



Mr. Artur Jan Orzechowski  
Ambassador of Poland  
Embassy of Poland  
Stevinstraat 139  
1000 Brussels

Leuven/Ghent/Bruges, December 12, 2019

### **LGBT-free zones in Poland**

Dear Honorable Ambassador

Please allow us to express our deep concern about the decision of several cities and provinces in Poland to create 'LGBT-free zones' with the support of the Polish government.

Cities have to be a place for all people to develop themselves and to enjoy equal access to all fundamental rights. Creating zones that exclude the LGBT-community, allowing and even promoting this, is an extreme violation of the right of non-discrimination on the base of sexual orientation or gender identity.

As representatives of the cities of Leuven, Ghent and Bruges, we kindly but firmly call upon you to urge the Polish government to put an end to the creation of LGBT-free zones in several cities and provinces in Poland. We are concerned that these zones will promote hatred amongst the people of Europe. It goes without saying that we consider the use of 'LGBT-free zone' stickers unacceptable and should be explicitly forbidden.

We consider LGBT-rights as fundamental rights of all European citizens. This freedom is part of our common European identity. We respect freedom of speech, but we believe that we must stand together on the side of fundamental common European values such as diversity and tolerance.

Thank you in advance for your special attention to this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely

*On behalf of the city of Leuven*

Mohamed Ridouani  
Mayor

Lies Corneillie  
Deputy mayor of equal opportunities

*On behalf of the city of Ghent*

Mathias Declercq  
Mayor

Astrid De Bruycker  
Deputy major of equal opportunities

*On behalf of the city of Bruges*

Dirk De fauw  
Mayor