Committee: UNICEF 

Agenda Item: Abolishing Child Marriages

The Republic of Poland, is a country in Central Europe stretching from the Carpathian and Sudeten Mountains to the Baltic Sea. It borders Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Poland is divided into 16 voivodeships. The biggest voivodeship is the Mazovian voivodeship, in which Poland’s capital city, Warsaw, is located. Poland covers an area of 310,000 km2 and has a population of almost 38 million people, making Poland the 9th largest and 9th most populous country in Europe.

Child marriages have been an active problem globally, affecting the young generations who have been victims of this issue. Child marriages have not only caused many difficulties in victims’ education, mental and physical health, but also caused economic problems for countries. According to the studies, the majority of the victims affected by child marriage are young girls. Victims of child marriage may not continue their academic or social life, or may be forced to work in hard labour at an early age, which will affect a child’s development. In addition, a child’s physical development will also be at risk if there is a young age pregnancy; this situation would not only risk the child’s physical development it would also increase the risks of the child dying during or after childbirth.

Poland’s legal marriage age is 18 years old; however, Poland allows girls over the age of 16 to be married with permission of the court. Poland has taken strict actions for sexual abuse of children; for instance, having sexual intercourse with an under-15-year-old is illegal, no matter the consent. The victim can be provided with professional psychological support and protection from police. Poland has taken action against violence against women and girls by signing the İstanbul Convention in 2015, signing the Act on Counteracting Violence, and is also working on a legislative draft (UD297) to make forced marriages illegal.

Poland has also taken action against child marriages that happen because of cultural differences or a lack of education. According to a study made by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights shows that around [2%](https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/addressing-forced-marriage-eu-legal-provisions-and-promising-practices) of Roma girls aged 10-15 are traditionally married or cohabiting with a partner across 11 European Union member states, including Poland. [16%](https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/addressing-forced-marriage-eu-legal-provisions-and-promising-practices) of Roma boys and girls aged 16-17 are legally or traditionally married or cohabiting across the 11 states. To be able to decrease the number of child marriages among Roma boys and girls in Poland, Poland is actively participating in and implementing the Programme for the Integration of the Roma Community. Poland has been providing opportunities in education, scholarships, and giving supplementary benefits with the ‘Mother 4+’, which has helped over 63,000 people.

Conclusion:

Poland is going to work with the UNICEF committee to ensure the protection of children’s rights and will be highlighting the importance of defeating cultural norms, educating young girls and boys, and encouraging laws against forced marriages.

Thank You.

Sources:

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* [CRC\_Poland\_NGO\_WORLD\_Policy\_Analysis\_Center\_86Session.pdf](https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/CRC_Poland_NGO_WORLD_Policy_Analysis_Center_86Session.pdf)