

Open Letter of Polish NGOs – a protest signed by 28 non-government organizations

Deeply disturbed by the statements of the Ombudsman on acceptability of beating children, we would like to convey to the public opinion a protest of non-government organizations committed to helping children and protecting their rights against treating children as citizens of inferior category.

**Open letter of non-government organizations in relation to the statement of the
Ombudsman on beating children**

The non-government organization acting for protection of children's rights and for helping children and their families strongly protest against the standing of the Ombudsman, Janusz Kochanowski, accepting the possibility of applying corporal punishment of children.

We are astonished and indignant at the opinion of the Ombudsman, who due to his statutory tasks should uphold human - and therefore also children's - freedoms and rights, considering in particular their dignity and bodily inviolability. Along with constitutional guarantees, the protection of children's rights is assured also by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed by Poland in 1991, which clearly states that a child has a right to respect, protection of its dignity, to life without violence, without humiliation and derision, as well as the right to protection against beating and maltreatment.

If the closest family and carers do not guarantee the aforementioned rights to a child, it is the obligation of the State to take such measures that will ensure the youngest citizens the sense of security and life without violence.

The experiences of non-government organizations helping children and their families demonstrate that the border between corporal punishment and violence is sometimes apparent, while treating children with respect strengthens good relations between parents and children and conveys to children a vision of the world, where violence in interpersonal relations is not acceptable.

In educating the society on upbringing without violence, particular role is played by the statements and opinions of the authorities, including the Ombudsman. His mission should focus on combating stereotypes harmful to human rights, and not on maintaining them.

Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje (*Nobody's Children Foundation*)
Komitet Ochrony Praw Dziecka (*Committee for the Protection of Children's Rights*)
Fundacja Kidprotect.pl (*Kidprotect.pl Foundation*)
Fundacja ABCXXI – Cała Polska Czyta Dzieciom (*ABCXXI Foundation – All of Poland Reads to Kids*)

and:

Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej (*Center for Citizenship Education*)
Fundacja Bullerbyn na rzecz Wspólnoty Dzieci i Dorosłych (*Bullerbyn Foundation for Children and Adults Community*)

Fundacja Porozumienie bez Barrier (*Foundation Communication without Barriers*)
Fundacja Komunikacji Społecznej (*Social Communication Foundation*)
Fundacja MaMa (*MaMa Foundation*)
Fundacja Pomóż Dorosnąć (*Foundation Help to Grow*)
Fundacja Przyjaciółka (*Przyjaciółka Foundation*)
Fundacja SERCE – Europejskie Centrum Przyjaźni Dziecięcej w Świdnicy (*HEART Foundation – European Center for Children’s Friendship in Świdnica*)
ITAKA - Centrum Poszukiwań Ludzi Zaginionych (*ITAKA – Centre for Missing People*)
Międzynarodowa Kapituła Orderu Uśmiechu w Warszawie (*International Chapter of the Order of the Smile in Warsaw*)
Ogólnopolskie Pogotowie dla Ofiar Przemocy w Rodzinie "Niebieska Linia" IPZ (*Polish Nationwide Emergency Service for Victims of Domestic Violence „Blue Line”*)
Polska Fundacja Dzieci i Młodzieży (*Polish Children and Youth Foundation*)
Stowarzyszenia dla Dzieci i Młodzieży SZANSA (*Association for Children and Young People CHANCE*)
Stowarzyszenie Bezpieczeństwo Dziecka (*Association Child’s Safety*)
Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej (*Association of Legal Intervention*)
Stowarzyszenie OPTA (*OPTA Association*)
Stowarzyszenie STOP w Lublinie (*STOP Association in Lublin*)
Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Poszanowania Prawa Dzieci i Rodziny Ojcowie.pl (*Association for Respecting Children’s and Families’ Rights Ojcowie.pl*)
Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Przeciwdziałania Przemocy w Rodzinie Niebieska Linia (*Association for Preventing Violence in the Family “Blue Line”*)
Stowarzyszenie Przeciw Przemocy (*Association against Violence*)
Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Dzieci Chorych SERCE w Świdnicy (*Association for Ill Children HEART*)
Terenowy Komitet Ochrony Praw Dziecka w Lesznie (*Local Committee for Protection of Children’s Rights in Leszno*)
Terenowy Komitet Ochrony Praw Dziecka w Poznaniu (*Local Committee for Protection of Children’s Rights in Poznań*)
Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Społecznych TROSKA (*Fellowship of Social Initiatives CARE*)
Towarzystwo Nasz Dom (*Fellowship Our Home*)

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