



17 May 2024

Open Letter

Open letter of the Ambassadors of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the Representative of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, the General Representative of the Government of Flanders, the Secretary General of the Community of Democracies, the Regional Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Head of Central Europe and the Baltic States, the Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in Poland, the Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Poland, the Country Manager of the International Finance Corporation for Central and Southern Europe, the Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration, the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Resident Representative of the World Bank for Poland and the Baltic states.

This letter has been coordinated by the Australian Embassy in Poland.

We express our support for the efforts to raise public awareness of issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) persons and communities, as well as other communities within Poland facing similar challenges. Awareness is the first step to understand and promote a positive change.

To this end, we acknowledge the efforts of the organisers of the equality parade and marches in Białystok, Bielsko-Biała, Częstochowa, Gdańsk, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Gryfino, Jelenia Góra, Kalisz, Katowice, Kielce, Kołobrzeg, Koszalin, Kraków, Legnica, Lublin, Łódź, Milicz, Olsztyn, Opole, Piła, Poznań, Rzeszów, Sanok, Słupsk, Strzelce Krajeńskie, Szczecin, Sztum, Toruń, Warszawa, Wrocław and Zielona Góra. We also acknowledge the LGBTQIA+ community's continued contributions, as an integral part of Polish society, to supporting those fleeing Russian aggression against Ukraine, and to persons affected by other conflicts and persecution.

We affirm the inherent dignity of each individual as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Respect for these fundamental rights, which are also enshrined in OSCE commitments and the obligations and standards of the Council of Europe and the European Union as communities of rights and values, obliges governments to protect all citizens from violence and discrimination and to ensure they enjoy equal opportunities.

To this end, and in particular to shield individuals and communities in need of protection from verbal and physical abuse and hate speech, we need to collectively foster an environment of

non-discrimination, tolerance, and mutual acceptance across society, and in particular sectors such as education, health, social affairs, citizenship, public service, and in public documents.

We welcome public commitments by the Polish Government to address these issues, including through the introduction of further legal protections for LGBTQIA+ persons and the provision of a legal framework to recognise same-sex civil partnerships. We also welcome the appointment of new Ministers for Equality and Civil Society as a clear and positive sign of goodwill in this endeavor. We look forward to strengthening our collective cooperation.

We pay tribute to the hard work of LGBTQIA+ and other communities in Poland and around the world, as well as the work of all those who seek to ensure the human rights of LGBTQIA+ and other persons belonging to communities facing similar challenges, and to end discrimination in particular on the basis of sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity and sex characteristics. Facilitating the gender recognition process is a critical step to ensuring everyone is treated with dignity.

Human rights are universal and inherent. Everyone, including LGBTQIA+ persons, is entitled to their full enjoyment.

This is something that everyone should support.

Signed,

H.E. Benjamin Hayes, Ambassador of Australia

H.E. Andreas Stadler, Ambassador of Austria

H.E. Rik Van Droogenbroeck, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium,

H.E. Catherine Godin, Ambassador of Canada

H.E. Aylin Estrella Joo Liem, Ambassador of Chile

H.E. Petros T. Nacouzis, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus

H.E. Ole Toft, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark,

H.E. Miko Haljas, Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia

H.E. Päivi Maarit Laine, Ambassador of Finland

H.E. Étienne de Montaigne de Poncins, Ambassador of France

H.E. Viktor Elbling, Ambassador of Germany

H.E. Niki Kamba, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic

H.E. Hannes Heimisson, Ambassador of Iceland

H.E. Patrick Gerard Haughey, Ambassador of Ireland

H.E. Yacov Livne, Ambassador of the State of Israel

H.E. Luca Franchetti Pardo, Ambassador of the Italian Republic

Mr. Drilon S. Gashi, Chief of Mission, Consulate General of the Republic of Kosova

H.E. Pascal Schafhauser, Ambassador of Liechtenstein

Ms. Audronė Markevičienė, Chargé d'Affaires of the Republic of Lithuania

H.E. Paul Schmit, Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

H.E. Maria Assunta Farrugia, Ambassador of the Republic of Malta

H.E. Juan Sandoval Mendiola, Ambassador of the United Mexican States

Ms. Milena Mumin, Chargé d'Affaires of Montenegro

H.E. Daphne Bergsma, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

H.E. Alana Hudson, Ambassador of New Zealand

H.E. Øystein Bø, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway

H.E. Luís Cabaço, Ambassador of Portugal

Mr. Matteo Mazza, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of San Marino

H.E. Bojan Pograjc, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia

H.E. Ramiro Fernández Bachiller, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain

H.E. Andreas von Beckerath, Ambassador of Sweden

H.E. Fabrice Maurice Ernest Filliez, Ambassador of Switzerland

H.E. Vasyl Zvarych, Ambassador of Ukraine

H.E. Anna Clunes, Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

H.E. Mark Brzezinski, Ambassador of the United States of America

Mr. Nicolas Neve, Representative of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region

Mr. Thomas E. Garrett, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

Ms. Elisabetta Falcetti, Regional Director, Head of Central Europe and the Baltic States, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Mr. Bartłomiej Balcerzyk, Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in Poland

Mr. Witold Naturski, Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Poland

Mr. Thomas Castrel, General Representative of the Government of Flanders

Mr. Ary Naïm, Country Manager of the International Finance Corporation for Central and Southern Europe

Ms. Livia Styp-Rekowska, Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration

Mr. Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Mr. Kevin J. Allen, Representative of UNHCR Representation in Poland

Mr. Marcus Heinz, Resident Representative of the World Bank for Poland and the Baltic states