

UNESCO Secretariate  
Head of the Department of Higher  
Education,  
Mr Georges Haddada

It is my pleasure to inform you that UNESCO Department of the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, established on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2004, started its activity on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005.

On 14<sup>th</sup> May 2005 a ceremonial inauguration of the Department was held at the Academy. It was the leading programme point of the celebration of the Academy's anniversary. This honorable event took place under the auspices of the President of the Capital City of Warsaw - Prof. Lech Kaczyński. The committee included as well: Mr Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, the former Prime Minister of Poland, Prof. Jerzy Kłoczkowski - the Chairman of the Polish UNESCO Committee, Prof. Jerzy Kuberski - the Chairman of the Korczak's International Association, Prof. Jadwiga Bińczycka - the President of the Korczak's Polish Committee and Prof. Piotr Węgleński - the Rector of the University of Warsaw.

The UNESCO Department inauguration ceremony, at the Academy of Special Education, gathered numerous representatives of the state and local administration, as well as academic circles. The list of participants included the rectors of Warsaw and Mazowsze region universities, deans of Pedagogy and Social Pedagogy Departments from various universities, staff and students of the Academy of Special Education. The ceremony was also attended by the representatives of non-governmental organizations, foundations and various institutions cooperating with the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw.

Apparently, it should be noted that the Academy has strong links with the national and local communities. It supports social initiatives concerning, for instance, the handicapped and it fosters broadly understood social, educational, cultural and political changes.

Letters congratulating on the opening of the Academy UNESCO Department have been received, among others, from - the President and Prime Minister Offices, Ministry of National Education and Sport and the Episcopate of Poland.

The ceremony was conducted by professor Adam Frączek, the Rector of the Academy of Special Education. He presented UNESCO Department's objectives in the perspective of the changes and achievements of the Academy of Special Education in Warsaw. The Rector pointed out, that the UNESCO Department foundation is a part of the Academy's profile broadening programme and it stresses its further openness toward European and global problems. The Department was named after Janusz Korczak - an advocate of children rights, a great educator and

unquestionable moral authority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a witness and victim of Holocaust.

According to the academic tradition the inaugurating lecture was given by professor Barbara Smoleńska-Theiss, acting Head of the Department. In her speech, *Janusz Korczak's Pedagogical Transgressions*, she emphasized motive of going beyond the scientific, social, political and national barriers - an integral feature of Janusz Korczak's activity.

In this perspective, Korczak's legacy is a universal lesson of protection of human dignity and rights, respect for values, faith in development of humanity. Korczak's ideas are in clear harmony with UNESCO's goal to realize "education for everyone" motto, and promote culture and education in the contemporary world.

In the next academic year the UNESCO Social Pedagogy Department starts regular, Polish and international, didactic and scientific work focused on collecting and attesting didactic, scientific and practical projects concerning Korczak. The objective of these efforts is to build a net of initiatives pertaining to Korczak's legacy, undertaken by academic centres.

The Academy and the University of Warsaw conduct an interdepartmental faculty "Following Korczak", to which foreign students and scientific workers are invited. I will inform you on the Academy's further accomplishment in my next report.

With due respect,  
Rector of the Maria  
Grzegorzewska Academy of  
Special Education,