



SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

RESOLUTION ON THE CLOSURE OF LITHUANIAN SCHOOLS BY THE BELARUSIAN AUTHORITIES

27 September 2022 No XIV-1431
Vilnius

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,
noting that the Lithuanian language spoken in Lithuanian ethnic lands, which are currently located on the territory of Belarus, is at risk,

having regard to the fact that the Belarusian authorities suspended the activities of the Lithuanian secondary school in Pelesa, Belarus, on 11 August 2022,

recalling the note verbale of protest, sent on 12 August 2022 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania to the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in Lithuania, against the actions of the Belarusian authorities aimed at closing the Lithuanian secondary school in Pelesa, which is funded by the State of Lithuania,

regretting that, in accordance with the amendments to the Belarusian Education Code which entered into force on 1 September 2022, all schools operating in the country may conduct education only in Belarusian or Russian and that Belarus unilaterally terminated the bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of education with Lithuania on 15 September 2022,

emphasising that Lithuania respects the rights of national communities and minorities and that Vilnius Pranciskaus Skorinos Gymnasium has been operating since 1994, with education being conducted in Belarusian,

strongly condemns the actions of the Belarusian authorities to close the Lithuanian schools in Pelesa and Rimdžiūnai;

notes that the Lithuanian secondary school in Pelesa, Belarus, operating since 1992, was built and is fully funded by the State of Lithuania;

stresses that the Lithuanian schools in Belarus which operated up till now enabled Lithuanians living in Belarus to learn their mother tongue and preserve national identity;

draws attention to the fact that Belarus has ratified the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education;

recalls the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted on 18 December 1992 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/135 and the resulting international obligations regarding the implementation of the rights of national minorities, including the right to learn in their mother tongue;

reminds that the United Nations proclaimed the period 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages;

states that the above facts point to the pursuit, by the Belarusian authorities, of a discriminatory policy towards the ethnic communities living in Belarus and **strongly condemns** such actions;

invites the United Nations Human Rights Council, the institutions of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to take, within their respective remit, all necessary measures to immediately halt the discriminatory education policy of ethnic communities pursued by the Belarusian authorities;

invites all competent authorities of the Republic of Lithuania to raise the issue regularly in bilateral meetings and in international organisations.

Speaker of the Seimas

Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen