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Palikot wants cross out of parliament

By Veronika Joy

Warsaw Business Journal, (14.10.2011) / HRWF (17.10.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> The newly elected leader of the liberal Palikot's Movement (RP), Janusz Palikot, has demanded that a wooden cross hanging in Poland's lower house of Parliament, the Sejm, be removed.

According to Mr Palikot, "the cross is not a national symbol. The state symbol is an eagle with a crown." He added that religious symbols should not be found in public institutions.

"We respect the religious character of the cross. That is why it should not be pulled into political disputes and should not hang in the parliament," Mr Palikot said at a news conference.

Mr Palikot said he would submit his request to the speaker of the Sejm and, if that fails, turn to Poland's Constitutional Tribunal, and even the European Court of Human Rights.

All other parties elected to the parliament are against Mr Palikot's provocative move, reported *Rzeczpospolita*.

A Civic Platform spokesperson said that although the cross is a religious symbol, it is also a "national symbol" in Poland.

Jarosław Kaczyński, conservative leader of the main opposition party, Law and Justice (PiS), has voiced vehement opposition. "There is no reason for the cross to be removed, just because a group of people with crazy beliefs wish for it to be so," the Polish Press Agency reported Mr Kaczyński as saying.
