



CANADIAN POLISH CONGRESS
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November 20, 2017

Hubert Lacroix
President/CEO
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)
P.O. Box 3220, Station C
Ottawa, ON K1Y 1E4

Esther Enkin
Ombudsman
CBC
P.O. Box 500 Station A
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1E6

Dear Mr. Lacroix and Ms. Enkin:

We are writing to raise our strong objections to the airing of episode six, season three of the CBC program Interrupt this Program, titled Warsaw: Art Fighting Ultrnationalism. Specifically, we believe the episode violated the Journalistic Standards and Practices set out by the CBC in its program policies (<http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/reporting-to-canadians/acts-and-policies/programming/journalism/>).

In particular, this episode fails to abide by the general standards of serving the public interest and acting responsibly and being accountable. It also breaches the core CBC values of accuracy, fairness, balance, and impartiality. We would draw your attention in particular to the policy's statement on balance, which says: "on issues of controversy, we ensure that divergent views are reflected respectfully, taking into account their relevance to the debate and how widely held these views are. We also ensure that they are represented over a reasonable period of time."

We object to the profoundly unfair and one-sided portrayal of the Republic of Poland and its people presented in this program. Poland is a free and democratic country in which rights to freedom of speech are protected by law. Regrettably, this program overtly attempts to equate Poland with genuinely totalitarian states such as North Korea or Iran, which is beyond the pale and does not represent “professional judgment based on facts and expertise”.

This program legitimizes views that suggest that “Poland is becoming fascist” or that the situation “is worse than it was under Communism,” which are fringe, extremist views that do not reflect reality.

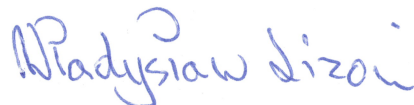
The ominous music, cinematography, cherry-picking of interviewees, and biased editing of the piece appears to have been designed to portray Poland – a NATO ally and member of the European Union – in the worst possible light. It is deeply offensive to Canada’s one-million strong Polish community, which is a significant contributor of the tax dollars that fund the CBC’s programming. At the very least, we expect our national broadcaster not to flippantly and irresponsibly endorse so-called ‘edgy’ programming that is frankly defamatory, rather than journalistic in nature.

The subjects of the interviews are entitled to their opinions and were depicted as expressing them freely – including when they were approached by an individual seeking to politely express his own disapproval of their methods. However, the failure of the producer to offer any mainstream opinion as part of the feature suggests that the producer had an implicit bias and intended to mislead the audience with the express purpose of harming Canadians’ perception of Poland.

To be clear, our concerns are not that this program was critical of Poland, but rather that it was so devoid of facts that it bordered on propaganda, which is not worthy of a public broadcaster.

We therefore ask that you formally investigate this matter and offer an apology for allowing this inappropriate programming to air.

Sincerely,



Wladyslaw Lizon
National President
Canadian Polish Congress

cc: Hon. Melanie Joly, PC, MP, Minister of Canadian Heritage