

# A fair deal for Poles in the UK: Appeal by UK citizens of Polish origin

Written by Stefan Mucha

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### A FAIR DEAL FOR POLES IN THE UK APPEAL BY UK CITIZENS OF POLISH ORIGIN

Dear Members of Parliament,

"Our ties with Poland are rooted deeply in our shared history" the Prime Minister said last week. Poland and the UK have faced external threats together since before the Second World War, and again now through NATO. Polish workers were made to feel especially welcome here when Poland joined the EU in 2004. In fact, they were encouraged to come and work here as a dynamic younger work force which would tackle the skills shortage, re-energize the British economy and rejuvenate the ageing population. Poles have continued to maintain their highly motivated work ethic, set up more than 87,000 businesses and contributed generously to the UK exchequer.

After the EU referendum on June 23rd, Polish and other EU workers and their families discovered that their presence in the UK was no longer welcomed. Most Leave campaigners during the referendum campaign had promised that the status of EU nationals currently here would be safe. Yet in the aftermath of the referendum Poles in the UK found themselves open to abuse and on occasions to actual physical attacks from UK citizens who interpreted the referendum result as a call for all EU foreign workers to depart. More than 180,000 Polish children in the UK were left deeply unsettled over their future. There were ugly incidents of hate crime including serious physical assaults, arson and even murder, as well as low level intimidation in public and online.

While the UK Government has said no EU nationals should be expelled they have made this conditional on

EU acquiescence. The International Trade Secretary has even referred to EU nationals as being a "key card" in the negotiations lasting over the next 3 years. It is shameful that thousands of Polish children should be treated by the UK government as hostages in a diplomatic poker game.

The UK government must declare unequivocally now that Polish and other EU citizens currently here under EU treaty rules, as well as their dependants, will be allowed to stay and work in this country. It is to the advantage of the United Kingdom to make such a declaration promptly because:

- 1 The UK should honour its commitment to those who arrived here legally under EU legislation and have contributed to the UK economy and society.
- 2 UK companies need a stable environment to plan their future investment and recruitment policies
- 3 A positive tone will be set for starting future negotiations with the EU when Article 50 is invoked.
- 4 There is less likelihood of a late "surge" of EU nationals once a clear demarcation date is set.
- 5 Polish entrepreneurs and Polish families will not feel pressurized to leave the UK early.
- 6 Perpetrators of hate crimes will be discouraged from intimidating Polish and other EU citizens.

Krystyna Bell, cultural coordinator, Andrzej Błoński, architect in private practice, Alina Callender, retired civil servant, Piotr Chłapowski, architect in private practice, Dr Ryszard Chmielowiec, retired engineer, Andrzej Fórmaniak, chartered engineer, Piotr Fudakowski, feature film producer, Danuta Hart, headmistress, Maria Horbaczewska, retired city banker, Major Otton Hulacki, retired printer, WWII veteran, Jan Jarzembowski, historian, Joanna Kańska, actor, Stefan Kasprzyk, former Mayor of Islington, Wanda Kościa, documentary film maker, Jakub Krupa, press agency journalist, Dr Olgierd Lalko, community leader, Ludomir Lasocki, former adviser to Polish Finance Minister, Jan Ledóchowski, financial adviser, film-maker, Rula Lenska, actor, Agnieszka Major, founder of Polish Psychologist Association, Director, Antah Ocean Ltd, Joanna Młodzińska, project manager, Dr Jan Mokrzycki, ex Chair of Federation of Poles in GB, Wiktor Moszczyński, ex Ealing Councillor, author, Bartłomiej Nowak, community centre manager, Tad Ostrowski, Director, Arlington Legal, Irma Pietron, solicitor, Romana Pizon, Bradford community leader, Tad Potworowski, Chartered Accountant, Krzysztof Ruszczynski, Director, Credit Union, Jolanta Sabbat, Health Policy Consultant, Janusz Sikora-Sikorski, Chair, Relief Society for Poles & Janusz and Wanda Prawdzic Szlaski Charitable Trust, former chair of the Polish Catholic Mission in England & Wales, Filip Słipaczek, Chartered Financial Planner & Patron of Faith Matters, Piotr Sowiński, veterinary surgeon, Dr Marek Stella-Sawicki MBE, military historian, Magda Szkuta, librarian curator, Robert Wiśniowski, Chartered Accountant, A E P Zaleski, solicitor, Andrzej Zakrzewski, chartered engineer, Krzysztof Zarebski, Management Consultant, Dr Marian Zastawny, Chair Association of Polish Engineers, Jan Zylinski, former London Mayoral candidate.

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