

## Press Release

26 September 2023

### **European Alliance of Academies expresses its solidarity with those engaged in arts and culture in Poland**

**Findings from talks held at Villa Decius, Krakow, 21-22 September 2023**

In the run-up to the elections in Poland, Villa Decius – the Alliance’s partner in Poland – invited the European Alliance of Academies for a study trip to Krakow, which took place from 21-22 September ([cf. press release of 18 Sep](#)). Talks with prominent representatives of independent museums, theatres and cultural institutions highlighted how the Polish government is advancing its agenda of re-nationalising art and culture, and in the process exerting increasing influence on artistic decision-making.

Participants from the world of arts and culture in Poland portrayed a situation characterised by political and financial pressure. Those who work in the cultural sector are forced to deal with such obstacles as the deliberate spreading of disinformation about artworks, personal animosity and allegations, even physical attacks.

In her keynote speech at the public roundtable “Rights and Freedom of Culture in Times of Political Change”, Alexandra Xanthaki, UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, pointed out how these methods can lead to artistic self-censorship, and explained that the right to artistic freedom is a government obligation, which must also be asserted through law if necessary.

The most recent example can be seen in the personal attacks levelled by the Polish Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro against Polish filmmaker Agnieszka Holland and her film *Zielona Granica* (*The Green Border*), which was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival.

Jeanine Meerapfel, President of the Akademie der Künste and initiator of the European Alliance of Academies, stated the following: “Comparing Agnieszka Holland to the propagandists of the Third Reich represents an attack on the dignity of a highly acclaimed filmmaker and colleague, and a violation of the right to artistic freedom.” In an official statement ([cf. press release of 21 Sep](#)), the members of the European Alliance of Academies expressed their solidarity with Agnieszka Holland.

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