

european network against racism

# ENAR Shadow Report 2006

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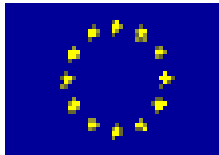
### RACISM IN POLAND

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Arabia.pl

*Racism is a reality in the lives of many ethnic and religious minorities in the EU. However, the extent and manifestations of this reality are often unknown and undocumented, especially in official data sources, meaning that it can be difficult to analyse the situation and to establish solutions to it. Even where there is extensive official data, NGOs offer a vital alternative data source that comes directly from experiences of those individuals and communities experiencing racism on a daily basis.*

*The ENAR Shadow Reports are produced to fill the gaps in the official and academic data, to offer an alternative to that data and to offer an NGO perspective on the realities of racism with the EU and its Member States. NGO reports are, by their nature, based on many sources of data, official, unofficial, academic and experiential. This allows access to information which, while sometimes not backed up by the rigours of academic standards, provides the vital perspective of those that either are or work directly with those affected by the racism that is the subject of the research. It is this that gives NGO reports their added value, complementing academic and official reporting.*

*Published by the European Network against Racism (ENAR) in Brussels, October 2007, supported by a grant from Compagnia di San Paolo and from Foundation Open Society Institute (Zug).*



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## 1. Executive summary

As a country of stabilised political and economical situation, member of the European Union, and signatory to international agreements on human rights and on the fight against racism, Poland is not a country where the situation requires an immediate reaction from the international community. However, in 2006, there were still incidents that should be the subject of thorough observation and analysis, as well as possible intervention, should the negative trend signalled in 2006 increase.

Among the most important points are:

- The situation of sexual minorities and the approach of the parties of the Polish government. Official statements of ministers and members of the government discriminating against sexual minorities should be met with an unequivocal reaction of the international community. The aversion towards homosexuals undoubtedly exceeds any other prejudices including those against ethnic or religious minorities.
- The approach towards Muslims and Arabs has no relation to the fight against terrorism and security policy. The Polish government should introduce clear rules of behaviour for the implementation of all actions that affect and involve Arabs and Muslims. Appeal institutions dedicated to this matter should be established so that the persons affected have a place to make a complaint.
- Strict punishments for racist action and the promotion of Nazism should be imposed consistently. Polish law in this matter must be followed unconditionally. The use of the argument of the "insignificant social harmfulness of the act" is improper here.
- The Polish government should definitely disassociate itself from the media of Tadeusz Rydzyk<sup>1</sup> – Radio Maryja, Nasz Dziennik newspaper and Telewizja Trwam - unless those media renounce "hate speech" on foreigners, especially on Jewish and German minorities.

It should be pointed that the greatest threat to tolerance in Poland are the xenophobic and racist views of people associated with the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin), some of whom are also members of Polish government. Their presence in the Ministry of Education, for example, poses a threat to carrying out EU policy on counteracting discrimination and fighting racism.

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<sup>1</sup> The audience of all these media is estimated at a few millions and is considered to be a disciplined group of potential voters choosing a person indicated by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. Radio Maryja is currently supporting the Polish ruling party - Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) and has the greatest significance of them all. It was established in Toruń in 1991 by the Congregation of the Redemptorist Fathers and functions as a church legal entity belonging to Roman Catholic Church. It is notorious for broadcasting anti-Semitic content.

## 2. Introduction

Compared to 2005, the year 2006 did not bring important changes to the situation of ethnic, religious or national minorities. However, the situation of sexual minorities deteriorated significantly.

Poland remains a country of relatively homogenous ethnicity; therefore racism against national or ethnic minorities is relatively rare. It is still not a destination for economic immigration, the number of foreigners is low and the situation has not changed much in comparison with previous years.

While ethnic minorities were not discriminated against, the situation of sexual and religious minorities deteriorated significantly. Following the autumn 2005 elections, a governmental coalition was formed in spring 2006 and the Polish government now consists of representatives of the right-wing party, League of Polish Families. Their members have repeatedly been accused of discrimination against sexual minorities.

What is more, youth members of LPR - All-Polish Youth (Młodzież Wszechpolska) - promoted anti-Semitic views in at least a few proven cases.

National and nationalistic views, although not racist, but still xenophobic and hostile to foreigners are shared by some members of ruling Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) party of the current Prime Minister and President of Poland. Anti-Semitic media - Radio Maryja and Nasz Dziennik - supporting Polish government representatives, as well as members of parties appearing in those media, provoke anxiety in NGOs.

The behaviour of authorities remains thus the most important factor of this year's report from January to December 2006. Because this report was finalised in mid-2007, it also considers issues, which began in 2006 and ended in 2007.

### 3. Communities vulnerable to racism

While the number of racist and especially anti-Semitic incidents did not increase in 2006, anti-racism organisation "Never Again" ("Nigdy Więcej") documented some cases where the members of LPR and All-Polish Youth took part - the former being in governmental coalition and whose chairman is Minister of Education.

The attack on the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, in May 2006, was an especially unpleasant anti-Semitic act. While hitting the Rabbi, the assailant shouted: "Poland for Poles". This example illustrates that although some Polish authorities tried to change the situation, the Jews remain much exposed to discrimination.

Since the terrorism threat is still high, Arabs and Muslims are another group vulnerable to discrimination and racist acts, especially on the side of state administration.

These acts are not only verbal assaults and insults, but also particularly detailed controls by security forces, in some cases of harassing character and hindering normal functioning in a society. For example, repeated community interviews among neighbours occurred, because of information given by police officers that Muslims should be paid attention to.

The way that state authorities treat Polish-Arabic married couples is also very unpleasant. The marriages are often considered as false from the start, their only objective being to obtain citizenship. Foreigners who fulfilled all visa requirements face difficulties with going out of Poland. In several cases, officials tried to dissuade women from planning to marry a foreigner.

Finally, cases of discrimination towards sexual minorities should be mentioned, although it goes beyond the scope of this report, because it does not concern religious and ethnic minorities directly. Yet, tolerance for discriminatory behaviour towards sexual minorities may turn into common approval of xenophobic behaviour. In Poland, gays and lesbians are the most exposed to discrimination. It might be symbolical that one of the few bans on "Equality Parade" in 2004 and 2005 were imposed by the then President of Warsaw and current President of Poland, Lech Kaczyński.

While in the European Parliament Resolution P6\_TA(2006)0273 sees an increase in racist and homophobic violence in Europe, the problem of growing homophobia was listed as one of Poland's crucial problems and the European Parliament appealed to member states "to give proper attention to the fight against racism, sexism, xenophobia and homophobia both in their relations with each other and in their bilateral relations with third countries"<sup>2</sup>. Polish MEPs, who voted for the resolution along with their European counterparts, were accused of "betraying Poland". While the Polish Parliament

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2006-0273+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

acknowledged that the word "homophobia" should not appear in the European Union documents, a special resolution passed as an answer to accusations to the Council of Europe states: "The Parliament, identifying itself with Judeo-Christian moral heritage of Europe, will not approve of such a term as homophobia being introduced to the documents of the European Union."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>First found on the Polish Parliament Website: [http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/oide/dokumenty/uchwala\\_rezolucja\\_PE\\_2006.pdf](http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/oide/dokumenty/uchwala_rezolucja_PE_2006.pdf) (currently unavailable). Now it can be found at: <http://www.bankier.pl/firma/narzedzia/akty-prawne/monitor-polski-2006/pozycja-0474.html>

## 4. Manifestations of racism and religious discrimination

### 4.1 Employment

In Poland, there is no data collected on discrimination on the basis of social background or faith. However, Polish legislation limits access to labour market for foreigners, except for:

- workers from EU countries and countries who signed the agreement with the EU on free movement of persons,
- family members of the afore-mentioned foreigners,
- refugees,
- people having a permit to settle,
- people who obtained tolerated stay permits,
- special groups of workers on the basis of separate regulations, e.g. academics.

The main legal act regulating the above-mentioned issues is the Employment Promotion and Labour Market Institutions Act of 20 April 2004. Cases of discrimination against people who, according to law, should not have problems of employment, were rather related to employers' preferences: because of the high unemployment rate in Poland, they have a great choice in potential workers and they could look not only at qualifications but also at background or faith.

In the difficult Polish labour market, which especially discriminates against women and elderly people, it is hard to prove certain cases of racist discrimination. According to information gathered by Arabia.pl Association, Muslim women wearing a hijab, outside of large corporations with foreign capital, encountered discriminatory behaviour. The employers argued that the opposition to employ such people was mainly based on possible reactions of clients and environment.

Foreigners employed illegally are in the worst situation, especially people staying in Poland illegally without a work permit, who do not have any protection. This situation mainly concerns women working as housemaids or babysitters and seasonal agricultural workers.

There is a chance for improving conditions of work for foreigners in the fact that many young people have gone abroad to Great Britain and other European Union countries. Consequently, employers are more and more willing to employ people leading stable lives and less prone to emigrate. Also the pressure to raise the income of labourers (builders are one of the professional groups with the highest migration rates) resulted in a market niche for foreigners with the lowest qualifications. This topic is described in details in the section on migration and integration (5.2).

## **4.2 Housing**

There is no statistical data about someone being refused to rent or not granted a flat because of his/her skin colour or faith. A foreigner can easily buy a flat in Poland, but he or she cannot buy a land.

Those with the greatest difficulty with renting a flat are refugees and foreigners with a different skin colour. During individual conversations with representatives of NGOs, they admitted that they usually meet reluctance or refusal when the landlord gets to know that they are foreigners.

However, while foreigners having enough money can rent a flat, there is a lack of cheap accommodation for people with refugee status, who because of their difficult financial situation cannot rent a flat at commercial cost. Very few of them have a chance to get substitute accommodation.

One of the few organisations supporting refugees in finding their own place to live is Warszawskie Centrum Pomocy Rodzinie (Warsaw Centre for Family Help), which annually grants five flats to foreigners with refugee status, who are in the worst financial and family situation.

However, the asylum issue in Poland is not substantial in comparison with other European countries. The year 2006 was the second year in a row in which there was a decrease in people applying for refugee status in Poland. The number of applications in 2006 reached 4223. Refugees do not constitute a substantial social group. For every thousand inhabitants there are only 0.1 refugee, whereas there are about a dozen refugees for every thousand inhabitants in other EU countries such as France and Great Britain.

## **4.3 Education**

By and large there is no problem of institutional racism or discrimination with regard to access to education in Poland.

The basic legislation regulating the educational system in Poland is the School Education Act of 7 September 1991 (Dz. U of 2004, No 256, item 2572 as amended). These regulations concern also educating children of foreigners residing in Poland as well as those applying for refugee status.

Details on the admission of foreign children to public schools are included in the Minister of National Education Order of 4 October 2001 on admitting people who are not Polish citizens to public nursery schools, schools and educational institutions (Dz. U of 2001 r. no 131, item 1458). It stipulates that foreign children are admitted to all educational institutions according to the same rules as Polish citizens (article 2, section 1 of the Order).

In practice, however, not all people have the possibility to go to school. According to the report, "Realisation of school duty by foreign minors living in

refugee centres” prepared by Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (Law Intervention Association), only 52% of all refugee children of school age (7-18 years of age) exercise their right to education.

The main problem is a poor knowledge of Polish, as well as lack of interest on the side of the refugees or their parents, especially in case of older children (14-18 years of age).

Therefore NGOs play a vital role, conducting additional classes for refugee children and mobilising them to study.

In spite of the introduction in 2004 of the governmental Programme for Romani Community (the legal basis of which is the Council of Ministers Resolution of 19 August 2003 on establishing a long-standing Programme for Romani Community in Poland) not all children have access to education. Despite employing assistants on Romani education and introducing special funding system, some Romani children still finish their education before reaching maturity.

#### **4.4 Health**

The biggest change in 2006 concerns a new act “On entering the Republic of Poland, stay and departure from these territories of citizens of member states of the European Union and their family members”. The act states that every non-Polish EU citizen who it is proven to carry deadly viruses can be expelled from Poland (unless he/she has been in the country longer than 3 months).

Until the introduction of the act, the above-mentioned issues were regulated by Act of 27 July 2002 on rules and conditions of entering and staying in the Republic of Poland of EU member states citizens and family members (Dz. U., no 141, item 1180, as amended) and Ministry of Health Order of 25 September 2003 based on it. The current change refuses to give access to health care to those who really need it.

Officials of the Ministry of Interior and Administration and the Ministry of Health cite a European Union directive, which allegedly orders member countries to include a regulation on deportation. Jan Węgrzyn from the Repatriation and Foreigners Affairs Office at Ministry of Interior and Administration informed, when the act was being passed, that Czechs, Slovaks and Italians applied a similar solution and that it was based on the law of the European Union.

However, in other EU countries such regulations are non-existent. There is no mention of sanctions if the directive is ignored – deportation is not obligatory according to the European Commission, but only recommended. Philip Tod, spokesperson of Markos Kyprianou, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, speaking to Polish media in 2006 was surprised to

learn that the content of European directive was interpreted in Poland as an obligation to expel ill foreigners.<sup>4</sup>

Problems with access to health care among foreigners are a result of a lack of knowledge of Polish law and procedures as well as the Polish language, rather than deliberate discriminatory policy of the country.

The issue of access to health care concerns also illegal workers in Poland. Health contribution not being paid, which must be allotted from legal workers' salaries, means that illegal workers cannot benefit from free health care.

#### **4.5 Policing and racial profiling**

The year 2006 in Poland as well as in the whole of Europe was a year of growing Islamophobia. Because of the small number of Muslims in Poland (about 20 000), there is no accurate statistical data (this figure is only based on estimates provided by the Ministry of Interior and Administration). Surveillance of most Polish Muslims is possible, as well as almost all newcomers, who come to Poland for a temporary stay.

Despite the fact that there is no procedure that orders different treatment of people from Muslim countries visiting Poland (Arab countries, Pakistan and Iran), they are checked more thoroughly at the airports (passport control lasts longer) and the community interview is carried out at the place of their stay, if they came privately.

No other nationalities or religious minorities visiting Poland are treated in this way. According to data collected by the Muslim League of Poland and Arabia.pl Association such treatment is used for almost all Muslims visiting Poland (with passports from Arab countries, Pakistan or Iran), which amounts to more than 2000 people a year.

Discriminatory treatment of all guests from Muslim countries was criticised by the Polish Information and Foreign Investments Agency. The criticised discriminatory treatment included the refusal to issue a visa as well as inappropriate treatment of people with diplomatic passports or investors at the airport. Identical treatment, without any difference concerning the purpose of the visit, means that suspiciousness and the different approach of customs officers is based on the very passport and skin colour of people visiting Poland.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://refugee.pl/index.php?mod=knowbase&path=865>

### Examples of NGO Good Practice

Arabia.pl Association was established in 2001. As part of a programme funded by the Stefan Batory Foundation, since June 2006 ARABIA.pl has given legal advice to people in mixed marriages, wishing to enter such a relationship or having relatives who are in such a situation. By the end of 2006, 400 pieces of advice were given by e-mail, through a special legal section in a forum or chat and phone calls. Most questions concerned problems with Arab or Muslim husbands or future husbands coming to Poland. Arabia.pl prepared legal advice on legalising relationships as well as on the presence of a spouse in Poland.

#### 4.6 Racist violence and crime

There are no detailed statistics on attacks and racist violence in Poland. However the anti-racist association Nigdy Więcej (Never Again) mentions more than ten cases a month in the first quarter of 2006 in its catalogue of incidents entitled "Brunatna Księga" ("Brown Book").<sup>5</sup>

Since few foreigners live in Poland and not all racist crimes are reported (except for the most dangerous ones), we can say that the real numbers remain unknown.

The biggest problem is governmental institutions approving the promotion of racist and discriminatory views, especially those about sexual and religious minorities. The youth organisation of League of Polish Families – All-Polish Youth - is particularly infamous for it.

### Examples of NGO Good Practice

"Nigdy Więcej" ("Never Again") Association was established in 1996. One of its projects is an informative programme consisting of running an information centre, monitoring and regular service for mass media, and recording all nationalistic and racist incidents happening in the country, which are published in a quarterly "NIGDY WIĘCEJ". An archive consisting of records of chauvinism is also included in the programme.

#### 4.7 Access to goods and services in the public and private sector

There are no institutional limits concerning the access to services in private and public sectors on account of race or religion in Poland.

<sup>5</sup> Kornak, Marcin, „Nigdy Więcej” Association, *Incident catalogue for the year 2006* <http://www.nigdywiecej.prh.pl/katalog/2006.php>, accessed 9 July 2007.

Most of the time, difficult access to goods and services is not based on ill-will but on communication barriers; foreigners not speaking Polish are literally unable to handle most official procedures.

A noticeable problem is discrimination of people of Romani origin or those who look like Romani. As it is common to see beggars of Romani origin (especially in public transports) in larger cities, people similar to them might not be admitted to a restaurant or supermarket; they are automatically treated as potential beggars. However, there is no precise statistical data on the scale of this phenomenon.

Sporadically, there are examples of refusing to provide services to foreigners or institutions supporting foreigners. For example, Arabia.pl Association had to face a situation in July 2006 when new directors of Polish Radio dissolved an agreement with the association about access to a news service and refused to sell it, no matter how high the rates proposed by the Association were.

#### **4.8 Media, including the internet**

There are no detailed statistics in Poland concerning racist or discriminatory statements on the internet. Most web administrators delete racist posts from servers without reporting them to law enforcement bodies or other institutions fighting racism. Racist content is reported directly to administrators of internet portals, blogging or chat services.

Legal procedures in Poland are time-consuming and troublesome, thus going to court is only used as a last resort. Therefore, page or server owners get many unofficial reports.

Statistical data on racist web pages only exists when the owners of servers where racist statements were made do not want to remove them on request of the internet users and an action of an NGO or prosecutor is needed.

In 2006, as the result of "Nigdy Więcej" Association's activity, 150 Nazi Web pages in Polish language have disappeared from the internet and 500 more were closed down in the following months.

A similar activity of removing web pages from the internet that included prohibited content (including child pornography) was carried out by a team of specialists organised at NASK. In 2006, they had 2730 reports, out of which 441 were qualified for further action. Only 7% of them concerned, however, pages with racist statements (that is about 31 reports). Most of them were kept on servers outside Poland, which meant more difficulty in blocking them.

The most significant media event of 2006 was the creation and closing down of Redwatch, a web page related to the organisation Krew i Honor (Blood and Honour). On the Web site, photographs were displayed with personal data of people active in organisations which are anti-racist, leftist or left-wing of

different sexual orientation, who are supposed to be “fought with” according to the authors’ aims. Despite repeated closure, the page keeps reappearing on other servers. The existence of such a page is a real and physical threat to all people whose data is contained within it.

Other than internet media, the most important issue relates to media belonging to Father Tadeusz Rydzyk – Radio Maryja and Nasz Dziennik. Their anti-Semitic character has remained unchanged for many years and the year 2006 did not see new positive developments in this matter.

The relation of Radio Maryja and Nasz Dziennik as well as Telewizja Trwam to the current ruling coalition of the Law and Justice Party and League of Polish Families is disturbing. Numerous anti-Semitic statements did not result in any legal sanctions imposed on media belonging to Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. In 2006, repeated appearances in those media of politicians representing the government coalition influenced greatly the increase of their significance and scope of audience. The Anti-Defamation League devoted a large part of its report from 2006, "Poland: Democracy and the Challenge of Extremism", to the issue of Radio Maryja, appealing to Polish politicians to stop co-operating with Radio Maryja.

#### **Examples of NGO Good Practice**

Dyzurnet.pl is a special team and a page for fighting illegal content on the internet, racist content among others. HOTLINE was created as part of an all-European programme, “Safer Internet Action Plan”, of the European Commission which supports establishing national contact points for fighting illegal content on the internet. In November 2003, NASK declared its intention to co-run the Hotline. The European Commission evaluated the project highly and in September 2004 an agreement was signed. Hotline is funded by the European Commission and Naukowa i Akademicka Sieć Komputerowa (NASK - Scientific and Academic Computer Network). It is an organisation co-ordinating and monitoring dangers on the internet. Each year more and more pages are closed down and people who do not want to or have no time to try to personally remove a page with illegal content (which involves a time-consuming report at the police station, prosecutor etc.) have an easy and fast place where they can report a page which, in their opinion, should be removed.

## 5. Political and legal context

As mentioned in the previous section, the victory of Law and Justice Party and then its formation as a coalition with populist Self-Defence Party and nationalistic League of Polish Families contributed to a decrease of governmental interest in anti-discriminatory policy. Close co-operation of anti-Semitic media – Radio Maryja and Nasz Dziennik, as well as Telewizja Trwam - with government, especially in early 2006 contributed to "hate speech" being used in political dialogues.

Despite this negative aspect, Poland introduced further components of EU law to its policy. The need to adjust country regulations to the requirements of the European Union positively influences Polish legislation.

### 5.1 Anti discrimination

On paper, the Polish government enforces EU directives on discrimination. Unfortunately, some of already introduced programmes have been abolished and there remain problems with the government's co-operation with NGOs.

A good example of this is the "Term report of Republic of Poland on realisation of rulings of *International Convention on Elimination Of All Forms of Racial Discrimination open for signature on 7 March 1966 in New York* of January 2000-July 2005" which was only published in the form of a project of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration web pages in February 2007.

NGOs received only 10 days to come forward with comments. Some actions implemented in years 2000-2005 were cancelled in 2006 or, in spite of promises, some actions were never implemented. In a letter of Otwarta Rzeczpospolita (Open Republic of Poland) Association to the Polish Ministry of the Interior and Administration, some of those examples were mentioned.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most important examples was the lack of a database including information on racism, racial discrimination, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, which was supposed to be created by the Office for Racism and Xenophobia Monitoring which was established in November 2004. NGOs, however, still have no information that such a database exists.

The participation of the League of Polish Families members in the Polish government, mentioned above in the report, has been largely influential with regard to the exclusive, declarative realisation of EU directives. In the letter written by Open Republic of Poland Association one can read,

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<sup>6</sup> Otwarta Rzeczpospolita Association, *Polish report on the realisation of rulings of Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination* [http://or.org.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=156&Itemid=66](http://or.org.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=156&Itemid=66), accessed 9 July 2007.

“Finally, we would like to refer to item 129 of the draft report about a Polish ban on employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The ban on discrimination included in Labour Law is indeed in opposition to recent statements made by high official, deputy Minister of Education, Mirośław Orzechowski (March 2007), announcing plans to collect information about educational workers and dismissing people who are homosexuals. Such oppositions – of law existing in Poland and socio-political life - in public speeches (and we have to remember that these are senior representatives of the government) we could cite more, but we obviously do not have space for it.”<sup>7</sup>

All those aforementioned examples are evidence of the Polish government declaring action in implementation of the EU law. However, it does not necessarily mean that the government takes actual anti-discriminatory and anti-racist measures in Poland.

## **5.2 Migration and integration**

The year 2006 was undoubtedly a year of emigration, especially from Poland to the EU countries. According to various statistics, between 0.5 and two millions Poles left Poland temporarily or permanently (mostly young, educated people with knowledge of foreign languages or building specialists).

The Polish government focused thus mainly on preventing the emigration of Poles, rather than working on the integration of foreigners in Poland. Polish people leaving and the lack of specialists in specific fields may have contributed to the free flow as well as increasing number of foreigners in Poland, in the beginning as workers and later staying permanently.

There is an ongoing debate in Poland as to what extent the job market should be open for non-EU citizens. Although the employment of seasonal workers from neighbouring countries is mostly taken into consideration, there is a possibility of the limitless opening of the labour market in some fields where there is a deficit.

Dynamic changes in the labour market have positively influenced the treatment of foreigners. Poles are less afraid that foreigners will take their income or hinder their development.

However, those changes have negatively influenced the legislation, because the integration of ethnic minorities (including refugees) was moved to the background and almost all public discussion about emigration and emigrants focused on solutions concerning the labour sector. First of all, facilitations concern citizens of the UE and EFTA, who were fully exempted from having to

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<sup>7</sup> Translated by the author.

obtain work permits. When it came to citizens of other countries, the course of action was simplified and conditions for obtaining permits were eased.

Fully exempted from having to obtain work permits are citizens of EU member countries, EEG countries, which are not members of the EU, as well as those countries who are not parties in EEG agreement but exercise free movement of persons on the basis of agreements reached with the European Union and its member states. This is possibly due to the repeal on 17 January 2007 of Minister of Labour and Social Politics Order of 21 July 2006 on the scope of work limitations of foreigners on the territories of Republic of Poland.

Citizens of other countries can work in Poland without permits, if it is implied by binding regulations. Foreigners with refugee status obtained in the Republic of Poland, foreigners who have a permit to settle in the Republic of Poland, foreigners with "tolerated stay" in the Republic of Poland, and foreigners exercising temporary protection in the Republic of Poland, are all exempted from the obligation to obtain a work permit.

Foreigners may work without needing to obtain permission in the cases included in the Minister of Labour and Social Politics Order of 30 August 2006 on foreigners working without a need to obtain work permit. It concerns cases resulting from international agreements, from the uniqueness of their occupation, the character of their work or special status, which allows them to obtain a permit to live for a definite period of time on the territories of the Republic of Poland.

Apparently, the year 2006 brought about a series of legal solutions concerning this sector. When it comes to refugees' rights or those concerning family reunification, there are no new legal solutions. However, in practice we can observe more strict procedures and more impediments concerning family reunification. Officials treat most new mixed marriages as "fictional" and they see their only purpose as to obtain a permit to work on EU territories. It is indisputably harder to get married as well as obtain a visa if one is a citizen of non-EU country.

The government did not show much interest in the case of illegal immigrants in 2006.

The year 2006 was also a year of adjusting country legislation to European Union law on foreigners. In the draft amendment to the Act on Foreigners there are applied regulations of Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions for admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service<sup>8</sup> as well as other changes.

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<sup>8</sup> Official Journal of EU L 375 from 23.12.2004, pp. 12-18 and Council Directive 2005/71/EC of 12 October 2005 on a specific procedure for admitting third-country nationals for purposes of scientific research p. 15

Because amendments to the Act are constantly made and some articles are still in negotiation, it is hard to estimate which dimension of EU policy is not included.

NGOs are invited to comment and present their notes on the Act. According to information published on governmental pages,

“The draft was consulted with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who gave a positive opinion about it. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights read it as well and had observations, which form basis for verifying some solutions originally proposed. The amendments introduced to the draft concern fuller adjustment of the draft to the regulation included in the Order (EC) no 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), resignation from introducing amendments to article 57 section 6, approving of argumentation of the Foundation, that proposed expression “should not stay on the territories of the Republic of Poland” would raise doubts on interpretation and removing ways of collecting costs of deportation of foreigners, who were according to the Foundation too far-reaching and narrowing down their rights, especially their ownership.”<sup>9</sup>

## **5.3 Criminal justice**

### **5.3.1 Racism as a crime**

The legal basis of anti-racist action can be found in many Polish legislative acts, including the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (articles 13, 32, 35), Penal Code (Dz. U. of 1997, No 88, section 553 as amended) of 1997 as amended (articles 256, 257) and other legislative acts.

There is a “National programme on the prevention of racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance related to them 2004-2009,” which is still legally binding. However, it is not the lack of law but its selective application which is problematic in Poland.

Parties in the ruling coalition whose members have xenophobic views and at least in some cases racist views as well, negatively influence effective legal protection against racism.

It may lead to such a situation as when the public radio station (Radio Bis) got rid of a programme called Masala with ethnic and multicultural music, because their guests were to discuss racist behaviours being tolerated in LPR. The subject of that programme was “Brunatna księga” (“Brown book”) –

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<sup>9</sup> The Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Comments about *Act on Foreigners* <http://kprm.gov.pl/bip/070111u2uz.pdf> accessed 9 July 2007.

an annual report of "Never Again" Association on racist violence in Poland. Authors of the programme provided information on the radio's web page revealing that there were more than 240 racist incidents in Poland. They also suggested a connection between the Polish neo-Nazis and the All-Polish Youth and League of Polish Families. They specifically stated that, "Polish government and MPs, officials and ministers, members of those organisations support thus killers and are indirectly guilty of the death of innocent people."<sup>10</sup>

The Radio Secretariat, on behalf of its new director Jacek Sobala, requested a change in the subject. Since the author, Max Cegielski, refused, Masala was removed from the radio programme. The Director claimed that for such views and such programme there is no place in the "new programme formula of Radio Bis."

Political debate on EU policy on this matter is hindered when members of the ruling coalition with LPR are questioning the idea of a common currency, giving some prerogatives to EU institutions as well as the very idea of European integration.

Racist incidents are most of the times revoked on the basis of "insignificant social harmfulness of the act" and the perpetrators do not feel endangered. "Gesture of beer ordering" performed by current MPs from LPR or All-Polish Youth, has already entered the colloquial Polish as a new idiom ("Sieg Heil" gesture was explained as nothing more than "ordering beer"). Those people were not punished and uncovering pictures from their youth had no impact on their careers (nor did they not hand in their resignation).

The government also did not react to a film uncovered in November 2006 by "Dziennik" newspaper.' In a shocking film of summer 2004 we can see members of All-Polish Youth along with skinheads shouting "Sieg Heil", raising their hands in fascist greetings and burning torches in shape of swastikas. In the background there is a Polish flag in the same row as the fascist one. Even a child is watching this Nazi play.<sup>11</sup> Outrage of politicians did not translate into charges drawn up against people connected with this incident.

The only result was that the League of Polish Families disassociated itself from All-Polish Youth, but informal relations remained. Moreover, most members of the organisation moved to a newly-created Ruch Młodych LPR (LPR Youth Movement), which became an official wing of the party.

One can say that the more exposed the case is, the bigger the chance that the officials will react the right way. It is reflected by the exemplary reaction to search for the robber who attacked Rabbi Michael Schudrich in May 2006 or attempts to remove the Redwatch web page from the internet. Therefore, the NGOs role is to conduct wide informative action on racist behaviours and put

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<sup>10</sup> Polish Radio Bis Web pages at first, then only in the news on this issue e.g. [http://www.wiadomosci24.pl/artykul/radio\\_bis\\_zdejmuje\\_kolektyw\\_masala\\_1917.html](http://www.wiadomosci24.pl/artykul/radio_bis_zdejmuje_kolektyw_masala_1917.html)

<sup>11</sup> Cius, Renata *Nazi incident of All-Polish Youth*, Dziennik Newspaper 27-11-2006 <http://www.dziennik.pl/Default.aspx?TabId=14&ShowArticleId=23263>

pressure on the government so that it effectively enforces the existing Polish law.

### 5.3.2 Counter terrorism

Poland is not well prepared to fight terrorism. There is no co-ordinating institution or appropriate procedures in this matter. This means that many different organisations and professionals are occupied with terrorism issue, including police institutions such as Centralne Biuro Śledcze (Central Investigation Office - CBS), police forces, the intelligence agency, Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego (Interior Security Agency - ABW), previously the Wojskowe Służby Informacyjne (Military Information Service - WSI),<sup>12</sup> border guards and analysts at Ministry of Interior and Administration or other governmental institutions.

That is why warning about terrorist threat reaches people who are not prepared for it in any way and did not undergo any training. Consequences of such behaviour include suspiciousness towards all Muslims or people with Arabic passports and their relatives, e.g. their spouses.

There was no new law implemented in this field in 2006 and the country's policy was generally chaotic and uncoordinated. NGOs - especially Muslim religious associations in Poland - repeatedly reported to the Ministry of Interior and Administration that police had visited their members far too often, questioning them about visiting friends. They argue that such a practice might be qualified as harassment. Most of the time, police questions and visits had no basis.

Arabs–Muslims who have no right to permanent residency are sometimes persuaded to co-operate with Polish secret service under threat of being expelled from the country. After 24 May 2004, when Ahmed Ammar left Poland on charge of constituting a hazard to Poland deportation became a credible threat for all Muslims.<sup>13</sup>

Arabia.pl Association is one of the organisations collecting data on this subject. However, since most of the relevant actions are top secret, it is not possible to refer them to the court. In the year 2006, 134 such accounts were collected, although the number is certainly much higher.

Two examples collected by Arabia.pl and mentioned below may suffice to demonstrate that Polish officials are completely unprepared and the

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<sup>12</sup> The WSI is in reality no longer in operation. WSI was disbanded and a new service created instead. Most of its previous workers were made redundant. The reorganisation of WSI is still pending.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmed Ammar, imam of Muslim community in Poznań, PhD student at University of Poznań. A Yemeni, who had been living in Poland for 14 years, when in May 2004 he received an order to leave Polish territories in seven days counted from the date of letter delivery. The grounds for such a decision were ABW's (Interior Security Agency) negative opinion about him. He has never faced official charges. The media unofficially reported that he had connections with representatives of Islamic terrorist organisations. NGOs questioned the lack of Ahmed Ammar's right to defend himself and appealed to ABW to officially present charges or to withhold deportation and initiate proceedings.

discrimination against the whole Muslim community occurs even though they are not actually a threat:

“...unfortunately my mother was really affected by the visit of guys from ABW, who decided to make her aware of the mess I am in since I hang about with Muslims and what kind of a world terrorist I am planning to introduce to our family home. All the more that the visit was unannounced, they showed her my pictures made undercover, photos of my husband (on which he also looked as if he had just left prison), informed her about the lives of people who were allegedly my friends and the secret service was really anxious about the purity of my family blood . There's no sense in saying all...”<sup>14</sup>

We were also checked on the authenticity of our marriage and a guy from ABW visited my parents (he called beforehand and made an appointment). When he came my mother offered him some coffee and cake, my father out of his good will showed him pictures from the wedding (because he observed that in this guy's papers, my husband looks like a criminal and wanted to prove him how handsome he is). My parents managed to tell him the whole story, documented with photos, the atmosphere became party-like. Moreover, they encouraged him to visit them again. The guy said that there is no reason for it... bowed and, extolling my mother's cake, said goodbye and left... My parents told me that he was really nice and shy.”<sup>15</sup>

Those examples demonstrate that the secret actions of ABW should only be considered justified when the security of country is concerned. The examples collected by Arabia.pl Association prove that the reality is completely different. Intelligence actions that are in no way connected to the fight against terrorism, affect the whole Muslim community. However, since they are secret, NGOs cannot merely monitor them.

### **5.3.3 Racial profiling**

While racial profiling is often employed as a counter terrorism measure, it is a broader and more general phenomenon. However, in Poland, it is evident only in actions attributed to the fight against terrorism and concerns mainly Arabs or people considered to look like Arabs or Muslims. This judgement has been made on the basis of visual cues associated with expression of the Muslim faith, e.g. the hijab worn by women and, in the case of men, a long beard. The judgement has also been made on other cues such as if the person is speaking a language other than Polish.

Police checks of people they consider to be Arab or Muslims can entail, for example, much longer security check at the airport, following or eavesdropping on the person and, in the case of newcomers considered to be

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<sup>14</sup> The words of a young woman who is the wife of an Egyptian citizen, describing visit of Polish intelligence to her family home, during a community interview after her wedding.

<sup>15</sup> These are the words of a young woman who is the wife of an Algerian national.

Muslim, a community interview<sup>16</sup> and questioning of neighbours. The measures have (maybe unintentionally) a harassing effect and are bothersome for Muslims living in Poland.

Poles who converted to Islam are also interrogated. In individual cases they are sometimes persuaded to co-operate with Polish intelligence.

On account of the small number of Muslims living in Poland we can confidently report of the existence of discriminatory behaviour on the basis of race and religion, because this problem strikes all Muslims regardless of whether they might pose a threat to Poland.

Because of the secrecy of actions intended to counter terrorism, it is difficult to document changes that may have occurred in 2006. NGOs may only monitor such actions, since the very Muslims affected by these actions are afraid to speak against Poland in this matter.

#### **5.4 Social inclusion**

The European Commission obliged all European Union member countries to present their National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion for the years 2006-2008.

According to the Polish programme,<sup>17</sup> the risk of exclusion as well as poverty concerns mainly large families, as well as families which have members who are unemployed. Therefore, action is taken to level deficits on lack of access to certain goods and services in those groups.

There is no space for the integration of religious or ethnic minorities in this programme. Polish religious or ethnic minorities threatened by social exclusion are treated the same way as the rest of Polish society.

The only governmental action that concerns integration is aimed at the Romani minority and is included in "Programme on the Romani Community in Poland", which has been conducted since 2004 and has not changed much in 2006.

NGOs and municipal bodies manage much better in helping ethnic or religious minorities. They simply became assistants in social integration and prevent exclusion of ethnic minorities. NGOs accept such a situation as long as they receive funds from central or municipal administration for those actions.

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<sup>16</sup> A "community interview" involves getting in touch with people, who are to be at the destination place of a foreigner e.g. school, university or work place. Should the foreigner visit private persons and stay in a private flat – the neighbours are contacted.

<sup>17</sup> National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion, [http://www.mps.gov.pl/integracja/pliki/NAP\\_konsultacje.pdf](http://www.mps.gov.pl/integracja/pliki/NAP_konsultacje.pdf) accessed 9 July 2007.

## 6. National recommendations

### 6.1 General

- While NGO activity should refrain from criticising a given policy party, Polish NGOs should definitely speak out against the propagation of views that are anti-Semitic, racist and those discriminating against sexual, ethnic or religious minorities, especially if such views are expressed by politicians. Therefore, NGOs should jointly develop and put forward a strategy to ensure that those who publicly propagate such views are excluded from the Polish government coalition.

### 6.2 Anti discrimination

- NGOs should be enabled to jointly intervene in Polish governmental institutions so that they can influence in a real way the shape of anti-discriminatory projects carried out by Polish government, especially those carried out within the European Union. Unless this demand is met, NGOs should intervene in EU institutions to put pressure on the Polish government.

### 6.3 Criminal justice

#### 6.3.1 Racism as a crime

- Monitor racist crimes and publicise them by letter-writing, collecting signatures and petitions, also through the internet. Only through accurate publicising such cases we can ensure that Polish law is adhered to in this matter.

#### 6.3.2 Counter terrorism

- Every person who is questioned with regard to an administrative issue (e.g. visa, marriage, permanent stay, a family member visiting) by the intelligence or other institutions that do not have an explicit responsibility in this area should be informed about the purpose and nature of the procedure. If it is deemed impossible to provide this information to the person for security reasons, a mechanism should be put in place that would facilitate the aggrieved to submit a complaint to an open, public institution. He/she should receive a written response. Currently, there is a motion to appoint such an institution or to add a new competency to an already existing one. The institution named as having responsibility in this area should have the right to access top secret documents and the right to question secret service, so that it can verify the answers given.

### **6.3.3 Racial profiling**

- The Border Guards should not conduct special checks of Muslims and Arabs crossing Polish borders without any justified suspicion. People who are checked on any other basis than as part of a random control should be informed immediately about both the reason for such behaviour and the time involved in the prolonged control.
- The Border Guards should undergo special intercultural training which would enable them to treat Muslim women in an appropriate way, as well as understand cultural differences (for example that a beard is not tantamount to religious fundamentalism).

## 7. Conclusion

The year 2006 introduced to the world of Polish politics people with explicit xenophobic views. This has undoubtedly hindered activity of NGOs, especially in the field of propagating tolerance and anti-discriminatory acts in the education sector. The response of NGOs is, however, worthy of admiration. It is thanks to the objection of the NGO sector that the Ministry of Education backed out of ideas which might have contributed to an increase in racist and xenophobic sentiments in Polish schools.

The Polish policy harmed sexual minorities the most. Access to grants was made more difficult, as was the possibility of acting in educational institutions, advisory bodies in ministries and co-operation with the Polish government. And again the reaction of Polish and European non-governmental institutions helped in preventing actions of MPs and representatives of the Polish government which were against such organisations. We can also observe that statements openly discriminating homosexuals and lesbians have ceased in the Polish media.

The biggest success and development of Polish NGOs concerned the change of approach shown by the Polish judiciary towards racist crimes. "Hate speech" or acts of racist vandalism previously had not been punished because of "insignificant social harmfulness of the act." Now, although many of those crimes are disregarded, those which make it to the media, such as assault on Rabbi Michael Schudrich, are treated with due attention.

In all cases mentioned above, the NGO sector played the biggest part in shaping positive anti-discriminatory and anti-racist behaviour. We owe the positive approach of a large part of Polish society towards multiculturalism and the positive co-existence of national, ethnic, religious and sexual minorities in Poland to NGOs and not to the policy of the country. Most of those actions would not have been possible if it was not for the funds and support of the European Union. Co-operation with international organisations allows Polish NGOs to have greater independence, to conduct action more effectively as well as to exchange experiences. They are also more successful in lobbying Polish governmental institutions.

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## 9. Annex 1: List of abbreviations and terminology

**All-Polish Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska, MW*)** Organisation formed in 1989 by Roman Giertych, who remains its honorary chairman. In its policy documents it claims that the main aim is to bring up youth in the Catholic and national spirit. In the ideological declaration of December 1989 we can read that the organisation refers to rules of the Only, True and Holy Catholic Faith, declares war on doctrines propagating lawlessness, liberalism, tolerationalism and relativism and aims at building a Catholic country of Polish nation. Affiliated with the League of Polish Families, the All-Polish Youth has a reputation for acts of violence. In December 2006 LPR leadership announced that it dissociates itself from All-Polish Youth and decided to establish a new youth organisation Ruch Młodych LPR (Youth of League of Polish Families Movement). Roman Giertych's decision was motivated with press reporting about neo-Nazi party with members of All-Polish Youth taking part. During the meeting, its participants chanted Nazi slogans and shouted "Sieg heil!" against background of burning swastikas.**Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS*)**. Mainstream conservative party formed in 2001 by twin brothers Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński, who are, respectively, President and Prime Minister of Poland. The party won power in the 2005 elections. It has relations with anti-Semitic media belonging to Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, mainly Radio Maryja.

**League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR*)**. The main extreme-right party in Poland formed shortly before the September 2001 parliamentary election. The organisation is strongly Catholic and nationalist in orientation. The LPR's leader, Roman Giertych, was appointed Minister of Education in May 2006

**Radio Maryja** - Polish radio station - national-Catholic in character - established in Toruń in 1991 by the Congregation of the Redemptorist Fathers. Radio functions as a church legal entity belonging to Roman Catholic Church. Concession is in hands of Catholic order – the Redemptorists responsible to the Vatican. Father Tadeusz Rydzyk is radio's director. In the documents, he is mentioned as „one-man supervisory body, one-man managing body and one-man monitoring body” of Radio Maryja. Current coalition politicians support Radio Maryja. It is known for broadcasting anti-Semitic content.



european network against racism

**ENAR** Shadow Report 2006