

24 September 2019

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to draw your attention to the critical situation that has developed with Russian schools and kindergartens in Estonia. Last year, at the same meeting, the representative of Estonia (Mrs. Kala) presented the presence of Russian schools in Estonia with incomplete secondary education as an achievement and example of respecting the rights of the Russian national minority in this matter. Unfortunately, we cannot consider this as an “achievement,” because the system that remains is what has not yet been destroyed by the Estonian authorities in 30 years. In particular, since Estonia regained independence in 1991, higher education in the Russian language was destroyed, the gymnasium level was largely estonized, and teachers for the Russian schools were not consciously prepared. Russian schools and kindergartens are under constant threat of estonization, and Russian children, respectively, are at risk of assimilation.

What legislative extremism can lead to in this matter can be seen in the example of neighbouring Latvia, where the country has decided in favour of forcible assimilation of Russian children by completely transferring Russian schools into Latvian language. The same initiatives and threats are being rained against Russian schools and kindergartens in Estonia. All parliamentary parties in Estonia support the abolition of education in Russian and the translation of all Russian schools into the Estonian language of instruction. There is no consideration of the interests and rights of the Russian national minority, the ethno-cultural basis of which are Russian schools and kindergartens. This approach leads to the assimilation of Russian children, which is a rough violation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities (this convention has been ratified by both Estonia and Latvia).

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