

**THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF
THE COMPREHENSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPLEX
NO 2 IN BIAŁY BÓR IN THE COMMON EDUCATIONAL SPACE**

As a result of increased migration processes and sociocultural transformations taking place in the global village, the modern world is a mosaic of ethnicities, nationalities and cultures. As a consequence of the aforementioned changes one observes a phenomenon called multiculturalism, i.e. coexistence of two or even more cultures which vary in language, religion and values. Such groups are usually called minorities.

The concept of minority is understood and defined in numerous ways. An interesting definition was proposed by Wirth: *“a group of people who, due to their physical and cultural features, are differentiated from others within the society (they live in) in a way that they are treated differently and incomparably and as a result consider themselves objects of collective discrimination”*.

A national minority is characterised by the following features:

- a minority is a fraction, subordinate to general social entities, which is aware of its existence and of certain characteristics attributed to it by others,
- physical or cultural characteristics of a minority are less valued or even underestimated by the majority of the society,
- the transfer of minority affiliation takes place due to the rule of origin, which has the capacity of affiliating future generations,
- there exists a tendency towards marriages among members of the same minority/

National minority is a special kind of minority and may be defined as *„a certain community within a wider society, that has real or alleged common ancestors, memories of common historical past and a certain cultural „bundle” focused on one or more symbolic elements defined as the essence of humanity.*

It is the sense of unity and affiliation with a certain national or ethnic minority that constitutes the current challenge for educational politics of the European Union and, as a result, for legal systems and codes, labour markets and the education of the EU countries. The reality of the multicultural society is the subject matter of multicultural pedagogy.

The aforementioned issue applies also to Poland, which has been a multicultural country for centuries. Nowadays, the most prominent national minorities are: the Germans, the Belorussians, the Ukrainians, the Russians, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Armenians and the Jews. Among ethnic minorities there are: the Romani, the Lemkos, the Tartars, and the Karaims. The Silesians and the Kashubians, on the other hand, are referred to as declared minorities.

In years 1945-89 national policy of Poland was based on the concept of a single nation state. The post-war reality of national minorities was presented by J.M. Tortosa: *„the heterogeneity of the society can be countered by its elimination and diminution, to the point of achieving homogeneity, but it can as well be eradicated ideologically by negating and masking its existence and thereby destroy the very consciousness of heterogeneity.”* The communist policy on national minorities was in accordance with the above-mentioned statement. The scope of rights was limited, especially regarding the educational field.

The political transformation in 1989 resulted in democratisation, in education as well. Relevant legal regulations are contained in The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2

April 1997, article 35 section 1. In January 2005 the Sejm passed the „*Act on the national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language*” referred to as „the national minorities constitution”. In accordance with the process of democratisation of Poland and with the requirements arising from the European Union membership – The Republic of Poland has ratified international conventions regarding the (also educational) rights of persons who identify themselves with national minorities. The requirements concerning the education of national minority students are stated in the article 13 of the Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system.

Among the minorities inhabiting Poland a special position is occupied by the Ukrainians. As a part of the operation „Vistula” in 1947, the then communist authorities resettled the Ukrainian population inhabiting south-eastern Poland to northern and western territories of Poland. According to the historical studies approximately 150 thousand people were included in the transfer. In the 60s there were around 180 thousand Ukrainians in Poland and at the beginning of the 80s there were approximately 250 - 350 thousand. However, there is no agreement among scholars respecting the quantitative data. There is a shortage of precise nationality statistics, which are indispensable for the labour market and educational politics. The data collected during the Polish Census of 2002 showed that 27 172 Polish citizens declared affiliation to the Ukrainian minority. Pomerania is inhabited by over 6,5 thousand people, most of whom in the county of Człuchów (1,19%) in Pomorskie province and in the county of Szczecinek (1,12%) in Zachodniopomorskie province.

One of the most important issues regarding national minorities is education, especially the communicative competence in the language of the ancestors. The Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 3 December 2002 regulates the conditions and execution of the tasks of schools and public institutions allowing the maintenance of national, ethnic, religious and language identity of students who belong to national minorities and ethnic groups. The act introduces the following regulation: *education of children and youth belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups may take place in schools and sections with native language of instruction, bilingual schools and schools with additional native language courses*. According to the aforementioned Ordinance, the organisation of teaching is as follows:

- schools or units with native language of tuition conduct classes in the minority language, with the exception of Polish, history and geography classes,
- bilingual schools or sections conduct classes in both languages, that is in Polish and the minority language,
- schools or sections with additional native language courses conduct classes in all subjects in Polish as a medium of tuition, including the native language of a particular minority).

A particularly significant normative act is the aforementioned Act on the national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language of 6 January 2005 which enables children and youth from families belonging to national, ethnic and language minorities to learn in schools their own native language, as well as the history and culture of their own group. The result of the above legal acts (as a consequence of the political transformation of the state and adjustment of legal requirements to the democratic legislation of the European Union) is an increase in activity of national minorities. Detailed studies in the subject matter were conducted by prof. Jerzy Nikitorowicz. It should be emphasised that in the education of national minorities schools with additional native language courses are prevalent. According to the data, the Ukrainian minority had 45 schools in 1990 and as many as 156 schools in 2005; those numbers show the dynamics of growth in the field even despite the fact that the

Ukrainian minority is characterised by significant dispersion of the population, which results in a small number of children in a large number of schools. Additionally, schools nowadays contend with the effects of the population decline, which results in additional financial problems for local governments. Primary schools for the Ukrainians include 68 schools and 20 interschool groups, nine of which are schools with Ukrainian as the native language (289 students), one school conducts instruction in a bilingual system (91 students), in the rest of the schools Ukrainian is taught as an additional course. There are 18 such schools in Pomerania, that is 9 in Pomorskie province and 9 in Zachodniopomorskie province. 39 schools and 17 interschool groups function at the level of lower-secondary school (4 schools and 4 groups with native language of instruction, one bilingual school), 6 of which function in Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie provinces. Upper-secondary schools have started teaching and educational activities since 2002/2003. The most prevalent are schools with the Ukrainian language – 9 schools and 3 interschool groups (total of 439 students). It is noteworthy that recently even higher education institutions for members of minority groups have started to appear.

Currently the most prominent school and education centres with Ukrainian as a medium of instruction are:

- the Comprehensive Secondary School Complex in Biały Bór,
- the Comprehensive Secondary School Complex in Legnica,
- the Comprehensive Secondary School Complex in Przemyśl,
- the Comprehensive Secondary School Complex in Bartoszyce,
- Ukrainian sections in the Primary School in Banie Mazurskie
- Ukrainian sections in the Primary School in Bielsko Podlaskie.

The schools mentioned above have functioned for a long time and have developed rich tradition. Not only do they function as didactic and educational institutions, but simultaneously as cultural centres cultivating and promoting Ukrainian culture in the social environment.

A representative Ukrainian school in Pomerania is the Taras Szewczenko the Comprehensive Secondary School Complex No. 2 in Biały Bór. The history of its establishment is closely related to the aforementioned operation “Vistula”. In years 1947 – 1952 the Ukrainian population was deprived of future opportunities and the right to take its own initiative. The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Poland of 22 July 1952 set up a legal framework for introduction of native language teaching in primary schools. The sociocultural animators of the Central Pomerania, i.e. Aleksander Kutylński, Włodzimierz Serkiz and Michał Kowalczyk, with the support of almost 300 parents (mostly from the county of Koszalin), established (in 1957) a native language learning centre in Biały Bór, despite the dispersion of the population and teaching staff shortages. Among the staff, with deep devotion, worked Eugenia Koziej Kowalczyk. One year later, on the 2nd September of 1958 a new Primary School No. 2 was opened at 27, Żeromskiego Street. The school was managed by Włodzimierz Szulhan and consisted of four joint classes (of total 57 students), the teaching staff included Eugenia Koziej – Kowalczyk, Stefania Szulhan and Aleksy Kutylński. Ukrainian was taught in the first year, the teaching of Polish started in the second year. From the beginning of its existence the school was territorially unrestricted, with its own boarding house from which 21 students benefited in the first year of its functioning. In 1960 the house moved to 9, Armii Czerwonej Street and the position of the headmaster was assumed by Aleksander Kutylński.

In 1961 the school was named after the Ukrainian poet Taras Szewczenko. Headmaster duties were performed by the following persons: Jan Cymbaiko (1962/1963); Andrzej Waszenko (1963-1966); Daniel Drewko (1966-1975). The next headmaster, Irena Drozd, is an extraordinary figure. She held the position for 24 years (1975 – 1999) and carried out extensive renovation and expansion of the building. To this day, she is an exceptional and widely respected figure highly appreciated by the public. After the conclusion of the restoration work in 1983, the headmaster I. Drozd was forced to close down the boarding house due to poor technical condition. The students were gladly, although temporarily taken in by the Agricultural School Complex. In the same year the Social Committee for the Construction of the PS No.2 Boarding House was formed as an effective way of finalising the construction of the building at 27, Dworcowa Street. The building was put into use in 1989. Especially noteworthy is the effort put into the undertaking in view of the crisis afflicting the field of education to a great extent at the time.

In 1983 the school celebrated its 25th anniversary and received its school banner with the image of the school patron. The banner was sponsored by the Board of Management of The Ukrainian Sociocultural Association (in 1990 transformed into The Union of Ukrainians in Poland). The next significant event for the school and the Ukrainian community was the unveiling of the monument of Taras Szewczenko on 22 September 1991. The monumental statue was the first memorial to the poet in Poland and the unveiling celebration was attended by several thousand people of both Ukrainian and Polish origins.

In the same year, as a sign of the headmaster's organisational dynamism and in accordance with the act of 1991, the school admitted six-year-olds.

In 1995, aside from its educational pursuits, the school proved to be a cultural centre.

The promotion and standards of the students' vocal and dancing skills are unrivalled in the province. The school, thereby, proved its ability to cultivate Ukrainian culture and intercultural education.

After the tenure of I. Drozd, the post was assumed by Jarosław Myc (1999 – 2002), who was the first graduate to become the school headmaster. After him, Zdzisław Bihun took over for the following 2 years. Since September 2004 the position has been held by Andrzej Drozd.

The beginning of the school year in 2009 served as an occasion to unveil a plaque commemorating the 50th anniversary of the school, as well as to present a bilingual picture album published by the teaching staff. Another proof of the high teaching standards at the school in Biały Bór is its 12th ranking place in the province and 261st in the country. The ranking was carried out by opinion-forming magazines: "Rzeczpospolita" and "Perspektywy". The school's high position in the ranking was caused by students' achievements in contests and high results in the secondary school-leaving examinations, which confirm the potential of both the students and the educators. Therefore, the school motto: "*From reception to graduation with the Ukrainian language*" may be expanded by the effectiveness of the educational path of the students.

The above-mentioned Ukrainian teaching school is not only a didactic and educational institution, but also a propagator of the knowledge of Ukrainian cultural determinants and age-adequate participation in Ukrainian culture.

Pomerania was and is a multicultural area, to which may well I attribute some features of cultural borderland. This region is a natural phenomenon located outside the country's centre, an area of diversity, otherness, dissimilarities, but also that of similarities. It is a territory wherein comparisons and contrasts seem evident, due to different perspectives (Self – Other) and the possibility to reflect and take part in the intercultural dialogue. It is

commonly believed that the fusion of cultures has positive consequences and puts the world and human interactions into clearer perspective.

Educationalists agree with the conviction that cultural diversity is a precondition for creative development of the society. As examples of such scholars let us point to Florian Znaniecki and Lech Witkowski. Topicality of F. Znaniecki's statement is indisputable – *“everyone should actively participate in at least two national cultures, fully appreciating both”*. According to prof. Witkowski, a Man and the culture of borderland together form a culture that cultivates the borderland of human fate; on the ground of those two aspects the dialogue and subjectivity appear to be far from trivial. Therefore, the cultural diversity constitutes a challenge for a school which aims to prepare students to find their own existence in culture, to understand it and actively participate in it. A young man in confrontation with this cultural plurality and similar environmental divisions is simultaneously subjected to an expansive popculture of a globalised world. In such a complex reality, he must find the source of his/family/cultural identity, but also find his own place in existential-professional dimension. This situation frequently requires an interference/support on the part of the parents and professional pedagogues obliged – especially in schools of this type – to help with occurring dilemmas. Educational activities are not – and cannot – have neither objective nor obvious nature. They are the result of permanent cultural negotiations which are initiated by the need to ask the social questions: what kind of world do we define as ours? How do we begin to comprehend it? However, the existence of people inhabiting the cultural borderland is more complex, since quite frequently there is an environmental division into the categories of 'Us' and 'Them'.

Every student (or an adult) has a need to function **within** a group – and not **outside** it; it is a common fact beyond any cultural divisions. The social division into the categories of “Us” and “Them” is dependent on the ability to tell the difference between both groups. The conviction in the existence of differences manifests itself primarily in a protecting relation to the group of “Us” together with the feeling of harm and it is simultaneously an evidence of a group identification. This real or imagined feeling of harm or hurt attests to a group stigmatization, and from this group's perception it is a justification for a conflict's legitimization. It needs to be emphasised that this barely touched upon pattern should be applied to each of the sides. The feeling of harm evokes hostility, is mythologised which in turn causes it to become established. In pedagogy there is a term of ethnic distance, which is understood as a social distance in relation to other national groups. Ethnic and cultural diversity is perceived as a side-by-side functioning of representatives of various nations/cultures/languages/identities, constitutes a subject of an attitude of ethnic character. An important element of attitudes in relation to “the Other” are stereotypes, i.e., non-scientific generalisation which is a consequence of a rapid and superficial process of thinking, functioning as a defence mechanism. In the reality of multicultural society the stereotypes strengthen the opposition of “our” and “alien”, effectively distancing rational arguments in favour of emotions, schematic views, perceived and presented through emotions and usually in a judgemental way. The stereotype of an Ukrainian is two-fold. The first, positive, presents him as a person capable of making a sacrifice, loving freedom and justice. The negative one uses terms such as: unfriendly, deceitful, vindictive, but, at the same time...brave. The genesis of this stereotype needs to be looked for in history (and its frequent conflicts). Among the Ukrainians, the stereotype of a Pole also has historical roots. We used to be “Lachs” – arrogant, malicious, vain noblemen, while a “non-Lach” is an indifferent description of a non-nobleman. Both nations notice their own negative trait, namely: their inclination to overuse alcohol.

Hence, the educational field ought to encompass the mechanisms of social life in which the above-mentioned patterns may still – needlessly – remain hibernated.

Relations between the “Our” and “Alien” fractions primarily rely on the following factors:

- historical events which might constitute painful topics for both sides,
- the number of “Us” and “Them” – less numerous minorities are perceived as less threatening,
- the congestion of population – a minority which inhabits a certain territory and perceives that area as their “home territory” is more threatening than the one living in a diaspora,
- cultural level – one needs to consider racial, language and religious differences,
- separatist activity – minorities exhibiting strong separatist tendencies are problematic,
- democratic traditions in a given country – countries characterised by a long-standing tradition of democracy tend to have fewer conflicts,
- guarantees for national minorities – legal status; the highest form of guarantees for national minorities is constitution (Canada, Australia), which makes a multiculturalism into a doctrine of a country’s functioning,
- the level of living as well as economic and organisation levels of a given country – a rich and well-organised country has a positive and soothing influence on the number and fierceness of its citizens’ conflicts.

The above-mentioned – only the most relevant – factors, next to human attitudes and most frequently ambiguous emotions, influence the dynamics of the phenomenon. What needs to be emphasised is that the problem in question does not only concern the area of school. It is treated as one of the global problems of the world. In the global scale it can be a problem dealt with by international organisations (UNESCO, EU), a topic of educational reports and politics as well as that of solutions in educational systems. In the micro-scale, the discussion refers to the considerations at the level of a given social environment, family or school. We need to try to achieve a point where diversity is an incentive to be creative, which in turn leads to growth, simultaneously counteracts stereotypes, prejudice, conflicts - and frequently also the bureaucratic stagnation.

In a situation where cultural differences clash, a special role and task is attributed to the transfer of cultural heritage, the shaping of cultural identity and attachment. This is also a purpose of the school in Biały Bór, although in the Polish educational system a particular role is played by secondary schools – as they are the last phase of education for the members of national minorities (apart from filological majors of universities and academies). Simultaneously, it is the phase of a student’s adolescence in which a system of values, attitudes and social (next to national) identity is shaped. For the alumni for whom this is also the last phase of education – their own, internalised (through the work of their own and this by the educators) cultural resources shall remain with them for the rest of their life.

In the scientific literature on the subject one may encounter opinions that schools fail to implement the planned educational purposes and constitute only “smoke-screen” in relation to the minorities.

According to J. Smolicz, there are situations where a conviction is phrased that „it is not worth it” to communicate (and so, in consequence, to learn) in the language of the ancestors since it might form an obstacle on the road to career. However, if the minority students do not complete their education with the feeling of being rooted in their minority

culture, it will mean a higher likelihood of developing resentment, inferiority complexes and even xenophobia in relation to the dominant culture.

M. Sobecki argues that educational problems in the reality of clashes of cultures shall be analysed in an integral fashion, the sphere of identity, competences and students' attitudes constitute a subject of educational and didactic endeavors. As it is evident in the above-mentioned statement, educational success depends primarily on the awareness of the concept of "being alien." This concept is associated with the concept of identity which signifies *a non-modifiable sameness, an identity the basis of which is the genetic code, so the traits in question are characteristic and crucial*. On the one hand it serves to establish an individual's place in a social world, among other people, but on the other – it is a source of feeling of personal uniqueness and individuality. Identity has the quality of a human trait and, simultaneously, it is a process.

Three basic scopes of identity can be differentiated: individual, social and cultural.

- Identity of a separate-individual-personal character. According to the life cycle model by E. H. Erikson, the development and identity are the consequence of man's progression through eight stages out of which the first stage of baby's life and the period of adolescence are the most important ones. The need felt in those stages for the unification of external (group) identification with the internal one (oneself) can be described as the feeling of identity. This phenomenon consists in collecting various information about oneself, their assessment, interiorisation of specific knowledge about oneself, including autoreflection. The source of information can be the observation of our own behaviour and that of others', their consequences, comparisons with them and social categorisations connected with an awareness of belonging to a specific social/ethnic/religious group. From a man's personal perspective, the feeling of identity encompasses four spheres: the feeling of being unique, identical, that of continuity and integrity both in personal and social dimension. From such a perspective, identity is *a system of interiorised elements of social life, individual and specific for each individual, created as a result of identification perceived as a conscious internalisation of patterns, symbols and social values*.

- Social identity – produces content and experiences from the perspective of belonging to a social community to which one belongs. This is the type of character specific to group identity (eg. family or school class) which requires loyalty, but enables the possibility of perspective and self-assessment.

Furthermore, it requires the knowledge of what was and is. Prof. J. Nikitorowicz argues that it is the meeting of the present and the past in order to better anticipate the future.

- Cultural identity is the result of a relatively permanent identification of an individual (subjective) and group character with specific cultural values (ideas, convictions, opinions, attitudes...). It develops owing to individual and social identity. We can differentiate the following levels which remain in mutual relations despite the fact they do not form a closed system:

a) home-family-oriented identity, original socialization – leads to becoming familiar with the rules and standards of behaviour and accepting the system of values,

b) local and parish-oriented identity is a conscious positioning of oneself within the local social environment and representing (non)conformist attitudes,

c) regional and ethnic-oriented identity is a phase characterised by the spreading of territory and methods of social communication, while simultaneously perceiving other social/ethnic groups which cause comparisons and verification of previously accepted elements of domestic culture,

d) national and country-oriented identity is characterised by strong, emotional ties with one's ethnic group as well as the country in which one functions. This is a phase of one's self-definition as a member of small and large motherland (common ideas and historical past), consciousness of the language, art, religion and tradition,

e) supranational and cosmopolitan-oriented identity is the act of reaching beyond national identity with(out) cutting the ties with it, described as the culture of a global world.

The above-mentioned considerations highlight the importance of the identity-shaping process in the life of every man. Even more so that it is particularly important in the situation of children and youth of multicultural areas. The purpose of it is to – during the socialization and acculturation processes realised by the family and school – create for the students conditions to accept and interiorise their own culture, which is supposed to be the source of pride and strength especially in the cases of antagonistic contacts with other national groups. The research conducted by prof. Nikitorowicz (concerning the cultural borderland of Belarus and Ukraine) suggests that even though the youth perceive themselves as Europeans in the full scope of participation in this world, simultaneously the identification with their own "private motherland" has grown. Thus, assuming and accepting family roots puts in motion further personal process of shaping and the awareness of existence of "I and We" (family), which is connected with a social process of association with (beyond family) "We", which, in turn, results in the contamination of numerous "We". This barely touched upon phenomenon in practice boils down to assimilation – that typical for Europe process of "merging" of minority groups in a leading group and culture. This process (in nationality-oriented politics) may have a spontaneous character, or it may be a forced assimilation (cutting off national roots of a minority group). In the past and the present of the Ukrainian minority on the Polish territory one could find examples of both of those assimilation types.

However, as far as this article is concerned, the emphasis is placed on the culture contamination process under the influence of common experiences, participation of a student in a social reality which creates opportunities to internalise attitudes represented by "the Others". The cultural assimilation is served – or even preceded – by the acculturation process, important in interpersonal relations. The elimination of elements within one's own culture and accepting the content of the culture of "the Others" in consequence leads to the merging of both, with the character of this contamination - symmetrical or asymmetrical – depending on the dominance of a given culture. Furthermore, what is important is the character of mutual relations which may be symbiotic or antagonistic. The world is heading towards the option of integration, hence the subject of an utmost importance is to make the acculturation process symmetrical and symbiotic. This should accommodate all the identity types and prevent the perception of a minority as a specific ghetto. The above-mentioned postulates have been taken into account in intercultural education which considers dialogue as the most important method of communication following the concept of teaching the skills to solve conflicts to avoid confrontations. Declaration to honour democratic values, respect for human rights, and enable the dialogue of bodies of opinion was the leading topic of "Joint Declaration of Presidents of Republic of Poland and Ukraine on Concord and Reconciliation" of 21 May, 1997, signed in Kiev. Postulates of cultural dialogue put forward concepts of the resignation from isolation and stigmatisation as well as necessity to experience otherness – which obviously cannot be easy initially, but as a result leads to a proper and desirable perspective. All those tasks are the responsibilities of science to enable theoretically and methodologically analyse "new" dilemmas and an area of education which – as a result of its down-to-earth approach and functionality will make it possible to achieve a new perception of cultural dialogue.

The proposition put forward by prof. Nikitorowicz – to create a new paradigm of the dialogue of cultures, tolerance and acculturation in the multicultural societies of today leads to a paradigm of coexistence in a multicultural world. For this purpose it is essential to:

- Promote universalisms and joint cultural goods instead of minimising the importance of otherness. Universalisms help with learning, tolerance, positive confrontations with “the Others” also in the purpose of shaping “cultural canon”, i.e. values, language, symbols and particularly cultivated and protected myths.

- Promote human community as encompassed in a triad of kinship – neighbourhood – friendship. Human community needs to be characterised by tolerance and appreciation.

- Promote acculturation and assimilation. One needs to distinguish: preventive acculturation (accepting foreign cultural content for the purpose of protecting one’s own culture); controlled acculturation (agreeing to fuse chosen cultural contents, without violating the foundations of one’s own culture), unintended acculturation (mutual borrowing) as well as democratic acculturation (partner-like interpersonal relations of countries characterised by cultural pluralism).

- Promote attitudes expanding the spectre of cultural goods – community-based, educational programs; forming local projects and those of country-wide reach which aim to promote and affirm cultures and create the foundations for intercultural dialogue. Similar initiatives result in the crossing of borders, the understanding of the world’s otherness.

The basis of this process is regional education realised in schools and educational-didactic institutions. A particular role is played by those which function in multicultural communities since apart from tasks of didactic nature they are supposed to prepare a student to live in a pluralist society (also in a cultural sense).

Country’s and self-government’s educational policy is compatible with the postulates of education for the common world, while paying attention to learn about and understand one another and the culture of “small motherland”. Educational policy also refers to the education of national minorities, hence a particular role bestowed upon schools dealing with them together with conditions for their optimal, effective functioning.

It is assumed that the school’s role is all the bigger the higher are the possibilities to communicate using a language of minority.

Hence, whenever a dispute arises whether a school is to teach using a language of minority as a language of tuition or just use it within the scope of an additional subject – any doubts can be settled by an analysis of a social role of a given language of minority. The above-mentioned problem is precisely formulated by European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (signed in 1992): teaching a child an ethnic language *should in no way mean cutting this child off from their native culture, taking away their right to satisfy equivalent need to fluently command their native language both in speech and writing*. The optimal solution is the rule of balance which advocates teaching it, but simultaneously warns against the scenario of being pigeonholed in an ethnic ghetto. Forcing a student to use a nationwide language deprives him of an opportunity to socialize, to master shortcut communication codes, to understand context, which in consequence results in resentment, building barriers and feeling of incompetence in social interactions. On the other hand, the mastering of motherland’s language provides strength to those who realise that fact. Activity of ethnic school community is determined by the social status of families, the importance of education in culture as well as activity in the fields of forming and promoting educational-cultural initiatives. The process of educating aims to equip the students with cultural competences – which, in a narrowed perspective, mean a coherent collection of signs and

semantic codes, that allows for a creative active movement within the spiritual, aesthetic field of a given group. In the process, it is essential to have access to the given cultural goods. The wide perspective perceives culture in an anthropological fashion, that is it plans to prepare a pupil to function innovatively in a global village. For the areas of cultural borderland what is important is the social context in which the transfer of said competences takes place. It suggests that the language functions here as a link, and in the case of members of minority – it constitutes a central, relevant value and a leading element of their identity. Currently, we classify a language – next to a national flag and an anthem – among national symbols and even despite that fact - it is the language that disappears most rapidly from the world. The reason behind such a situation is an insufficient rooting of a native language in tradition, literature and, above all, in the style of life of young generations which more quickly and willingly master functional languages. In the era of cultural dialogue the language should fulfill an integrating function, quite like cultural competences are to lead towards a transmission into communicative competences and promote above-mentioned universalisms and national goods. There exists a danger of using a language as an element of manipulation, and not communication. This problem is a subject of legal regulations of all countries and international organisations, which aim to protect this means of communication. The aspects of cultural competences of the borderland should not exclude and overlook the meaning of art as a value and a component of a national cultural canon, but also an opportunity to find something unique. A question which is marginalized (in the context of multiculturalism) is the religion – mainly because it is treated as a private sphere. In spite of the progressing process of society's secularization, the role of Graeco-Catholic and Orthodox church remains an important element consolidating the national culture of Ukrainians with important questions of their socio-cultural life.

The above-mentioned considerations concerned spheres which determine efficient undertaking of cultural dialogue on an international basis. The source of positive and expected relations is the consciousness of one's own culture. The process of identification starts in one's family and lasts for a lifetime. Special tasks in this field are undertaken by school since the results of didactic-educational activities should be a permanent process of "choices", acceptance in the sphere of own's own national tradition. A student/alumnus of an ethnic school is typically open to otherness, shows an initiative in searching for the possibilities of understanding and cooperation. I believe that the didactic-educational offer of the school in Biały Bór takes into consideration all the questions discussed so far. The main program purpose of the school is shaping the sense of identity with the Ukrainian culture. The school in Biały Bór described its mission in the following way:

- learning about the history of ancestors,
- acquiring the knowledge on nature, geography, and ethnography of Bieszczady – the land of ancestors,
- establishing interpersonal contacts with the displaced in order to gather and systematize information,
- developing patriotic attitudes related to national identity,
- shaping the sense of belonging to one's own "small motherland",
- uniting and mobilising local community for joint activity,
- shaping the attitude of creative participation in culture as well as popularization of Ukrainian folklore outside one's own immediate social environment.

For the purpose of achieving the above-mentioned postulates, numerous school ceremonies are organised, for instance, the days of Widkryti of school, "Rokowyny" of

Szewczenko; teacher's Day/Holiday of Pokrowa, the festival of Sakralnoji Tworczości or Swjatweczir, the contest of sung poetry with lyrics by Taras Szewczenko as well as meetings with important and interesting personalities like, for example, ambassador of Ukraine in Poland (26.10.2010). Ukrainian culture and art is promoted in the local community and the whole region by Folk Song and Dance Ensemble „Witrohon”. In the days of 29-30.10.2009 the school hosted an Ukrainian delegation from Iwanofrankiwsk headed by mayor Wiktor Andruszkiewiczjus. Among the members of the delegation were councillors from the town council, entrepreneurs as well as a representative of the Youth Council of Iwanofrankiwsk. Comprehensive Secondary School Complex no 2 in Biały Bór is not a school unknown in the region nor in Ukraine. Teaching and educational activities conducted in the school manifest care for the survival of identity and Ukrainian cultural legacy. It is an example of an institution which, in spite of the scattered state of Ukrainian population or negative demographic tendencies (drop in the birth rate is also felt by the Polish majority) also fulfills the role of cultural Centre animating projects for the sake of a wide social community. Through its actions it protects its own culture while simultaneously strengthening the attitudes which lead towards cultural dialogue. I believe it also expects the same of “the Others”.

Normative Acts

- Dz. U. z 1977 r. Nr 38, poz. 168
- Dz. U. z 1991 r. Nr 120, poz. 527
- Dz. U. z 1993 r. Nr 61, poz. 285
- Dz. U. z 1997 r. Nr 78, poz. 483
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The phenomenon of globalization, cultural changes, increased migration processes lead Europe/ the World to a model of a global village. The feeling of national identity, the awareness of common and different features resulting from the history, origin and culture play an important role for its inhabitants. The reality of a multicultural society is a subject of research and postulates of intercultural pedagogy.

The above issue refers also to Poland which has been a multicultural country for century. Nowadays the following minority groups should be distinguished: Germans, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Russians, Czechs, Slovaks, Jews and Armenians. The ethnic minorities include: Romani people, Lemkos and Tatars, however Silesians and Kashubians are proposed minorities. The system changes of Poland after the year 1990 caused a change of legislation and ratifying international conventions which determined the legal frames and the scope of the activity of minority groups.

Ukrainians have a special position in the Pomeranian region due to a migration action "Vistula" which was carried out in the year 1947 by communist authorities. At present 6.5 thousand people live in the north of the country, most of them in districts of Człuchów (1.19 %) and Szczecinek (1.12 % of the total number of inhabitants).

Education, especially communicative competences in a language of ancestors are a leading purpose of teaching. Complexes of Secondary Schools in Biały Bór, Górow Iławiecki, Legnica, Przemyśl, Bartoszyce and Ukrainian classes in Banie Mazurskie and Bielsko Podlaskie realize bilingual teaching. Apart from didactical and educational activity these schools play a role of the centres of pension trustees of Ukrainian culture, the culture which they promote in social environment.

The Taras Szewczenko Complex of Secondary Schools No2 in Biały Bór is a representative school in Pomerania. The fate of the school present symbolically the fate of Ukrainian people who thanks to their determination led to opening the school in 1962. The headmistress Ms. Irena Drozd had a special contribution to expansion of the base and organization of the institution (in the years 1975-1999).

The leading purpose of the school curriculum is creating the national identity, animation of Ukrainian culture in social environment. Meetings with interesting people / guests from Ukraine as well as trips and events at school and outside it are very helpful. Projects result in creating relationships, popularization of folklore and first of all they break stereotypes concerning the insularity of Ukrainian culture. Schoolchildren of the Complex of Secondary Schools No2 in Biały Bór are at the cultural edge thanks to which they are richer in a different perspective of perceiving the reality. Cultural competences acquired in school and after-school social interactions result in open attitude - commonly expected in a reality of a global village.

Key words: *Ukrainian national minority, cultural borderland, multiculturalism, national identity, Biały Bór.*