



The Ambassador
of the Republic of Poland
to the Court of St James's
Amb, Lon. 264-2/14

London, 7 November 2014

Mr Ronny Gottschlich

LIDL UK Managing Director
Lidl UK GmbH
19 Worple Road
Wimbledon
London SW19 4JS

Dear Mr Gottschlich,

I would like to draw your attention to a matter that is of great concern to the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in London, and the Polish community in the UK. It is an apparent imposition of a ban on communicating in Polish by Lidl's employees in Kirkcaldy during their breaks and also on using Polish to assist Polish speaking customers. It is also a matter of our further concern that the Lidl's spokesperson has supported such policies, stating that it is Lidl UK's company policy that its staff speak in English at all times, irrespective of their nationality.

We live in a globalised world. I can see on your website that you take pride in being "a successful chain of grocery stores, expanding strongly throughout Europe and beyond its borders". It is obvious that in the UK you use English as the main vehicle of verbal communication. However we strongly feel that denying Lidl's employees the right to use their own language in private conversations during breaks is a sign of discrimination.

Moreover, the ability to communicate in Polish to Polish speaking customers should be seen as an advantage. By speaking in Polish, and in fact in any foreign language, Lidl's employees have elevated your customer service to a higher level and have broken communication barriers with customers who cannot communicate in English fluently. It improves the quality of service and attracts new customers, thus should be praised, not reprimanded.

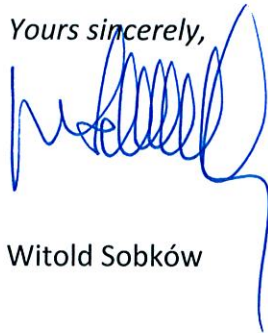
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Poles know Lidl from Poland and would like to remain its faithful customers and employees, even if there are other ample opportunities on offer. I could find on your website the following statement: "People have been talking about us. But we don't mind. In fact, we like to stand out from the crowd". Lidl is very popular with the Polish community in the UK and it seems natural for its staff to be able to assist their customers to the best of their ability. We want people to talk about Lidl in a positive way. I am sure that in the case I am describing in the letter you "will mind" and "will stand out from the crowd".

I remain hopeful that this issue can be addressed shortly and that Lidl will reconsider its current position.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Witold Sobków', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Witold Sobków