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November 17, 2007

Honourable Diane Finley
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister Finley;

I am sure that by now you are quite aware of the tragic and unnecessary death of Mr. Robert Dziekanski. As the President of the Canadian Polish Congress, I would ask for your assistance in reviewing the policies, procedures and services or lack there of, in place at Canadian airports when dealing with New Canadians and visitors to Canada. The unfortunate and unnecessary death of Mr. Dziekanski leaves many unanswered questions related to immigration policies and procedures.

The first issue that seems to need attention is why Mr. Dziekanski was held alone for 10 hours in a secure area of the airport after an already lengthy flight from Poland. After being detained for such a long period of time why was he not offered assistance in meeting relatives, finding transportation, locating an interpreter or in making a phone call?

Secondly, why were R.C.M.P. Officers called to the scene rather than a Settlement Officer, Chaplin or interpreter? Why did a Custom Official not seek to find help for Mr. Dziekanski? Baggage cannot be left unattended for more than 15 minutes in a major airport, why then was an individual newly arrived in a strange country, not knowing the language be left abandoned in a secure area for more than 10 hours.

Thirdly, why were tasers used immediately to subdue Mr. Dziekanski rather than Officers trying to establish a conversation with him and finding out what the problem was?

Not only is Mrs. Zofia Cisowski (Robert's mother) looking for the answers to these questions but also so are the countless Canadians who have witnessed this tragic event via the release of a home video.

At this time I would ask that a thorough investigation be held, to answer these and other questions surrounding the death of Mr. Dziekanski.

Canada receives many immigrants each year as well as countless visitors. It is important that each person entering Canada receives the utmost attention and due respect.

I also ask that based on the findings of the investigation that the proper services and supports be put into place so that once again all people entering Canada feel safe and secure.

Sincerely


Wladyslaw Lizon
National President
Canadian Polish Congress