

7 May 2020



Adam Bodnar

Commissioner for Human Rights for the Republic of Poland

c/o anna.szczodry-gorczyńska@brpo.gov.pl

Dear Mr Bodnar

As you are aware, your recent correspondence has been referred to my office by the Chief Ombudsman. I note your concerns about the wellbeing of Polish and European nationals currently present in New Zealand. Although many people in New Zealand, as in many other countries, are facing serious social and financial hardship, I recognise that foreign nationals can be in a particularly tenuous position as they do not have the same access to welfare assistance or extended family support as New Zealand citizens.

As a result of these concerns, I have written to the Minister of Social Development requesting that access to emergency social welfare financial assistance be made available to foreign nationals who have no other means to support themselves in New Zealand and no ability to return to their home countries due to COVID-19 related factors outside their control. I will let you know if I get a positive response to this request.

In relation to your concerns about access to healthcare, New Zealand is fortunate to have had very low rates of COVID-19. However, if foreign nationals require medical treatment for quarantinable or infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, then clause B23 of the New Zealand Eligibility Direction states that they are able to receive public health services for these purposes even if they are not otherwise eligible to receive such care. A copy of the direction is available at this link:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/eligibility-direction-2011.pdf>

I thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention and wish you and you colleagues well during these difficult times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Hunt'.

Paul Hunt
Chief Commissioner

cc His Excellency Mr Zbigniew Gniatkowski : wellington.amb.sekretariat@msz.gov.pl