

Michał Kałka
Councillor of the Municipality of Poczesna
Authorized representative of the referendum initiators

Poczesna.02.04.2026

Members of the European Parliament
European Parliament
Brussels / Strasbourg

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to draw your attention to a matter of significant concern regarding the municipality of Poczesna (Poland), in connection with the planned modification of administrative boundaries in favour of the city of Częstochowa. The proposed measures raise serious concerns of both a social and environmental nature.

This matter has already been the subject of prior correspondence, in particular in relation to the planned expansion of a waste management installation in Sobuczyna. Furthermore, a petition concerning the necessity of conducting an independent environmental audit of this facility is currently under consideration by the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament.

On 29 March 2026, residents of the Poczesna municipality participated in a local referendum concerning the proposed administrative changes. Voter turnout exceeded 51%, with 99.9% of participants opposing the incorporation of parts of the municipality into the city of Częstochowa.

This result represents a clear and overwhelming democratic mandate expressed by the local community.

By contrast, in the city of Częstochowa—home to approximately 180,000 residents—public consultations attracted participation from less than 1.5% of eligible citizens. Such a level of engagement raises serious concerns regarding the democratic legitimacy of the proposed measures.

In this context, it is pertinent to recall the example of the referendum held in Hamburg (Germany) on 12 October 2025. With participation reaching 43.7% of eligible voters, and

53.2% supporting the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2040, the outcome was recognised as binding and resulted in concrete legislative action at the local level.

This example demonstrates that, across Member States of the European Union, the will of citizens expressed through referenda constitutes a fundamental element of democratic governance, including in matters relating to environmental protection and local development.

Against this background, the case of Poczesna—characterised by high turnout and an almost unanimous result—clearly establishes a strong democratic mandate which must be duly taken into account in any legitimate decision-making process.

Of particular concern is the fact that, on 30 March 2026, the City Council of Częstochowa adopted a resolution in this matter by a narrow majority (14 votes in favour, 10 against). This decision was taken despite the clearly expressed will of the residents of Poczesna, thereby raising questions as to the respect for democratic standards and the principle of representative accountability.

During the council session, residents and representatives of the Poczesna municipality presented substantive arguments and concerns. However, councillors supporting the resolution did not engage in meaningful deliberation nor address the issues raised.

Consequently, the decision appears to have been taken without genuine public dialogue and without prior completion of an independent environmental audit.

Furthermore, I would like to underline that individuals engaging in public debate on the environmental and health impacts of the installation have been subject to formal legal actions. Such measures may create a chilling effect on public participation in environmental matters.

In this context, particular importance should be attached to the provisions of European Union law guaranteeing public participation in environmental decision-making and access to information, notably:

- Directive 2011/92/EU on environmental impact assessment (EIA),
- Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (IED),
- Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (Waste Framework Directive),
- as well as the principles stemming from the Aarhus Convention.

These legal frameworks impose clear obligations to ensure transparency, access to information, and effective public participation in environmental governance.

The situation described above raises a fundamental question as to whether a case in which the clear outcome of a local referendum has no tangible impact on decision-making should not warrant closer attention from European institutions.

Failure to address such cases risks establishing double standards in the assessment of democratic governance within the European Union.

I would kindly request that this position be shared with other Members and political groups of the European Parliament. In particular, I appeal to Members representing the Civic Coalition and the Left to give due consideration to this matter, both in terms of environmental protection and adherence to democratic standards.

For the residents of the Poczesna municipality, this issue directly concerns their quality of life, environmental safety, and the future of their local community. It also carries potential implications for the functioning of local governance standards across the European Union.

Publicly available statements by entities managing the installation in Sobuczyna suggest that the planned administrative changes are directly linked to the continued operation and potential expansion of this facility. Additional communications point to planning constraints on the side of the Poczesna municipality and the need to secure conditions for ongoing waste processing.

These circumstances reinforce the perception among residents that the proposed administrative changes may be instrumental in nature and closely connected to the planned expansion of the installation.

In light of the above, I respectfully request:

- that this matter be placed under scrutiny at the level of European Union institutions;
- support for the prompt initiation of an independent environmental audit;
- consideration of appropriate measures or intervention at the national level.

Yours faithfully,

Michał Kałka

Councillor of the Municipality of Poczesna

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