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Minority rights in Latvia: 2014-2015

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### **Education**

The destruction of the network of schools offering bilingual education in Latvian and Russian languages (most of minority schools in Latvia) is continuing – in 2014/2015, there are only 160 such schools left. A year before, there were 165, fifteen years before – 322. For comparison, 15 years ago, 860 schools offered Latvian-language-only education programmes. Their number has fallen, too, but not in the same way – there are 690 such schools remaining, as at 2014/15.<sup>1</sup>

The role of minority languages in minority schools continues to be diminished (this also concerns the Polish minority schools, offering bilingual education in Latvian and Polish, the number of which is more stable – four, instead of five before 2012) – in autumn 2015, Cabinet Regulations No. 468 of 12 August 2014 came into force, limiting the use of minority languages in grades 7-9 of public schools.

One positive change is that the coalition agreement of the new cabinet (since end-2014) does not provide for switching to Latvian-only education in public schools (except subjects related to minority culture), as it was planned in the previous coalition agreement. Nevertheless, para. 2.5.1. of the new coalition agreement<sup>2</sup> allows one of the ruling parties to bring such proposal through parliament (trying to create a one-issue majority with the radical MPs from the opposition and other ruling parties).

In September, 2015, the ruling coalition has agreed that refugee children must learn in Latvian-language schools.<sup>3</sup> This approach is questionable in general, as contradicting

<sup>3</sup> http://www.mixnews.lv/ru/society/news/2015-09-21/185055 (RU)

http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/visp\_izgl/2014\_2015/VS\_skolu\_sk\_14.xls (LV) See "pa plusmam". "Krievu"="Russian" [language]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/05\_sadarbibas\_ligums.pdf (LV)

the freedom of choice (all schools have to ensure Latvian language learning, anyway), but it might be of particular importance to the Ukrainian refugees being denied connection to their kin communities and the existing bilingual (Latvian-Russian or, the only one, Latvian-Ukrainian) schools in Latvia.

### **Statelessness**

The small Republic of Latvia continues to keep the first place in the EU by the absolute number of stateless persons (mostly those with the status of so-called "non-citizens of Latvia", without any electoral rights) – a problem concerning almost exclusively ethnic minorities.<sup>4</sup>

As at 1 January, 2015, there were 262,622 "non-citizens" residing in Latvia, or more than 12 % of the population (and 180 more persons recognised by Latvia as stateless under 1954 Convention). The statelessness problem is less acute among children – but this overall positive fact has a downside; the share of disenfranchised adult population is even bigger than 12 %. The decrease in the number of "non-citizens" is notable (on 1 January, 2014, there had been 282,876 "non-citizens" but its causes are disturbing:

In 2014, only 939 persons acquired Latvian citizenship via naturalization. Latvia's report to the Universal Periodic Review allows to estimate that approximately 818 non-citizens' children have obtained Latvian citizenship through other procedures in 2014. The number of "non-citizens" living abroad has grown by 188 only in 2014. Thus, approximately 90 % of the reduction of the number of non-citizens is due to death or accepting citizenship of other countries.

In June 2015, a new law on intellectual property proceedings has been adopted. The Parliament has refused to allow "non-citizens" to work as patent attorneys – while it was recommended by Ombudsman in 2008, <sup>10</sup> and the jobs are open for EU citizens.

df (LV) See the row "Latvietis" (ethnic Latvian) and column "Latvijas nepilsonis" (Non-citizen of Latvia)

http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2015 09/AMzino 28082015 Latvijas Rep.1883.docx NB See Table 6 in the annexes. 616+(654/4)+(154/4)=818

http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/01072013/01.01.2014/ISAG Aarvalstiis pec DZGada VPD.pdf (LV) and in 2015

http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/statistika/01.01.2015/ISAG Aarvalstiis pec DZGada \_VPD.pdf (LV). *NB* 4282-4094=188

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Less than 0.3 % of "non-citizens" are ethnic Latvians, as at 2015.

http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/statistika/01.01.2015/ISVN Latvija pec TTB VPD.p

df. (LV) See the row "Latvijatis" (athnic Latvian) and solvens "Latvijas perileggis" (Non-citizen of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/statistika/01.01.2015/ISVP Latvija pec VPD.pdf (LV) See the row "Latvijas nepilsonis" (Non-citizen of Latvia)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> <a href="http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/01072013/01.01.2014/ISVP\_Latvija\_pec\_VPD.pdf">http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/01072013/01.01.2014/ISVP\_Latvija\_pec\_VPD.pdf</a> (LV) See the row "Latvijas nepilsonis" (Non-citizen of Latvia)

<sup>7</sup> http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/home/statistics/naturalization.html (EN)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Second cycle UPR report by Latvia (LV)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>See and compare the row "Kopā" (Total) in column "Latvijas nepilsonis" (Non-citizen of Latvia) in 2014

<sup>10</sup> http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/img/content/atzinums\_par\_pilsonu\_un\_nepilsonu\_tiesibam\_2008\_09.pdf

In September 2015, the Court of Justice of the EU has recognised the prohibition for citizens of other EU member states to be notaries in Latvia to be illegal under EU law. Notably, the same prohibition for "non-citizens" remains in force, although have a stronger legal connection with Latvia that citizens of other EU member states. "Non-citizens" are given Latvian passports, more than two fifths of them are born in Latvia 12, and virtually all others have been living in Latvia for decades.

## Language legislation and its enforcement

On October 23, 2014, a pack of amendments to the Labour Law has been adopted. The law now prohibits employment contracts to require "foreign language" (all except Latvian and nearly-extinct Liv language) skills unless it is "reasoned and necessary". On its own, the requirement might be viewed as anti-discriminatory, but it omits, in a suspicious way, the fact that disproportionate Latvian language requirements can be discriminatory, too.

The same day, amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law have been adopted. Those private radio stations which now broadcast in Latvian for at least 50 % of time, will have to work in Latvian only (all other-language pieces will have to be repeated in Latvian), since 2016. In the annotation to the bill, it was written that the authors consider unacceptable if "almost a half of Latvia's radio programmes would sound in a foreign language (30 from 67)", which could be the case with a threshold of 51%, so they chose the value of the threshold to ensure that "most of the radio programmes sounding in Latvia (50 from 67) would sound in Latvian language". Notably, more than a third of residents speak Russian at home, according to 2011 census. The annotation also claims that "The draft law does not concern" international obligations of Latvia, ignoring minority rights (in other place, it even claims the bill to endorse them) and freedom of expression. <sup>13</sup> The relevant provisions have been contested before the Constitutional Court by one of radio stations impacted <sup>14</sup>, but it is virtually impossible for the judgment to be delivered before 2016.

On October 30, 2014, amendments to the Code of Administrative Violations were adopted, concerning the infractions in the sphere of media. The maximum fine for violating licence terms has been raised – from 2100 EUR to 10,000 EUR. One of licence terms is the share of Latvian language on the waves of a radio station. Parliament's own press release mentions that the amendments will apply to language proportions. <sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Case C- 151/14

<sup>(</sup>LV) p. 29

<sup>12</sup> http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3\_FCNMdocs/PDF\_2nd\_SR\_Latvia\_en.pdf P. 67

http://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS11/SaeimaLIVS11.nsf/0/0E856AE90D704F79C2257CE6004BC796?OpenDocument (LV)

<sup>14</sup> http://www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv/?lang=1&top=1&rid=1334 (LV)

http://saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/22722-palielina-administrativo-atbildibu-par-parkapumiem-mediju-nozare (LV)

On February 17, 2015, an action plan for 2015-2016 under Integration guidelines (2011) has been adopted by the Cabinet. There are both positive and negative elements – on one side, allocating money to Latvian language learning and minority media, on the other one – creating 4 additional workplaces in the State Language Centre under the Ministry of Justice to impose fines (para. 2.1.2.1). <sup>16</sup>

In January 2015, a public call was issued by the State Language Centre. The core part is: "the Official Language Law provides that it does not apply to the use of language in unofficial communications of the inhabitants of Latvia. Since the communication between employees in foreign language can be heard by others passengers, visitors of shops, bureaus and offices, one cannot consider it to be unofficial communication. Therefore, it cannot be accepted for the employees to speak with each other in a foreign language, when fulfiling professional duties". <sup>17</sup>

Disturbing cases of law enforcement by the State Language Centre include prohibiting Rezekne city municipality from distributing a bilingual newsletter (Latvian-Russian) in public places, in September 2014. Despite most of the residents of Rezekne being Russian-speakers, the SLC interprets the law to allow authorities to keep printed inforation for residents in public places only in Latvian, except extraordinary situations. <sup>18</sup> On March 3, 2015, the State Language Centre has requested the Latgale Regional Court to deprive a councillor of Balvi Municipality, Mr Ivans Baranovs, of his seat for insufficient proficiency in Latvian. The electorate, it should be noted, is satisfied with Mr Baranovs' ability to work – he has been elected for three terms in a row. <sup>19</sup> In September 2015, SLC has fined a museum for the title of an exhibition using both Latin and Cyrillic letters. <sup>20</sup>

# **Historic memory**

On 16 March 2015, the annual far-right march in Riga honouring the veterans of Waffen SS Latvian Legion has happened with participation of certain politicians from a co-ruling political party, *National Alliance*. The posters used by participants included calls for "death to the occupants" <sup>21</sup> and claims that 16th of March is "the day

A media report http://baltnews.lv/news/20150219/1013541812.html (RU) and the action plan http://tap.mk.gov.lv/doc/2015\_02/KMPl\_160215\_sab\_integr\_preciz.2853.docx (LV)

The original text is still on the main page of the SLC website - "Aicinājums lietot valsts valodu savās darbavietās" (A call to use the official language in one's workplaces) of 16.01.2015

<a href="http://www.vvc.gov.lv/">http://www.vvc.gov.lv/</a> below (LV) There is a translation <a href="http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/centr-gosyazyka-prizval-govorit-na-rabochem-meste-tolko-po-latyshski.d?id=45463772">http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/centr-gosyazyka-prizval-govorit-na-rabochem-meste-tolko-po-latyshski.d?id=45463772</a> (RU) In later interviews, SLC head Mr Baltiņš said that this was just a recommendation (despite the use of "cannot") and intended for public sector only (despite referencing "shops")

<a href="https://meduza.io/feature/2015/01/30/ne-hochetsya-chtoby-nas-schitali-rusofobami">https://meduza.io/feature/2015/01/30/ne-hochetsya-chtoby-nas-schitali-rusofobami</a> (RU)

http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/rezekne-inspektory-zapretili-rasprostranyat-municipalnuyu-gazetu-na-russkom.d?id=45001936 (RU)

http://vesti.lv/news/centr-gosyazyka-ustroil-ohotu-na-deputata-soglasiya (RU)

http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/centr-gosyazyka-oshtrafoval-muzej-za-nazvanie-vystavki-maksla.d?id=46432969 (RU)

http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/criminal/uz-latvijas-robezas-aptureti-vairaki-16marta-pasakumu-provokatori.d?id=45698464#!dgs=dgslv-50508:4762793 (LV)

we remember Latvian freedom fighters". 22 Before the march, National Alliance Secretary-General has called to participate in order to "learn from our heroes" and in its Twitter, NA has announced being proud of having a legionnaire Mr. O. Baltputnis as a honorary member, mentioning his two Iron Crosses.<sup>24</sup>

The government distances itself from the marches (one of the National Alliance ministers wished to participate<sup>25</sup>, but refrained from it after Prime Minister's objection<sup>26</sup>) – but in the same time it presents them as innocent "remembrance" instead of glorification of collaborators.<sup>27</sup>

A hotel had suddenly refused promised premises for an Anti-Fascist conference intended to happen on March 15. The hotel admits that it had informed the police on the refusal.<sup>28</sup>

The Security Police has spoken about "provocations" and "discrediting Latvia" in the context of anti-fascist activists protesting against the march<sup>29</sup> and spread unsubstantiated allegations about anti-fascist activists receiving foreign funding for the event. 30

There is inconsistency in the statements of Prime Minister Straujuma at the cemetery of SS legionnaires in Lestene in September 2015. On one hand, she clearly condemns Nazism and points to the fact that Nazis did not plan to restore the state of Latvia. On the other, regrettably, she claims that those buried at the cemetery fought for free Latvia, referring to some vague promises by Nazis, whose unprecedentedly criminal policy was actually quite obvious even before the formation of the Latvian Legion of the SS in 1943 – the genocide of Latvian Jews and Roma began in 1941. 31

On a positive note, there is progress with the draft laws on restitution of certain real estate pieces to the Jewish community - the bills have been adopted in the first of three readings in September, 2015.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> http://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/gallery/legionaru-godinasana-riga-un-lestene/ Photo No. 7

http://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/aktualitate/kapec-piedalities-16-marta-gajiena/ (LV) https://twitter.com/VL\_TBLNNK/status/543758876341194752 (LV)

<sup>25</sup> http://skaties.lv/latvija/politika/tieslietu-ministrs-rasnacs-gribetu-piedalities-16-marta-gajiena/ (LV)

http://nra.lv/latvija/politika/132527-straujuma-ministriem-nebutu-japiedalas-16-marta-gajiena-piebrivibas-pieminekla.htm (LV)

<sup>27</sup> http://www.mfa.gov.lv/images/Desktop/16.marts\_ENG\_14.03.pdf

http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/antifasistiem-atsaka-telpas-svetdien-ieceretajaikonferencei-uzruna-arzemiu-vestniecibas.d?id=45690976 (LV) http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/antifashisty-vnov-ostalis-bez-pomescheniya-dlya-voskresnojkonferencii.d?id=45690190 (RU)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/latvija/551328mezviets\_antifasisti\_ari\_sogad\_16marta\_meginas\_izdomat\_ko\_jaunu

http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/en/monitoring/search/?date\_from=2015.03.10&date\_to=2015.03.10&qu ery= NB Disclosure - one of anti-fascist activists mentioned is a member of LHRC

The speech http://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/aktualitates/ministru-prezidentes-uzruna-lestenes-bralu-kapu-15gadadienas-pieminas-pasakuma (LV) Excerpts translated http://ru.bb.vesti.lv/politika/item/9163693-lajmdota-strauyuma-ofitsialno-nazvala-divizii-waffen-ssbortsam-za-demokratiyu (RU)

Parliamentary press release http://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/23828-saeimaatbalsta-piecu-nekustamo-ipasumu-nodosanu-latvijas-ebreju-draudzu-un-kopienu-padomei (LV)

# Ethnic stereotyping and hate speech in public discourse

On a positive note, several low-profile cases of hate speech have been prosecuted. It also became known in 2015, that criminal proceedings for inciting ethnic hatred were earlier initiated against a well-known far-right activist Mr Linards Grantins, but we have to note two concerns in respect of this case: first, relevant to minority rights, Mr Grantins has not been deprived of his Order of Three Stars. 33 On an unrelated issue, the use of force during the arrest of the elderly Mr Grantins in 2015 causes concern. 34

In August, 2015, a paid article was published in a daily newspaper "Latvijas Avize", calling to remove 750 000 of "Russian colonists" from Latvia as a pre-condition for accepting refugees.<sup>35</sup>

In October, 2014, Security Police refused to initiate criminal proceedings concerning the statement of a writer Mr A. Rancans, made in an interview in another daily newspaper, that Russians have "robbers' genes" in their mentality and that "they are mostly created for theft, not for working". <sup>36</sup>

In August, 2015, sworn advocate A. Alliks, in his speech in a courtroom, acting as a defender in criminal case, attacked those hundreds of thousands of citizens who voted for introduction of Russian as a co-official language during a referendum in 2012 as "acting against the state and Constitution", "lacking loyalty to the country and nation of ethnic Latvians" and "correctly described as traitors". He also spoke negatively of "various –ich's, -ov's, -eers's, -man's, -oren's, -ok's" (typical Slavic, Jewish, Germanic surname endings probably referring to certain activists Mr Alliks doesn't like). Co-ruling *National Alliance* has published this speech on its website. <sup>37</sup>

In February 2015, a prominent Latvian far-right activist Mr Leonards Inkins was acquitted by the court of first instance on inciting ethnic hatred in the internet, having used the old forgery – "Cathechism of a Soviet Jew" in 2012. <sup>38</sup> The acquittal was upheld by the appellate court in September 2015. <sup>39</sup>

and news story http://baltnews.lv/news/20150924/1014519533.html (RU)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The fact of the award being granted in 1996:

http://www.president.lv/images/modules/items/PDF/20130611 1994 2004tzo.doc (LV). No president-granted awards from 1996 have been withdrawn -

http://www.president.lv/pk/content/?cat\_id=9359 (LV)

http://www.pietiek.com/raksti/grantina aizturesana nak klaja jauni fakti par dp sadismu un nir gasanos\_ (LV)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>Media report <a href="http://www.mixnews.lv/ru/society/news/2015-08-27/183298">http://www.mixnews.lv/ru/society/news/2015-08-27/183298</a> (RU) The original text, later sent also to MEPs, and its translation (LV, RU) <a href="http://vesti.lv/news/russkih-latvii-predlozhili-srochno-deportirovaty">http://vesti.lv/news/russkih-latvii-predlozhili-srochno-deportirovaty</a>

http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/pb-rancans-ne-prav-naschet-russkih-no-eto-ne-prestuplenie.d?id=45046450 (RU)

http://www.nacionalaapvieniba.lv/aktualitate/dainis-rutenbergs-rikojas-satversmigi/ (LV)

http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/criminal/attaisnots-kriminallieta-par-naidiga-raksta-pret-ebrejiem-parpublicesanu-apsudzetais-inkins.d?id=45559040 (LV)

http://www.delfi.lv/news/national/criminal/tiesa-attaisno-kriminallieta-par-naidiga-raksta-pret-

Sadly the ethnically divisive statements are also heard from prominent politicians, without repercussions. The parliamentary secretary (one of the highest-ranking officials) of the ministry of justice Janis Iesalnieks (*National Alliance*) wrote on January 8, 2015 (after the murder of *Charlie Hebdo* staff) that "Only when every nation will live in its historic homeland, in accordance with its traditions, one will be able not to fear to fall a victim to some fanatics". <sup>40</sup> Leader of a co-ruling *Unity* party, Ms. Solvita Aboltina, has explained her hooing to the crowd of the protesters in August 2015 as follows: "there were the aggressive part of people left, and when they were hooing – it was obviously organised by LABA trade union and retired people, in Russian". To be fair, Ms Aboltina recognised this not to be a justification of her actions, and apologised. <sup>41</sup>

### Other issues

Minority rights issues have been raised by various international organisations during the relevant time. In particular, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities has "encouraged the authorities to maintain Latvia's robust system of education in minority languages" and "reiterated the recommendation made by my predecessors and by other international institutions that the right to vote in local elections should be extended to non-citizens". <sup>42</sup> ODIHR has recommended to "explore ways to increase the naturalization rate such as conducting campaigns to promote naturalization, publicizing opportunities for simplified naturalization under the revised Citizenship Law, and expanding the availability of free opportunities to learn Latvian" and that "Consideration could be given to providing a broader voter education in minority languages" <sup>43</sup>. ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has paid attention to the risk of employment discrimination against minorities due to the Official Language Law requirements. <sup>44</sup> LHRC joins those recommendations and concerns.

In February 2015, information that Military Intelligence and Security Service is "interested" in ethnicity of soldiers and their parents, became public. <sup>45</sup>

ebrejiem-parpublicesanu-apsudzeto-inkinu.d?id=46417331 (LV)

<sup>40</sup> https://twitter.com/JanisIesalnieks/status/553148438238748672 (LV)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Media reports about the incident with quotation <a href="http://rus.tvnet.lv/novosti/obschjestvo/300894-aboltinja-kajetsja-v-uljuljukani-vinovati-agrjessivnije-pjensionjeri-govorjaschije-porusski-ttp://www.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/latvija/zinas/aboltina-ujinasana-pasliktinas-vienotibas-reitingus-pieredzejis-politikis-ta-nedrikst-darit.a143071/</a> with recording (LV) and in English, without Aboltina's quotes <a href="http://www.latviannews.lv/news/7695/">http://www.latviannews.lv/news/7695/</a> (EN)

<sup>42</sup> http://www.osce.org/pc/127063?download=true

<sup>43</sup> http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/latvia/132416?download=true Chapter XVI, Paras. 5, 10

 $<sup>\</sup>frac{http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13100:0::NO::P13100 \ COMMENT \ ID:}{3192118}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Article <a href="http://nra.lv/latvija/134103-krievus-latvijas-armija-skali-neskaita.htm">http://nra.lv/latvija/134103-krievus-latvijas-armija-skali-neskaita.htm</a> (LV) and excerpts <a href="http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/gazeta-latvijskaya-armiya-ne-schitaet-skolko-nelatyshej-v-nej-sluzhit.d?id=45556194">http://nra.lv/latvija/134103-krievus-latvijas-armija-skali-neskaita.htm</a> (LV) and excerpts <a href="http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/gazeta-latvijskaya-armiya-ne-schitaet-skolko-nelatyshej-v-nej-sluzhit.d?id=45556194">http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/gazeta-latvijskaya-armiya-ne-schitaet-skolko-nelatyshej-v-nej-sluzhit.d?id=45556194</a> (RU)

A disturbing case is the prohibition, in May 2014, of an annual demonstration organised by Russian minority NGO "Rodina" on May 9 in Riga. For many years, it has happened without any incidents, but in 2014, it was preventively prohibited by Riga municipality upon advice of the Security Police. The decision, based on vague "risks" and criticism of a video ad issued before the May 2013 demonstration (which had happened without any violations), was upheld by the Supreme Court in July, 2015. 46

In September 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia has refused <sup>47</sup> to stand up for LHRC secretary Aleksandrs Kuzmins, a Latvian citizen and a lawyer having won a case at ECtHR, when he was denied entry to Lithuania on vague "national security or public order grounds". <sup>48</sup> This causes concern in the light of similar language policy of Latvia and Lithuania, criticized by LHRC.

#### Recommendations

### For Latvia:

To sustain the network of public minority schools;

To reconsider the language policy based on wider freedom to use minority languages as media of instruction in public education and as a means of communication with local authorities:

To withdraw the restrictive declarations to Articles 10 and 11, made while ratifying the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;

To send a clear signal from the top officials that honouring of Nazi collaborators by politicians is unacceptable, even if some of the collaborators weren't volunteers;

To refrain from pressure upon Latvian minority rights activists and to stand up against pressure on them exerted by other participating states;

To grant non-citizens of Latvia the right to vote in the municipality and European elections;

To simplify and accelerate the naturalization procedure.

#### For OSCE:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Decision of July 7, 2015, by the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court, in case SKA-156/2015. Disclosure – "Rodina" had been represented by a LHRC lawyer. Interestingly, he was questioned by the police on "Rodina" activities between the hearings of the first instance court and the Supreme Court, despite not being a member of "Rodina"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Letter No. 43/4197-3785 of 22 September 2015 by the State secretary of the ministry

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Mr Kuzmins has never been convicted of any crime. "Human Rights Watch" has criticized the denial of entry to Lithuania in respect to him. <a href="https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/18/lithuania-latvian-activist-barred-visiting">https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/18/lithuania-latvian-activist-barred-visiting</a> Disclosure - Kuzmins is one of the athors of the present document

To reaffirm its commitment to the use of minority languages in education, as expressed in the Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities of 1996;

To reaffirm its commitment to the Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and the relevant provisions of Moscow Document and Copenhagen Document;

To send a clear signal that honouring of Nazi collaborators by politicians is unacceptable, even if some of the collaborators weren't volunteers.