



**The Statement of the Board of the Polish Sociological Association  
Concerning Refugee Crisis**

Polish sociologists are alarmed by the tone and content of many comments questioning our duty to accept the refugees from the Middle East and North Africa.

To refuse asylum to refugees is to deny our own humanity. There is no greater social exclusion than the one experienced by refugees. Forced migration is one of the greatest tragedies that a person can experience. That is why we have a moral obligation to help the refugees. The effectiveness of this help depends on the proper definition of the situation.

Migrations are an indispensable part of human history. They are in fact a unique opportunity for contacts among people of different cultures, languages, and religions. Migration studies analyzing the consequences of migrations, both for migrants and for the societies that host them, have always been a vital part of Polish sociological thought. Let us just mention the contribution of Florian Znaniecki, the founder of Polish sociology and the co-author of "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America" and the author of "Studies of Antagonism to Strangers" – classics of migration studies.

We believe strongly that giving asylum to refugees is not just our moral and political obligation. It can be also demographically, socially, and economically beneficial. Moreover, it can be a unique chance for enriching our society that has been exceptionally culturally homogenous since World War II, as the refugees bring with them new cultural patterns and values.

Sociologists are aware of the concerns that bother Polish society. We also realize how critical is the process of adaptation and integration of migrants. The acceptance of refugees is a complex social issue and cannot be solved by purely administrative decisions. Social legitimization is needed and the decision makers should not limit their activities to the introduction of technocratic solutions.

We call for a rational and democratic public debate. It cannot be carried out primarily at party conventions and in tabloids. We demand that politicians and public figures stop using hate speech and demagoguery in the public debate concerning refugees. The wave of xenophobia and disrespect to others that they can trigger can have tragic consequences.

We expect the government, the media, and other opinion leaders to undertake measures that will facilitate the acceptance of refugees by Polish society.