On Saturday 17 December 2016, the Speaker of the lower chamber of the Polish parliament issued an order banning all journalists from entering the parliamentary estate, following large demonstrations in Warsaw and other cities in Poland, in protest at proposed changes to rules governing journalists' access to the Polish parliament. The order remains in force, and no journalists have been able to access the parliamentary estate since Saturday morning.

Last week, Marek Kuchciński, the Speaker of the Polish parliament (a member of the ruling Law and Justice Party) published changes to the rules governing journalists’ access to the Polish parliament. The stated goal of the changes is to bring order to the building and lessen interference in MPs work. NGOs have expressed concern that the new regulations would disproportionately restrict the ability of journalists to cover the work of elected representatives, by reducing the number of accredited journalists, significantly limiting where recording can take place and confining most journalists to an official media centre away from the main parliament building.

Following the start of demonstrations, Speaker of the Senate Stanislaw Karczewski has now held consultations with editors of the main media outlets (on 17 and 19 December 2016) and stated that he intends to share new proposals on 6 January 2017.

RESOLVED

On 9 January 2017, Speaker of the Senate Stanislaw Karczewski announced the withdrawal of proposed changes and return to the rules that were in force prior to 14 December 2016 regarding media presence and coverage of parliamentary proceedings and upon the resumption of the work of the Parliament, there were no noted restrictions for the work of journalists when covering parliamentary proceedings.
25 January 2017, the partner organisations of the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- AEJ report concerning journalists' access to the Polish parliament
- News on the Mapping Media Freedom website: "Poland: Ruling party proposes law to restrict media coverage in Parliament"
- EFJ Statement "Polish government to restrict journalists’ access to parliament"

STATE REPLIES

- 13 Jan 2017 | Reply from the Government of Poland
  - Letter from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the Council of Europe