

Assistance with Bilateral Agreements Representative to the Latvian-Russian Joint Commission on Military Pensioners

The Representative continued to provide assistance in the implementation of the 1994 agreement between the Latvian and the Russian Governments on social guarantees for military pensioners of the Russian Federation and their families residing in Latvia.

In 2007, a total of 16,266 people were eligible under the Agreement, 473 fewer than in 2006. At the time of the Agreement in 1994, a total of 22,320 people were eligible.

Activities and developments

Housing problems. The Commission's discussions continued to centre on issues surrounding the potential eviction of military pensioners and their families from so-called "denationalized" accommodation. "Denationalization" means the return of property expropriated by "nationalization" under Soviet rule and given to, among others, servicemen of the Soviet Army. Following the adoption of a law regulating the return of nationalized property to the legitimate owners or descendants, Latvia stipulated a seven-year grace period for tenants in these properties and, when this period ended, followed up with additional special conditions for military pensioners and their families as well as others affected. These included financial support and priority access to social accommodation. Given the circumstances, these efforts to soften potential hardship situations have been a success. According to an update from the Embassy of Russia to Latvia in October, imminent eviction from denationalized houses currently does not constitute a major problem for military pensioners.

Resettlement programme continues. Under a Latvian-financed resettlement programme for military pensioners wishing to leave Latvia and to take up permanent residence outside the country, launched at the beginning of last year, 167 persons had received financial aid by December. It is expected that the successful programme will continue in 2008.

OSCE Representative:
Lt. Col. Helmut Napiontek
Approved budget: € 9,600