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## **Report from the WOMEN'S STRIKE in Poland Krakow, October - November 2020**

102 years ago, just on November 28<sup>th</sup> 1918 Polish women received the voting rights.

Today, on this very special anniversary, on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Polish women are again at streets of all big cities and towns in Poland, fighting for their freedom of choice. Striking women express they have enough of disrespect, contempt, and violence against women. Women rights are human rights. Poland's governing PiS party's support of the barbaric amendment to the existing abortion bill has offended and outraged all, women and men alike, as citizens of a democratic state. Since October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020 women and men in almost 200 towns and cities in Poland and abroad are taking to the streets in protest against the proposed barbaric anti-abortion bill, which PiS party had recently advanced to parliamentary debate.



The largest national demonstrations are in Warszawa, the capital of Poland, but they are also running in most of towns, especially where there are large academic centers. Majority of students and academic community protest also against the proposed drastic changes to the Polish education system, which will affect schools, universities, and vocational training (including e.g. the police force and other public services). The picture above shows the protest at the Main Market Square of my city Krakow.

A vast majority of the protesters are not members of any organized groups and prior to the **#womensstrike** have never been publicly involved in social and political affairs. Although three days after the **#womensstrike**, the PIS party backtracked on the antiwomen and anti-abortion bill, the parliamentary majority has clearly not grasped the significance of the Women's Strike.



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Protesting women in Poland know that a civil rights movement was born on the rainy day in October, so we also here celebrate the 41st anniversary of the Icelandic national women's strike on October 24th, when Irish women decided to strike saying: it's time for us to stand up and be counted!



At Krakow Market Square, women's strike gathered a large group local community, especially young people with hand-made banners, who are fighting for their equality and human rights

We, women from Polish academia, are pleased for the support from European academic community received from many organizations and research groups engaged in international projects supporting gender equality in research organisations and higher education institutions, who recognize gender equality and freedom of expression as preconditions for both democratic society and modern academia (including academic management, experts, researchers, teachers and students in countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, Serbia, Slovakia, also from the H2020 GEECCO project team).

Report by Lidia Żakowska, PK, Poland on 28<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

More information at websites:

1. Women's Strike FB page (summary of key info): <https://web.facebook.com/ogolnopolskistrajkkobiet/?fref=ts>
2. Nationwide strike events: <https://web.facebook.com/events/183872815352754/>
3. National discussion group: <https://web.facebook.com/groups/1600548686912853/?fref=ts>
4. Herstory blog: [jestesmystrajkiemkobiet.blogspot.com](http://jestesmystrajkiemkobiet.blogspot.com) – stories from women explaining their reasons for supporting the protest.