

President

Mr Andrzej DUDA
President of the Republic of Poland

Copy to Your Excellency Mr Jerzy BAURSKI, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Representative of Poland to the Council of Europe

Strasbourg, 1 March 2022

Dear President,

The whole world follows, applauds and expresses its gratitude for the solidarity of the Republic of Poland in the crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Thank you for this. This is our war against the extension of President Putin's dictatorship in Europe.

In this context, we write to you and urge you not to sign the "Law amending the Act – Law on School Education and certain other acts" adopted by Sejm on January 13, 2022.

Poland has received many Ukrainian families who in 2014 fled the accession of Crimea by the Russian Federation. With the current wave of immigration, Poland will welcome even more Ukrainian children in schools throughout its territory.

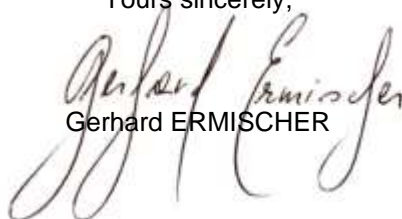
In order to meet the needs of these Ukrainian children, traumatised by the war, from the very beginning of their arrival, the schools need to be supported by non-governmental organisations to support teachers and parents in daily education, focusing on intercultural and interreligious dialogue, teaching Polish language and culture, teaching human rights and social justice.

As we stated in our open letter referring at that time to the draft law (please see attached), the centralisation of decisional power proposed in the law undermined democratisation and inclusive school governance.

Through the actions of our INGO members, we also seek to develop pupils' critical thinking skills to deal with disinformation and to build democratic societies. We know, especially in current times, how important democracy is, how important it is to cherish it.

Mr President, at this stage you are the only one Institution to stop this law and its negative impact on education in Poland. Your disagreement will open new opportunities to prepare a better draft, with all the concerned actors and above all with the teachers, the parents, the local governments. Participative democracy would be able to be implemented (for example through the citizens' assemblies) to build a better legal framework at the height of the aspirations and of the challenges related to peace and democracy of today and of tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,


Gerhard ERMISCHER