

Dear Dr. Kochanowski,

Today I had a meeting with the Police in Birmingham about the Polish teenager, Karolina Okonska who had gone missing on arrival in Birmingham by bus from Poland but who has now been found safe and well. West Midlands

Police are very concerned that young people, arriving in Birmingham by bus from Poland are not being given accurate information about the actual address and location of the bus stop where they will be arriving by the bus companies bringing them. They are also concerned that young people, coming from small rural villages are too "trusting" and do not understand the dangers to which they are exposed if they are on their own in a city like Birmingham and do not speak adequate English.

The Police have asked me for contact details for Polish magazines etc published in UK which are likely to be read by young people and also for contact information (e mail if possible) for Polish digital Radio and TV stations accessible from UK. They are also anxious to try to get basic safety information given out by bus companies (in this case the bus company was "Sinbad"). They also found it very difficult to get help from Police in her home area who were basically not interested because "no crime had been committed". West Midlands Police were concerned for her safety and were genuinely fearful that they might in fact be investigating a murder. If a British young person went missing in another Country in similar circumstances their home Police Force would appoint a "Family Liaison officer" so that, if the outcome was in deed bad news, the family would hear that news from a Police Officer, not from the TV or Radio. Is there anyway Police links could be strengthened?

I really would appreciate anything you can suggest to get the message across to young people in Poland thinking of coming to the UK. On another note, I am really concerned at the number of Polish migrant workers still coming to the UK despite the recession. Everyday I am being contacted by charities dealing with Poles who are sleeping rough on the streets. Bluntly there are no NO JOBS for people who arrive here without a good command of English. Perhaps the most worrying thing is the rise in Racial abuse aimed at Polish migrants. To put it bluntly the number of unemployed migrant workers from the EU (not all of them Polish) who are visible on the streets of towns and cities in the Midlands is causing a break down in community relations.

Is there anyway we can get them message across in Poland that "If you don't speak good English and you don't have a job arranged; there is no point in coming to the UK"?

Last week we had a racist attack on some Polish youngsters in Kidderminster, for the first time ever. It is estimated that unemployment in the UK will rise to over 3Million and in this type of employment crisis those who have lost their jobs are extremely angry when they see migrant workers taking the few jobs that are available. I know this is unfair and against the whole purpose of the EU but as you know logic can go out of the window when someone's personal finances are in crisis!

I would be grateful for any help you can give in these matters.

With best wishes,

Fran Oborski
Wyre Forest District Council and Worcestershire County Council