

Warsaw, 9 June 2006

The Honourable
Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz
Chairman of the Council of Ministers
of the Republic of Poland

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

We feel an obligation to decisively protest against the decision taken by the Minister of Education to dismiss Mr. Mirosław Sielatycki, the director of the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre, because of the book "COMPASS - A manual on human rights education with young people," considered the official handbook of the Council of Europe developed by an international team of authors with the participation of UNESCO.

In 2005, the manual was included in the educational campaign carried out in Poland as part of the European Year of Citizenship through Education and Poland's leadership of the Council of Europe.

The Polish edition of Compass included an introduction written by Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The book deals with the fundamental problems regarding human rights and counteracting their violation in accordance with international standards, following Council of Europe conventions, of which Poland is a signatory, and therefore included under Poland's democratic legal order.

The values disseminated through this handbook are the foundation for modern European societies, which attach importance to the rule of law, pluralist democracy and human rights.

A situation in which these values are being called into question by anyone, including the Minister of Education, constitutes a dangerous precedent that cannot be left unaddressed.

We call upon you, Mr. Prime Minister, to make certain there is an appropriate response to this harmful decision and that its execution is not approved.

On behalf of the Helsinki Committee in Poland

Marek Antoni Nowicki

Please find appended the abovementioned book.