

To the Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus  
I.V. Karpenko

From the citizen of the Kingdom of Sweden  
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On improper consideration of an appeal for  
control measures to check the quality assurance  
of education at the Ikhvis Private School

Dear Igor Vasilievich,

I am forced to send another appeal to you, since my previous appeal to you has not actually been considered on its merits.

As I informed you earlier, since 2008, being on the territory of the Kingdom of Sweden, I lived together with a citizen of Belarus L.A. Trafimovich. From our life together we have two minor daughters – Anthoula Anthie Cheropoulou, born on June 08, 2012 and Alexandra Cheropoulou, born on April 01, 2015, who were born and, until the moment of their removal to the Republic of Belarus on April 18, 2017, permanently resided at: Sweden, Stockholm city, Dansbanevägen, 28, 126 31 Hägersten.

Currently, between me and Trafimovich L.A. there are unresolved disagreements on the upbringing and education of the children.

Since September 2019, my daughter Anthoula Anthie Cheropoulou, born on June 08, 2012, at the request of my wife L.A. Trafimovich, but without my consent, is being educated at Ikhvis Private School, which is confirmed by the official response of the Education Department of the Administration of the Oktyabrsky District of the City of Minsk (ref. No. 1-2/H-208-1-эл. of November 16, 2019), *as well as photos posted on the website <https://obitel-minsk.ru/smotret/foto/?galAlbum=250>*. Religious rites are being conducted in relation to my daughter, which I did not consent to. Likewise, I did not give my consent to the publication of photographs of an advertising nature of my daughter on the Internet, which is a mass media outlet, which is a violation of Clause 9 of Art. 10 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Advertising”, which directly states that consent to this must be given by the legal representative of a minor.

In accordance with Part 2 of Article 75 of the Marriage and Family Code, all issues regarding the forms and methods of raising children, their education, attitude towards religion, organization of free time and other issues of raising children shall be decided by both parents by mutual agreement. Disagreements between parents on raising children shall be resolved in court.

In this regard, on May 14, 2020, I filed a statement of claim to the Oktyabrsky District Court of Minsk to eliminate the disagreements between the parents with regard to raising the children.

At the same time, in accordance with Article 10 of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On the Rights of the Child”, every child has the right to independently determine his / her attitude to religion, to profess any religion or not to profess any.

The same article of the Law provides that the state cannot interfere in the upbringing of a child based on a certain religious worldview of parents (guardians, custodians), and, therefore,

with the participation of the child in the performance of religious rites outside educational institutions, the observance of traditions, except for cases when incitement to religious action directly threatens the life and health of the child, violates his or her rights and legal interests. With regard to a child under fifteen, religious rites shall be performed with the consent of the parents (guardians, custodians).

Moreover, in accordance with Clause 1.10 of Article 2 of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education (hereinafter - the Code), the state policy in the field of education is based on the principles of the secular nature of education.

Nevertheless, these principles are grossly violated by Ikhvis Private School.

Thus, by virtue of Clause 3 of Article 2 of the Code, the creation and anonymous or other activities of religious organizations contrary to the law in educational institutions are not allowed.

According to Clause 4 of Article 2 of the Code, educational institutions, during extracurricular hours, can interact with registered religious organizations in matters of upbringing, on the basis of written statements of students (legal representatives of minor students), taking into account their influence on the formation of spiritual, cultural and state traditions of the Belarusian people.

However, I, as a parent (legal representative), did not apply to the Ikhvis Private School, I did not give my consent to this, and the obvious intensive activities of the religious organization in this educational institution are directly prohibited by Belarusian legislation.

I believe that a child should receive a general education in a public secular school, and not in a private religious school. A child should have freedom of religion and exercise his or her right to freedom of religion at a conscious age without the pressure that comes from studying in a religious school at a young age.

As follows from numerous publications on Internet resources, Ikhvis Private School is based on the personality cult of its religious leader, Archpriest Andrei Lemeshonk, who established an authoritarian regime in the institution. So, during the period of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the institution continued its activities as usual, without taking measures to protect the health of its employees, students and parishioners. As a result, most of the nurses and staff fell ill with pneumonia and COVID-19 coronavirus, however, this information is officially concealed (<https://news.tut.by/society/683501.html>).

**FOR REFERENCE.** *In fact, Ikhvis Private School is located on the territory of St. Elisabeth Convent, located at 6, Vygotskogo Street in Minsk, and is an integral part of it. This monastery is quite often visited by odious personalities who adhere to radical neo-Nazi views, which they do not hide, but, on the contrary, publicly demonstrate, in particular, Dmitry Lemeshonok, the son of Archpriest Andrei Lemeshonok (<https://nashaniva.by/?c=ar&i=197309&lang=ru>), and is also used as a platform for the propaganda of hatred and the cult of war by people with a dubious reputation, namely “the warrior of Christ Anthony” or as he calls himself “Lieutenant Colonel of the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate Anton Manshin” (<https://nashaniva.by/?c=ar&i=197200&lang=ru>).*

In addition, in violation of Clause 7.1. of Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 645 dated April 29, 2010 “On Certain Issues of the Internet Sites of State Bodies and Organizations and the Invalidation of Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 192 dated February 11, 2006”, the website of Ikhvis Private School (<https://obitel-minsk.ru/shkola-ixvis/>) contains no information about the school principal, including position, last name, first name, patronymic, e-mail and office phone number. Only the general e-mail address of the above monastery and its telephone number are posted.

Thus, all external communication with this educational institution is filtered, which is a gross violation of the legislation on education. I don't have the opportunity to communicate with a

competent school principal with regard to my children's education. I don't want to talk about this with the priest. In this regard, as a parent (legal representative), I have a reasonable question: why is this allowed, and why don't the state bodies authorized by the Code in exercising control in the field of education react to this?

On July 08, 2020, I received a response by e-mail (ref. No. 02-01-2686-Ч(0)-0) signed by the Deputy Minister of Health A.V. Kaldubay, stating that on the basis of Article 13 of the Constitution equality of the state and private forms of ownership is guaranteed, and in accordance with Clause 6 of Article 19 of the Code, the functioning of private educational institutions is provided, other general provisions of the current legislation of the Republic of Belarus were explained, and the appeal itself was sent to the Education Committee of the Minsk City Executive Committee, from where on August 13, 2020 it was redirected to the Administration of the Tsentralny District of the City of Minsk.

The response received on September 25, 2020 from the Deputy Head of the Administration of the Tsentralny District of the City of Minsk (ref. No. 1-13/1916/1Эл) is ungrounded, it does not contain specific wording that refutes the circumstances I have stated in my initial appeal. Based on this, I conclude that my initial appeal was considered inappropriately, the issues set out in it were not considered, and that appropriate measures were not taken to protect, ensure the implementation, restore the rights and my legitimate interests as the father of the child.

According to Article 76 of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Marriage and Family, father and mother have equal rights and obligations in relation to their children, regardless of their place of residence. At the same time, my opinion as a father was not taken into account when choosing a school, I was against raising a child in a religious environment, including studying in a religious school, and Ikhvis Private School actually acts as a religious organization, propagandizes Orthodoxy, conducts rites for my child without my consent.

In such circumstances, I demand to immediately consider my initial appeal on the merits, having studied all the circumstances I have outlined with the visit of the appropriate commission to Ikhvis Private School and inspection of its activities and interaction with the monastery, as well as in accordance with Article 109 of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education:

**I hereby demand:**

1. In order to identify the above violations of the legislation on education, to instruct your structural divisions to carry out specially organized control measures to check the quality assurance of education at Ikhvis Private School, based on the results of which to assess the activities of this educational institution and, if there are grounds, to consider the issue of denying its accreditation.
2. To notify me in writing of the results of the appeal consideration.

**Appendix:**

1. Initial appeal dated May 19, 2020;
2. Notification of the Ministry of Education dated July 08, 2020;
3. Copy of the response of the Education Department of the Administration of the Tsentralny District of the City of Minsk dated September 25, 2020.

Nikolas Cheropoulos

/Signed/

Nikolas Cheropoulos

September 30, 2020