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Brussels, 6 October 2017

**RE: Joint submission by Kazimierz Ujazdowski, Member of the European Parliament and 88 other Lawyers, Practitioners and Academics regarding General Comment 36 of the Human Rights Committee on Article 6 ICCPR**

The human right to life from the moment of conception until natural death provides the foundation of all other human rights and should not be subject to restrictions that would destroy any meaningful legal protection. The protection of the right to life of vulnerable individuals – especially unborn children and older persons – is of particular importance to the very existence and future of our civilization. We therefore have serious concerns about the positions put forward by the United Nations Human Rights Committee on the interpretation of the right to life, hereunto emphatically affirmed in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This novel interpretation proposed by the Committee logically leads to a dramatic broadening of the legal underpinnings of abortion. We would like to emphasize that no provision of any consensus-based and legally binding human rights covenant or convention provides any foundation for such an interpretation. It is true that national legislation may justifiably permit the application of lifesaving treatment to a pregnant woman even where this will have the necessary and tragic effect of causing the death of her unborn child. This cannot be taken, however, as a reason to promote abortion and the artificial creation of a new established so-called “right.” If the Committee’s recommendations were to be adopted, such strong legal favour toward abortion would mean that the right to life would be so severely diluted that its very meaning would be fundamentally undermined. We hope that the final version of the General Comment will return to its roots which underpinned the Covenant at its signing in 1966, at which the right to life was properly and fully affirmed.

For these reasons, we wish to see a revised drafting of paragraphs 9 and 10 of the General Comment that is fully in accordance with the human right to life. Moreover, paragraph 52 should, in our view, be restored to its previous form, in which the right to life of the unborn child was acknowledged as having been implied under Article 6(5). This acknowledgement was wrongly removed by the Committee from the previous draft as it conflicted with their false assertion that the Covenant establishes a right to abortion under any of its articles.

Undersigned on 6/10/2017

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