

--FINAL DRAFT--

Statement by the Republic of Poland in the High-level Segment on Statelessness  
and general debate at the 70th session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR  
Geneva, 9 October 2019

*Mr. High Commissioner,*

*Chairperson of the Executive Committee,*

*Excellences, Distinguished delegates,*

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

At the same time I take this opportunity to present national achievements in the context of the UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness.

*Mr. Chair,*

Statelessness is not a major issue in Poland. With 369 persons recognized by the Office for Foreigners to be without a citizenship and another 43 whose citizenship is not possible to be determined, the situation of statelessness affects merely 0,10% of all legally staying foreigners.

At present Polish law effectively secure foreigners against statelessness. Particular provisions on the matter were included in two instruments, namely the Act of 12 December 2013 on Foreigners and the Polish Citizenship Act of 2 April 2009.

*Mr. Chair,*

Pursuant to the **Act on Foreigners**, a foreigner is any person who is not a Polish citizen. Stateless persons are therefore treated on an equal footing

with any third country nationals. They enjoy the same access to the residence permits. No provision of the Act makes the basis for granting the permit conditional on holding citizenship of another country.

Another protection measure against statelessness is a **Polish ID card of a foreigner**. This document may be issued to a stateless person who resides on the territory of the Republic of Poland where it is justified by the interest of the country. The Polish ID card of a foreigner is a document that confirms the identity of the holder during his or her stay

A foreigner or a stateless person who is a holder of the residence card and has lost a travel document – and where it is not possible to obtain a new one – may be granted a **Polish travel document for a foreigner**. This document allows, to cross the Polish border multiple times.

The Act on Foreigners provides also for the possibility to regulate the legal status of **minor foreigners who have been abandoned in Poland by their biological parents** by enabling them to obtain a document confirming their identity and by allowing them to legalise their stay in our country. A foreigner's minor child born on the territory of the Republic of Poland, staying on this territory without care, is granted a temporary residence permit.

Provisions that apply to stateless persons also include regulations on proceedings for granting international protection as laid down in the **Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners within the Territory of the Republic of Poland**.

*Mr. Chair,*

The Polish national legal system allows stateless persons to legalize their stay, and in the longer term, to obtain Polish citizenship. The **Polish Citizenship Act** also prevents cases of statelessness, as:

1. it effectively prevents statelessness of children born or found on the territory of the Republic of Poland whose parents are unknown, have no citizenship or whose citizenship is undetermined;
2. stateless persons may apply for Polish citizenship under the simplified procedure. Moreover, every stateless person, like any other foreigner, may apply to the President of the Republic of Poland to grant them Polish citizenship;
3. it ensures that the loss of citizenship does not lead to statelessness by requiring the applicant to enclose in the application a document confirming citizenship of another country or a promise thereof.

*Mr. Chair,*

In closing, I wish to assure you **that Poland will continue to work for the effective accomplishment of the goal enshrined in the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness by 2024** by eradicating and preventing to emerge stateless community within our territory.

*I thank you.*

