



POLAND | Tory allies support shooting at rescue boats

FROM RAFAL PANKOWSKI FOR NEVER AGAIN IN WARSAW

RYSZARD CZARNECKI, a deputy president of the European Parliament from the Tory-led European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group has endorsed shooting at NGO refugee boats in the Mediterranean.

On 18 August, Czarnecki expressed his enthusiasm by exclaiming “At long last!” on social media, retweeting news of a Libyan border guard crew firing shots at a Spanish NGO rescue boat. Czarnecki’s support for shooting at the boats came hours after the terrorist attack in Barcelona that left more than a dozen people dead. The attack resulted in a new wave of Islamophobic and anti-refugee statements made by numerous Polish politicians and state-owned media outlets.

Czarnecki is no stranger to anti-migrant and anti-Muslim outbursts. In 2011, he wrote an article “Immigration

is threatening us” in which he stated: “I am afraid of Muslims” and expressed satisfaction that there are so few in Poland. The Muslim community in Poland amounts to less than 0.1% of the population. Born in London in 1963, he is a member of the ruling right-wing party, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc, PiS). He was previously an MEP for the nationalist and populist Self-Defence (Samoobrona) party. The British Conservatives and the PiS have been officially allied since the ECR’s creation in 2009.

Another high-profile MEP from the ECR, former speaker of the Polish Parliament, Marek Jurek, linked the presence of Muslims in European countries to terrorism in an interview on 9 June by making a chilling reference to Enoch Powell’s infamous racist 1968 “Rivers of Blood” speech.