

## **The Polish Government's response to the concerns expressed in relation to the proposal of changes to the rules governing journalists' work in the Sejm and Senat.**

„In response to the media alert on the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists entitled: „Poland – Journalists' access to Parliament restricted”, the Government of the Republic of Poland would like to provide the clarifications to concerns expressed in the alert which are unfounded as the proposed changes to the rules governing journalists' access to the parliamentary estate have not been introduced.

In December 2016 the Chancellery of the Sejm presented a proposal of changes to the rules governing journalists' work in the Sejm and Senat. The purpose of these amendments was to bring the principles regarding media access to the Polish Parliament in line with the standards of a number of European countries. The changes included inter alia introducing new types of accreditation for parliamentary correspondents, establishing a television studio in the Sejm building and a Media Centre located in the vicinity of the Sejm main building, as well as minor restrictions to the recording of interviews in the Sejm corridors. The proposal was then presented to the media representatives during their meeting with the Sejm and Senat Deputy Speakers on 14th December.

As the press community voiced their concerns towards the changes, on 17th and 19th December 2016 Stanisław Karczewski, the Senate Speaker, invited parliamentary journalists to a meeting on the amended rules of media access to the Parliament. Speaker Stanisław Karczewski obliged himself to put forward a compromise solution, acceptable to members of the journalist community, until 6th January. On 9th January Speaker Karczewski announced withdrawal of all proposed changes and return to the rules that were in force prior to 14th December. Thus, the Chancellery of the Sejm and the Chancellery of the Senat have decided to uphold the long-running regulations regarding media presence and coverage of parliamentary proceedings. At the same time, the new Media Centre has been inaugurated on the parliamentary estate.”