

THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

2008 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Warsaw, 7 October 2008

Working Session 12: Freedom of Religion or Belief

Statement in exercise of Right of Reply

Shaping the attitudes of respect towards other people disregard their beliefs, views or religion is one of the principles of education.

Constitution of the Republic of Poland ensures parents' right to tuition and moral education of their children consistent with their beliefs. It also allows a religion of a church or a community to be taught at school (on condition of having their legal status been regulated).

General knowledge about main religions and beliefs in the world is handed down on history lessons in primary and secondary schools.

The rules of organizing religious education and ethics at schools have been defined by the Education System Act and the regulation of the Ministry of National Education *on the conditions and ways of organizing religious education in state kindergartens and schools*.

Timetables of primary and secondary schools **make allowance for both Religious Education and Ethics lessons.**

For small groups of students (less than seven), inter-forms or inter-schools RE lessons are organized.

RE teachers and ministers / clergymen / nuns are employed due to nominal recommendation of a diocese bishop, proper churches authorities or religious community authorities.

RE teachers qualifications determine Polish Episcopate of Catholics Church and **proper church authorities or religious community authorities** – in agreement with the Ministry of National Education.

On basis of the Education System Act, **RE teachers, ministers / clergymen / nuns are allowed to run civil-religious and ecumenical organizations in schools.**

Religious Education syllabi are prepared on the basis of **curricula elaborated and approved by proper churches authorities or religious community authorities** and presented to the Ministry of National Education.

In reality, **Religious Education lessons in public schools have been conducted by several of churches and religious communities.**

In primary schools and lower secondary schools, **RE is organized on requests of the parents.**

In upper secondary schools, **RE and Ethics is organized on requests of parents or students.** (major students).

Proper church authorities or religious community authorities elaborate and approve the textbooks and present to the Ministry of National Education to familiarize with their contents.

Education superintendent is responsible for the pedagogical supervision over the ensuring the possibilities for the realization of a religion or ethics lessons at schools.

The changes in the rules of carrying out the Matura exam (secondary school - leaving exam)

The current **compulsory part of the Matura examination**, covers an oral and written exam in the Polish language, an oral and written exam in a modern language and a written exam in a subject chosen from an established list of subjects. For the leavers of schools (or classes) teaching the languages of minorities, it covers an oral and written exam in the language of the minority. The condition to obtain the certificate is to pass (with a defined result) the exams mentioned above.

Currently, every school-leaver is entitled to take exams in additional subjects (maximum three) at a broaden/widened level. However, their results do not affect the passing or not the final exam.

The list of subjects to be chosen:

Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, Geography, History, History of Music, History of Art, Mathematics, Civic Education, Knowledge about Dance, Philosophy, Ethnic Minority Language, Information Technology, the Latin and Antique Culture.

According to the amendments to the regulation (being under consultation) of the Ministry of National Education *on the conditions and ways of assessment, classification and promotion of pupils and adult students and carrying out of tests and examinations in public schools* the **compulsory Matura exams will be:**

- a) oral and written exam in the Polish language,
- b) oral and written exam in a modern language,
- c) written exam in mathematics,
- d) oral and written exam in the language of a minority – for the leavers of schools or classes teaching the languages of minorities.

The compulsory Matura exams will be taken at a basic level.

Every school-leaver will be also obliged to take an exam in an additional subject (including a subject taken as compulsory) at a broadened level. However, their results will not affect the passing or not the final exam.

Besides the additional compulsory subject, a school-leaver will be entitled to choose two more additional subjects.