

## 50 Ambassadors sign letter supporting LGBT rights in Poland

50 Ambassadors of countries from all corners of the world and representatives of international organisations have expressed their support for 'efforts to raise public awareness of the issues affecting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and other communities in Poland facing similar challenges.'

In an open letter, usually published annually on the occasion of Poland's Equality Parade, signatories recognise 'the need to jointly work on an environment of non-discrimination, tolerance and mutual acceptance'. They pay tribute to the hard work of LGBTI and other communities, in Poland and around the world, seeking to end discrimination 'in particular on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.'

As this year's Equality Parade was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic the letter was released publically on 27 September and will be presented to the organisers of the Equality Parade and a representative of the Polish government on 9 October by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Poland Luc Jacobs, together with Anna Clunes from the British Embassy (as the coordinator of last year's letter) and the Ambassador of Denmark, Ole Toft (as next year's coordinator).

The full text of the letter is as follows:

Open letter of the Ambassadors of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela, as well as the General Representative of the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region, the General Delegate of the French Community and the Walloon Region, the Representatives in Poland of the European Commission and of the UNHCR, the First Deputy Director/Director's alternate of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Head of Office of the International Organization for Migration and the Secretary General of the Community of Democracies.

This letter has been coordinated by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in Poland.

Although due to epidemiological circumstances the 2020 Warsaw Equality Parade could not take place at the foreseen date we express our support for the efforts to raise public awareness of issues affecting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and other communities in Poland facing similar challenges.

We also acknowledge similar efforts in Białystok, Bielsko–Biała, Częstochowa, Gniezno, Kalisz, Katowice, Kielce, Koszalin, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Nowy Sącz, Olsztyn, Opole, Płock, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Tarnów, Toruń, Trójmiasto, Włocławek, Wrocław and Zielona Góra.

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 communities in need of protection from verbal and physical abuse and hate speech, we need to jointly work on an environment of non-discrimination, tolerance and mutual acceptance. This includes in particular sectors such as education, health, social affairs, citizenship, public service and public documents.

We pay tribute to the hard work of LGBTI and other communities in Poland and around the world, as well as the work of all those who seek to ensure human rights for LGBTI and other persons belonging to communities facing similar challenges, and to end discrimination in particular on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Human rights are universal and everyone, including LGBTI persons, are entitled to their full enjoyment. This is something that everyone should support.

Signed,

H.E. Shpresa Kureta, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania

H.E. Ana María Ramírez, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic

H.E. Lloyd David Hargreave Brodrick, Ambassador of Australia

H.E. Werner Almhofer, Ambassador of Austria

H.E. Luc Jacobs, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium

H.E. Leslie Scanlon, Ambassador of Canada

H.E. Tomislav Vidošević, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia

H.E. Petros Kestoras, Ambassador of Republic of Cyprus

H.E. Ivan Jestřáb, Ambassador of the Czech Republic

H.E. Ole Toft, Royal Ambassador of Denmark

H.E. Aníbal de Castro, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic

H.E. Juha Ottman, Ambassador of Finland

H.E. Frédéric Billet, Ambassador of France

H.E. Arndt Freytag von Loringhoven, Ambassador of Germany

H.E. Michael-Efstratios C. Daratzikis, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic

H.E. María Erla Marelsdóttir, Ambassador of Iceland

H.E. Tsewang Namgyal, Ambassador of India

H.E. Emer O'Connell, Ambassador of Ireland

H.E. Alexander Ben-Zvi, Ambassador of Israel

H.E. Aldo Amati, Ambassador of Italy

H.E. Tsukasa Kawada, Ambassador of Japan

H.E. Edgars Bondars, Ambassador of Latvia

H.E. Eduardas Borisovas, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania

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

H.E. John Paul Grech, Ambassador of Malta

H.E. Alejandro Negrín, Ambassador of Mexico

H.E. Budimir Šegrt, Ambassador of Montenegro

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

H.E. Mary Thurston, Ambassador of New Zealand

H.E. Vasil Panovski, Ambassador of the Republic of North Macedonia

H.E. Anders Eide, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway

H.E. Luís Manuel Ribeiro Cabaço, Ambassador of Portugal

H.E. Dario Galassi, Ambassador of San Marino

H.E. Nikola Zurovac, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia

H.E. Božena Forštnarič Boroje, Ambassador of Slovenia

Daniel StemmerChargé D' Affaires a.i., Embassy of South Africa

H.E. Francisco Javier Sanabria Valderrama, Ambassador of Spain

H.E. Stefan Gullgren, Ambassador of Sweden

H.E. Jürg Burri, Ambassador of Switzerland

H.E. Andrii Deshchytsia, Ambassador of Ukraine

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

H.E. Georgette Mosbacher, Ambassador of the United States of America

H.E. Luis Gómez Urdaneta, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Dries Willems, General Representative of the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region

Anne Defourny, General Delegate of the French Community and the Walloon Region

Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director/Director's alternate of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights ODIHR

Marek Prawda, Head of Representation, European Commission in Poland

Christine Goyer, Representative, UNHCR Representation in Poland

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

Hanna Dobrzyńska, Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM)