

Eighth Conference of Organizations of Russian Compatriots in Latvia

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Ms. Astrid Thors

(OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

June 27 in Riga in Moscow cultural and business center "Moscow House" held the 8th conference of organizations of Russian compatriots in Latvia. The conference was devoted to the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941 - 1945. and was held under the slogan "We remember! We are proud of!"

The conference was attended by 234 delegates from 103 public organizations of Russian compatriots from all the cities in Latvia, 28 media representatives, as well as official representatives of the Government of Moscow Vladimir Lebedev and the Government of the Smolensk region Tatiana Ilyuhin.

For the first time in the conference of organizations of Russian compatriots attended by a delegation of trade unions of Latvia. The conference was also attended by representatives of the Coordinating Council of the Organization of Russian compatriots in Estonia and Lithuania.

Final Resolution (Excerpt)

Eighth Conference of Organizations of Russian Compatriots in Latvia notes with concern that since August 2014 and the Seventh Conference the political situation in Europe continues to deteriorate.

The ruling political elite of Latvia is still fully supportive of the anti-Russian policy of the United States and other Western countries causing irreparable damage to both the Russian-Latvian relations, and all the people of Latvia.

At the same time, the ruling elite continues to pass laws aimed at the construction of a totalitarian state in Latvia. On 18 June 2015, the Saeima passed amendments to the Law on Education, providing that ‘only a person who is loyal to the Republic of Latvia and its Constitution has the right to be a teacher’ whereas the concept of ‘loyalty’ is not defined anywhere in the Latvian legislation, which opens up opportunities for the persecution of dissent.

There is a growing pressure on the activists of the Russian compatriots in Latvia and the independent Russian-language media. The Security Police report on its activities for 2014 once again falsely accused many activists of Russian compatriots in Latvia, independent journalists and independent Russian media of subversive activities.

Before, during and after the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany a very clear negative attitude to the popular holiday - the Victory Day - was demonstrated by the Latvian state, as well as by certain local governments and Latvian-language media...

The Conference notes that the October 2014 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Latvia have once again failed to meet accepted standards of democracy in Europe, as the universal suffrage has not been restored in the country.

The Conference stresses that a return to universal suffrage in Latvia today is necessary, but is only the first step towards democratization of the Latvian state. Also an important task is to democratize the state ideology and the policy of integration, based on non-discrimination of language and culture of all peoples living in Latvia.

As long as this objective has not been achieved, the main tasks of Russian-speaking community under the current democratic deficit and growing threat of neo-Nazism in Latvia remains unchanged. Including:

1) in the field of human rights - the elimination of mass statelessness in Latvia ...

Sincerely,

Delegates of the Eighth Conference of Russian Compatriots in Latvia