

Right of Reply, ESTONIA, HDIM 2019

WS 12: Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities

24.09.2018 (1 min)

Thank you, Mr Moderator,

Estonia would like to exercise the right of reply and respond shortly to some misleading remarks presented in this working session.

The Estonian government has been very open about the topic of undetermined citizenship and has worked continuously over the decades to increase citizenship through naturalisation. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship has decreased remarkably, from 32% of the population in 1992 to 6% in 2019.

The persons with undetermined citizenship have travel documents, resident permits, right to equal treatment and access to social services, as well as the right to vote at local elections. In addition, residents with undetermined citizenship can travel visa-free to both to the EU and Russia.

Let me remind you that citizenship may not be forced on anyone and that everyone has the right to choose his or her citizenship. The people who have chosen to apply for Estonian citizenship acquire Estonian citizenship according to the requirements specified in the Citizenship Act.

In addition, Estonia is one of a few countries where one can receive an education in Russian language at all levels from primary school to university. The language of instruction is regulated only at the level of the upper secondary education, which is non-compulsory in Estonia.

Thank you.