functioning of national allotment gardening. We are aware that the act takes into account all the experiences and traditions of the 110 year history of the Polish Allotment Garden movement. It sanctions the gardeners' rights which have been established throughout the decades. The solutions of this legislation, after the difficult years of 1949-1981, have secured self-government for the Polish gardeners, autonomy and democracy and their very own organization – the Polish Allotment Garden Federation.

The PZD as a massive social organization is - alongside the German Federation - the largest national allotment organization in Europe. The PZD is seen as an efficient organization, serving the Polish gardeners, as well as the European movement.

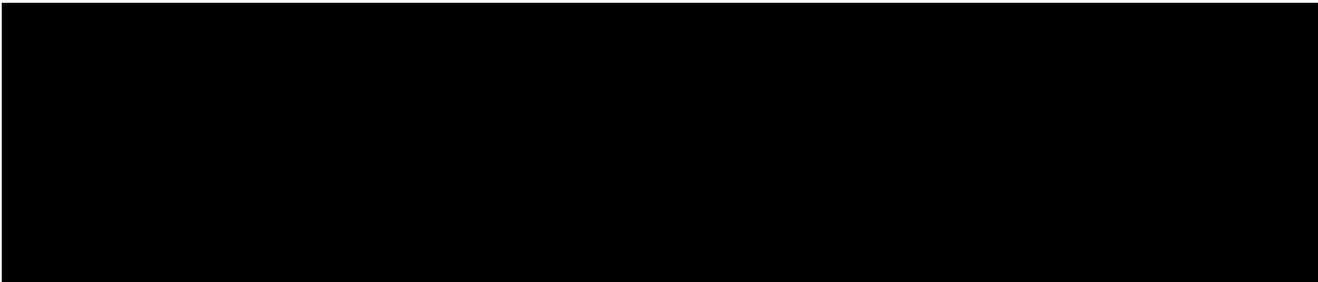
Therefore, the International Office appeals to the President of Poland, the Prime Minister of the Polish Government, the Speaker of Sejm and Senate, the Minister of Infrastructure and also the Chief Justice of the Supreme

Court and the Constitutional Tribunal to take a stance, which will preserve the rights of Polish gardeners, their family gardens and the PZD that are codified in the law on family allotment gardens. We also appeal to recognize the positive meaning of this Act and the PZD, that should be credited that in Poland there are nearly 5,000 efficiently managed allotment gardens, serving almost one million families, which makes the Polish Allotment Garden movement generally prominent in Europe.

The International Office profoundly hopes that the voice of the European allotment gardeners will be positively taken into consideration and the initiative of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall be withdrawn. This will allow for the further development of the Polish Allotment Garden movement which will be in the best interest for one million families benefiting from family gardens, for all Polish families in need of an allotment, as well as for local communities, cities and the Polish State.

The International Office, on behalf of the entire European allotment garden movement, grants the Polish Allotment Federation its full support in the struggle to preserve the law on family allotment gardens, which guarantees the rights of Polish gardeners, the existence of allotment gardens in Poland and the essential right to possess a strong national, self-governing and independent organization.

With kindest regards,



Chris ZIJDEVELD  
President

Wilhelm WOHATSCHEK  
Chairman

Malou WEIRICH  
Secretary General