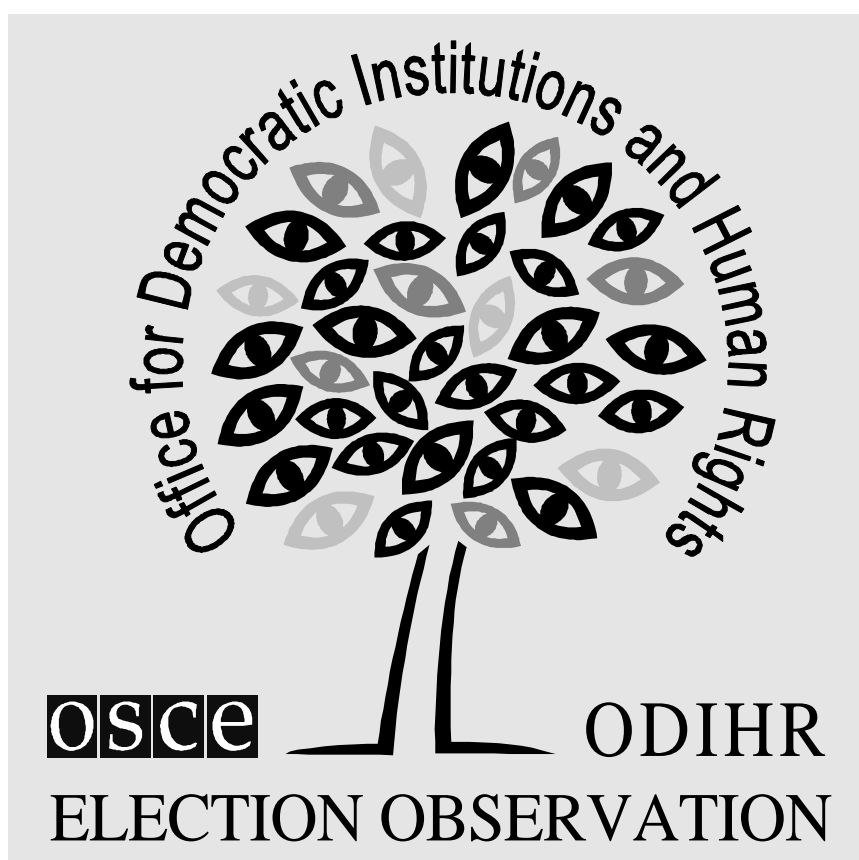




Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

**REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
AND
NATIONAL REFERENDUM
3 OCTOBER 1998
ASSESSMENT MISSION**



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1. Introduction

Following an invitation from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights conducted an assessment of the Latvian electoral arrangements for the Saeima (Parliament) Elections and the Public Referendum, both of which were held on 3 October 1998. The assessment included the legal and administrative provisions and their implementation by the various electoral bodies.

Mr. Peter Hatch was appointed as the ODIHR Technical Co-ordinator to lead the assessment and he was supported by Mr. Anders Karlsen and Ms. Sandra Mitchell, ODIHR Advisers. In addition, 15 election experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America participated in the assessment exercise.

Given the short time-period in which to assemble a team of election experts, between the approval of financing for the mission by the OSCE Permanent Council and the date of the election, due thanks are accorded to the Representatives of the OSCE participating States who responded to the urgent ODIHR Note Verbale of 17 September 1998.

The contribution of the OSCE Mission to Latvia in providing logistical support was invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Full co-operation was forthcoming from all levels of the election administration, particularly the Central Election Commission, as well as various central and local public administration bodies.

The ODIHR Assessment Mission co-operated with representatives from the various local Embassies, many of whom observed the electoral process on polling day. There was also co-operation with international observer groups and in particular with a delegation of twenty members, including election officials and leaders of non-governmental organizations, from Central Asia.

The assessment of the pre-election phase commenced in Riga on 17 September 1998 and, following an initial briefing, four teams of two election experts were deployed to the four constituency areas outside Riga (i.e. Vidzeme, Latgale, Kurzeme and Zemgale) on 24 September. A further team of two experts was deployed to cover a number of districts within the Vidzeme constituency on 27 September. A comprehensive briefing of election experts was held on 30 September in Riga, at which election experts reported on their activities and initial findings in the various districts. Following the briefing, a total of fifteen election experts were deployed to cover the various districts in all five constituencies and a presence was maintained until the de-briefing of election experts in Riga on 5 October 1998.

Prior to election day, election experts met with chairmen and members of regional, district, city, town and village election commissions, as well as representatives of the local public administration. Visits were made to numerous polling stations which, in accordance with the legal provisions, were open ten days prior to polling day for the

purposes of:

- (a) display of the pre-election candidature programmes and lists of candidates validly nominated for the respective constituency;
- (b) access to information about the candidates;
- (c) access to information about the Public Referendum;
- (d) to accept written applications for the mobile ballot facility for those persons unable to attend the polling station on polling day for health reasons.

Experts met with political party representatives and attended a number of campaign meetings and rallies. Consideration was given to the composition of the electoral bodies, their neutrality and independence, training of commission members, organization of the electoral process on the part of the various commissions, support from the local public administration, level of preparedness, arrangements in respect of polling station premises, receipt, distribution, display and security of all material, civic and voter education, particularly as regards the Referendum question and two ballots on one day, voters means of identification, the political campaign activities and the resolution of disputes.

On polling day election experts visited over 100 polling stations in the five constituencies in the towns as well as the rural areas. The mobile ballot box procedure was followed at four polling stations. All aspects of the polling process were assessed from the opening to the closure of the poll. A presence was maintained at nine polling stations for the counting of votes and this continued through to eight city and district level commissions in respect of the tabulation and consolidation of the polling station results.

2. Summary of Conclusions

The Assessment Mission has concluded the following:

- The Public Referendum and the Parliamentary Election held on 3 October 1998 were, overall, conducted in a transparent and professional manner.
- The Assessment Mission was impressed by a high level of openness, which contributed to public confidence in the electoral process.
- The integrity of the process was upheld by well-trained competent commission members who displayed complete independence and impartiality, which is essential to the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process.
- Due recognition should be given to the members of the various commissions who played an essential role in the provision of effective and efficient electoral administration.
- An election process in any country may be subject to imperfections and Latvia is no exception. A number of deficiencies were identified by the Mission and these are referred to later in this Report. It is encouraging to note that there is an awareness on the part of the CEC of deficiencies and a desire to improve arrangements for future elections.

- The constraint of the legal provisions in respect of the wording of the referendum question to the voters is of concern. The legal provisions prescribed the wording of the referendum ballot paper, and given this constraint and possible confusion on the part of the electorate a voter education exercise was conducted by the CEC immediately prior to polling day. In addition, guidance notices were displayed in all polling stations and polling booths. The political parties as well as the media also played a part in clarifying the referendum. All of this activity, to enable voters to mark the Referendum ballot paper so as to reflect their preference, is to be commended.

3. The Legal and Administrative Provisions

The Election of the Republic of Latvia Seventh Saeima and the Public Referendum were conducted in accordance with the following main provisions:

- (a) Constitution (Satversme) of Republic of Latvia (15 February 1922) renewed by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia on 4 May 1990 with subsequent amendments including those of 4 December 1997;
- (b) Rules of Procedure of the Saeima;
- (c) Saeima Election Law (25 May 1995) as amended on 26 March 1998;
- (d) Law on Public Referendums and Legislative Initiatives (31 March 1994);
- (e) Amendments to the Law on Public Referendums and Legislative Initiatives (3 September 1998);
- (f) Law on Citizenship (22 July 1994);
- (g) Law on Status of former USSR Citizens who are not Citizens of Latvia or any other country (12 April 1995);
- (h) Law on Financing Political Organisations (August 95);
- (i) Law on Pre-Election Campaigning (August 95);
- (j) Law on Central Election Commission (13 January 1994);
- (k) Law on City, District and Rural Municipality Election Commissions and Polling Station Election Commissions as amended on 19 June 1998;
- (l) Central Election Commission Decisions:
 - (i) Instructions on the work of Polling Station Commissions during the Saeima Elections (Decision No.23 14 July 1998)
 - (ii) Instructions for the Counting of Votes at the Saeima Elections (Decision

and (iii) Instructions for Organising Public Referendums (Decision No.103 7 September 1998).

4. The Saeima Elections

4.1 Background

Latvia is a parliamentary Republic first established on 18 November 1918. Its *de jure* independence was recognized on 26 January 1921. Elections for the Satversme (Constitutional) Assembly were held on 17 and 18 April 1920 when 150 deputies were elected for a period of three years. The Assembly functioned until 7 November 1922 when the legislative work was continued by the Saeima. The first Saeima Elections were held on 7 and 8 October 1922 and subsequent elections were held in 1925, 1928 and 1931. Following the interruption of May 1934 the Elections of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia were held on 18 March 1990 with the Fifth Saeima Elections being held on 5 and 6 June 1993 and the Sixth Saeima Elections being held on 30 September and 1 October 1995. The Political Parties in the Sixth Saeima immediately prior to the elections on 3 October, are set out at Appendix 1.

4.2 The Electoral System

In 1990 the Supreme Council established a transitional period for restituting independent state power. This period terminated with the convening of the first post-Soviet Saeima, which since the election of the Fifth Saeima is the highest legislative body in Latvia. The one chamber Saeima is comprised of 100 deputies and is elected in general equal, direct and secret elections by Latvian citizens, aged 18 or over on election day, and who enjoy all rights.

At the expiration of the Sixth Saeima, deputies will serve for four years instead of the previous three-year term. For the Seventh Saeima, elections will take place on one day (not two as hitherto) on the first Saturday of October and the newly elected Saeima will hold its first sitting on the first Tuesday in November, on which day the powers of the previous Saeima expire.

Members of the Saeima are elected proportionally on party candidate lists or electoral coalition candidate lists in five multi-seat constituencies. The Central Election Commission determines the apportionment in proportion to the number of electors in a constituency as determined four months before election day according to the Population Register. (Note: There is no National Register of Electors) The following table shows the electorates and seats allocated for each constituency:

Constituency	Electorate	Seats Allocated
<u>Riga City</u>	347,865	
(Overseas)	30,218	
Total	378,083	28
Vidzeme	342,790	25
Latgale	238,748	18

Kurzeme	186,976	14
Zemgale	201,938	15
<u>Total Number</u>	<u>1,348,535</u>	<u>100</u>

In 1993 there was a four percent national electoral threshold and this was raised to five percent in 1995. The Election Law prescribes the St Lagues method of distributing mandates among parties with the divisors being 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 etc. In addition to selecting one candidates list, each voter may mark the selected ballot paper list with plus signs to indicate their preference for particular candidates. They may also delete names of candidates on the ballot paper list. Parties may enhance the possibilities for their candidates to be elected by putting them on the ballot paper lists in several constituencies.

4.3 Qualifications to be Elected to the Saeima

In accordance with Article 4 of the Saeima Election Law any Citizen of Latvia who has reached the age of 21 on the day before the Elections may be elected to the Saeima unless any of the restrictions set out in Article 5 apply. Article 5 reads as follows:

Persons are not to be included in the candidates lists and are not eligible to the Saeima if they:

1. have been legally recognized as incapacitated;
2. are serving a sentence of imprisonment in a penitentiary;
3. have been convicted for a deliberately committed crime recognized as a crime in Latvia at the time this Law came into force and their previous criminal record has not been expunged or remitted, except for persons who have been rehabilitated;
4. have committed a criminal offence in an irresponsible state or have fallen mentally ill after committing a crime and are incapable of taking a conscious action or controlling it and as a result have been subjected to compulsory treatment or their case has been dismissed without applying such a coercive measure;
5. belong or have belonged to the salaried staff of the USSR, the Latvian SSR or a foreign state security, intelligence or counterintelligence services;
6. after January 13, 1991 have been active in the CPSU (the CP of Latvia), the Working People's International Front of the Latvian SSR, the United Board of Working Bodies; the Organization of War and Labour Veterans; the All-Latvia Salvation Committee or its regional committees;
7. have not mastered the state language to the highest (third) proficiency level.

4.4 Registration of Lists of Candidates

Articles 9 to 13 of the Saeima Election Law set out the procedures to be followed in respect of the nomination of candidatures to the Central Election Commission. Article 9 determines who may submit a list of candidates and the timetable for submission (i.e. 80th day before election day to 60th day before election day). Article 10 establishes the candidates data to be included in the lists and stipulates :

- (i) the number of candidates in a list must not exceed the number of seats allotted to the respective constituency, and
- (ii) the same candidate may only be included in one and the same party list distributed in one or several constituencies.

Article 11 sets out the documents, which must be attached to the submitted list of candidates. These documents are as follows:

- (a) statement signed by each candidate nominated in the list certifying his/her agreement to this nomination;
- (b) pre-election programme, the text of which should not exceed 4000 characters and which shall be signed by all the candidates on the list;
- (c) declaration signed by each candidate on the list stating that the candidate is eligible according to Article 4 of the Election Law and the restrictions stated in Article 5, paragraphs 1-6, do not apply to him/her;
- (d) the following data concerning the candidate and confirmed by his/her signature:
 - (i) full name, year of birth, gender, nationality;
 - (ii) personal identity number;
 - (iii) foreign citizenship (denizenship) if any;
 - (iv) place of residence (district or city);
 - (v) places of employment and positions;
 - (vi) completed education (year of graduation, special field);
 - (vii) information whether the person has or has not collaborated with the USSR, the Latvian SSR or a foreign state security service, intelligence or counterintelligence service on a contractual basis or as an agent, resident or whether he/she has offered his/her apartment for clandestine activities;
 - (viii) real property of the candidate and stock or bank shares or shares in companies (businesses) owned by him/her;
 - (ix) family status;
- (e) if the nominated candidate has not completed a school with the Latvian language of instruction or a two-language school with the Latvian language of instruction, he/she should submit a notarised copy of the document indicating the third proficiency level of the state language.

Article 12 provides for a security deposit of 1,000 lats, which is a guarantee that the same list of candidates may be distributed in all constituencies. The deposit is refunded if at least one candidate from the list has been elected in at least one constituency.

Article 13 relates to the valid nomination and registration by the Central Election Commission of the lists of candidates. There is provision for amendments to the lists to be made by the Central Election Commission as follows:

- (a) the deletion of a name of a nominated candidate if:
 - (i) the candidate is not a legitimate citizen of Latvia (Articles 4 and 5);
 - (ii) the candidate has not resigned from his/her office (service) as set by

- Article 6, paragraph 1 of the Election Law;
- (iii) the same person has been put on more than one party list of candidates (Article 10, paragraph 3);
- (iv) the candidate has died;

(b) the insertion of a technical correction.

Deletion by the Central Election Commission may only be made on the basis of a certificate issued by the relevant institution or by a court judgement and Article 13 sets out the various institutions which may certify the relevant information and present it within five days of a request from the Central Election Commission.

4.5 Assignment of Numbers to the Lists of Candidates

Article 14 provides for the CEC to assign numbers to the lists of candidates firstly by choosing the numbers by lot for those lists of candidates which have been registered in all five constituencies then for those registered in four constituencies and so on.

4.6 The Ballot Papers

In accordance with Article 14, the lists of candidates are printed on separate forms (i.e. one ballot paper for each list). Each ballot paper contains the name of the constituency, the number of the list of candidates, the name of the list of candidates and the full names of the nominated candidates. There is a blank space against each candidate's name so that an elector may put his or her mark to show preference for a particular candidate.

4.7 Publication and Display of Candidature Details

In accordance with Article 15 no later than 20 days before election day the CEC is required to publish the pre-election programmes, lists of candidates, data concerning each candidate (Article 11 of the Election Law) and full names of the candidates about whom the Centre for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism has information stating that, at its disposal or at the State Archives or other national depositories, there are documents certifying the fact that these candidates allegedly collaborated with the USSR, the Latvian SSR or a foreign state security service, intelligence or counterintelligence service on a contractual basis or as agents, residents, or they have offered their apartments for clandestine activities.

No later than 10 days before election day, each polling station is required to display the pre-election programmes and announcements showing all the lists of candidates nominated for the respective constituency and make available data referred to in Articles 11 and 15 of the Electoral Law. The locations, opening and closing of polling stations are announced by the district (city) election commissions on or before the fifteenth day before election day.

4.8 Electoral Administration

The Law on the Central Election Commission and the Law on City, District and Rural Municipality Election Commissions and Polling Station Commissions provide for the electoral bodies responsible for the preparation and proper conduct of the electoral processes. These are:

(a) Central Election Commission (CEC)

The CEC is formed no later than six months after the Saeima's formation. It

operates as an independent state institution with overall responsibility for regulating the elections of the Saeima, the referendum and the legislative initiatives. The CEC's competencies are set out in detail under Article 6 of the Law on the Central Election Commission. This administering body is composed of nine members. The Chairperson and seven other members are elected by the Saeima and one member is from the judiciary nominated by the Supreme Court. The Chairperson, his/her Assistant and the Secretary of the CEC form a "standing" commission. Organizational and technical duties are ensured by the Secretariat of the CEC.

- (b) City Election Commissions (7)
and Regional (District) Election Commissions (26)
and Town and Village (Rural Districts) Election Commissions (556) *

* (Note: Many also act as Polling Station Commissions)

These Commissions are standing bodies elected by the associated City, Regional, Town or Village Councils within three months of the relevant Council being elected and remain in office until replaced by the newly elected Council. The work of the Commissions is supported by the local public administration. Nominations for membership of these Commissions may be made by registered political parties, independent institutions, Regional Council Members and groups of 10 or more voters. Members are required to be Latvian citizens with language proficiency and a secondary education. They may not be members of the Saeima or respective City or Rural District Council. Neither may they be candidates for the Saeima or persons

responsible for submitting lists of eligible candidates. Membership is restricted to one Commission with the exception of those Rural District Commissions, which also act as Polling Station Commissions. Each Commission has seven members and at its first meeting the Chairperson and Secretary are elected.

Meetings are open to journalists, certified representatives of independent political parties, persons submitting lists of candidates as well as members of the CEC or their representatives.

- (c) Polling Station Commissions (PSCs) (Over 970, plus 31 in 24 Countries)

The same legal provisions apply to Polling Station Commissions except that the term of office of PSCs is determined by the CEC. Many of the PSCs also act as Village/Town Commissions in Rural Districts.

5. The Public Referendum

5.1 Law on "Amendments to the Citizenship Law"

5.1.1 Adoption of Amendments

On 22 June 1998 the Saeima adopted sixteen amendments to the Law on Citizenship. The amendments, put forward by the coalition government led by

Prime Minister Krasts, concerned the possibilities for applying for naturalization on the part of non-citizens in accordance with the recommendations of the OSCE.

5.1.2 Suspension of Law

Under Article 72 of the Constitution (Satversme) the President of State has the right to suspend the promulgation of a law for a period of two months at the request of not less than one third of the members of the Saeima. This right must be exercised by the President of State or by one third of the members of the Saeima within seven days after the adoption of the law by the Saeima. The law thus suspended must be submitted to a referendum if not less than one tenth of the electors so request.

5.2 Article 72 of the Constitution Invoked - Signature Campaign

Some 36 deputies in the Saeima voted for the suspension of the law on Amendments to the Citizenship Law. Accordingly a signature campaign in support of a referendum was held between 20 July and 18 August 1998 with the result being announced by the CEC on 27 August 1998 in accordance with the legal provisions. This was accompanied by the publication by the CEC of the text of the suspended law and the decision on the suspension of its promulgation. The total number of signatures collected from Latvian citizens within Latvia and those resident abroad was 226,530. This is equivalent to some 17% of the total electorate and well in excess of the required 10%.

5.3 Recording of Entry in Signatories Passports

In accordance with Article 8 of the Law on Public Referenda and Legislative Initiatives an entry (stamp) is made in the passports of those citizens who have supported the petition for a referendum.

5.4 Holding of Public Referenda

Under Article 10(2) of the Law on Public Referenda and Legislative Initiatives, a Public Referendum for the revocation of a suspended law must be held not earlier than one month and not later than two months after the day of the announcement of the public referendum, which announcement must be made within three days after the deadline for the collection of signatures.

5.5 The Ballot Paper

Article 13 of the Law on Public Referenda and Legislative Initiatives provides for the CEC to prepare the referendum ballot paper. Article 14 of the said Law provides as follows:

"On each ballot paper shall be written the issue put to a public referendum (Article 1 of this Law) and the words 'FOR' and 'AGAINST'."

The relevant part of Article 1 reads as follows:

"The President of state has suspended the promulgation of a law for two

months and during this period a petition by not less than one tenth of the electors has been received to put the suspended law to a referendum"

Thus, within the constraints of Article 74 of the Constitution and Article 10(2) and 13 of the Law on Public Referenda and Legislative Initiatives, the wording of the question on the ballot paper was determined. As a consequence a voter voting "FOR" votes to reject the amendments and a voter voting "AGAINST" votes for the adoption of the amendments. A specimen ballot paper is attached at Appendix 4.

5.6 Annulment (Repeal) of Suspended Law

Under Article 74 of the Constitution (Satversme) a law adopted by the Saeima and suspended in the procedure set forth in Article 72 shall be annulled by a referendum if the number of voters participating in the referendum is at least half the number of electors who participated in the previous Saeima Elections and if the majority has voted for the annulment of the law.

According to CEC figures the law on Amendments to the Citizenship Law would be repealed if at least 477,696 voters participated in the Referendum and at least 238,849 vote for the repeal.

6. **Polling, Counting, Scrutiny and Tabulation of Results**

6.1 Central Election Commission Instructions

Detailed instructions expanding the Election Law as well as defining and clarifying the various polling station procedures for the Saeima Elections were issued by the Central Election Commission. A separate set of instructions was issued for the counting of votes at polling station level and for the compilation, consolidation and tabulation of results at town or pagasts (rural municipality) level, at district level and at city level through to CEC level.

Similarly, a set of instructions for organizing Public Referenda, and supplementary provisions for the holding of the Saeima Elections and Public Referendum on the same day, expand on and clarify the provisions of the Law on Public Referenda and Legislative Initiatives.

In general the same arrangements apply for both the Saeima Elections and the Referendum.

6.2 Polling

Polling takes place on one day on the first Saturday of October and polling hours are from 8am to 8pm. Two ballot boxes (one for the Saeima Elections and one for the Referendum) are provided and there is provision for checking and sealing the empty ballot boxes. Authorized observers from the political organizations (parties) and their associations may be present throughout the polling station procedures. The keeping of minutes of proceedings, complaints etc. together with maintenance of order and the prohibiting of canvassing within 50 metres of the polling station entrance on polling day are the responsibility of the Chairperson. The means by which each elector is identified

is a Latvian citizen's passport. However, those electors residing abroad who have not received a Latvian citizen's passport may produce or mail to the polling station a registration document bearing the elector's personal identity number issued by the Citizenship and Immigration Department.

On entering the polling station an elector attends a table (or tables) and presents his/her passport for verification as an eligible elector and determination that the elector has not already voted at the current election or referendum. Page 14 of the elector's passport is endorsed (stamped) separately for the Saeima Elections and the Referendum. Separate Registers (Lists of Voters) for the Saeima Elections and the Referendum are compiled as each elector is processed with each elector's details being entered into each list. Each elector signs the respective list before receiving the ballot papers. In respect of the Saeima Elections each voter is issued with the ballot papers containing all the lists of candidates for the constituency and a special envelope bearing the respective polling station stamp. (It is noted that the ballot papers themselves are not stamped). An elector must receive a complete set of the ballot papers and not separate ballot papers. In respect of the Public Referendum each voter is issued with a single ballot paper with the polling station stamp endorsed on the reverse side. There is no envelope for the Referendum ballot paper.

Although there appears to be no legal provision, an elector does not have to receive ballot papers for both the Saeima Elections and the Referendum. Having received the ballot papers the voter then attends a compartment (polling booth) or separate room where the voter makes his/her choice in privacy. Guidance posters for both the Saeima Elections and the Public Referendum produced by the CEC were displayed in the polling compartments. Samples of these are set out at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

Note: These voter education posters were in addition to the pre-election programmes, lists of candidates, text of the suspended law on Amendments to the Citizenship Law which were available for perusal in the polling stations.

In respect of the Saeima Elections the voter chooses one of the ballot papers for a list of candidates. The voter may choose to put a "+" mark against the name of any of the candidates on the list to denote a particular preference **or** to cross out a candidate's first or last name **or** to leave the ballot paper without any marks. The ballot paper is then placed in the stamped envelope by the voter. In respect of the Referendum the voter is required to place a mark "+" in the respective box (diamond) against either the word "FOR" or the word "AGAINST" and then fold the ballot paper. Each voter places their ballot paper envelope for the Saeima Elections and folded ballot paper for the Referendum into the respective ballot box in the presence of a member of the PSC.

If a voter "damages" a ballot paper (or envelope) he/she may be issued with a new ballot paper (or set of ballot papers or envelope). The damaged items are cancelled and a note placed against the electors entry in the list of voters.

There is provision for the receiving and recording of requests for the mobile ballot box facility for those persons unable for health reasons to attend the polling station in person. In addition, there is provision for persons unable to vote by reason of a physical handicap to be assisted by a companion and this is recorded in the lists of voters.

Only those electors who have arrived at the polling station before 8pm may be allowed to cast their votes.

There appears to be no provision for suspending or dissolving the poll.

6.3 Counting at PSC Level

Counting of votes at polling stations starts immediately after the close of polling at 8pm with the exception of those polling stations abroad where counting starts at 8pm on the third day following election day. Votes cast for the Saeima Elections and for the Referendum are "counted at the same time, but in different places of the polling station". Should any ballot envelopes for the Saeima Elections and any ballot papers for the Referendum not be placed in the corresponding ballot box, they may be transferred at the time of opening of the ballot boxes. Persons authorized to be present at the polling may also be present at the counting process.

Counting is conducted in two stages with an initial preliminary vote count after which there is an intermission followed by a final vote count. There is no stipulation as to the length of the intermission. In practice most PSCs take a break of approximately one hour, however a number of PSCs resume the following day to conclude the final count stage. Security of the material is maintained by the police or National Guard, and at least one member of the PSC. The PSCs record their activities and all relevant figures in a set of minutes completed in duplicate for both stages of the counting. Joint minutes are kept for the Saeima Elections and Referendum. Both copies of the minutes are signed by all members of the PSC and endorsed with the PSC official stamp.

6.4. Saeima Elections Count at PSC Level

The following is a brief summary of counting procedures for the Saeima Elections:

(a) Before Opening of Ballot Boxes

- (i) Lists of voters are closed, signed and checked by the PSC.
- (ii) Stamped, unused or damaged envelopes are put together and the unused election documents are put to one side.
- (iii) Number of election envelopes received, stamped, unstamped, remaining unstamped, remaining stamped, damaged by voters and those issued to voters is recorded.
- (iv) Remaining stamped, damaged and unused envelopes are cancelled by cutting the upper right corner.
- (v) Number of voters is determined according to the list of voters (including the separate list for the mobile ballot box).
- (vi) The figures are balanced and the relevant envelopes packaged.

(b) Preliminary Vote Count

- (i) Ballot boxes are opened (including the mobile box) and the number of envelopes counted. A ballot paper without an envelope is cancelled.
- (ii) Envelopes are sorted into valid and invalid (an envelope not bearing the official stamp is invalid) and counted.
- (iii) Invalid envelopes are packaged unopened.
- (iv) Valid envelopes are opened and sorted into valid and invalid. An empty envelope or one containing more than one ballot paper or a damaged ballot paper is referred to the Chairperson for a decision by the PSC. If there is more than one ballot paper and they are not similar they are invalid. If the ballot papers are completely similar one is regarded as valid. A torn ballot paper or one belonging to another constituency is invalid.
- (v) Number of invalid ballot papers is recorded and the papers packaged.
- (vi) Number of valid ballot papers is recorded and the figures are balanced.
- (vii) Valid ballot papers are sorted according to the lists of candidates and the number of ballot papers for each list counted and recorded.
- (viii) PSC informs the respective City, Town, Village Election Commission of the total number of valid ballot papers and the number cast for each list of candidates. This information is displayed at the polling station.

(c) Intermission

For the period of the intermission the election documents should be packaged and the valid, invalid ballot papers, the minutes and list of voters placed in a sealed ballot box.

(d) Final Vote Count

- (i) Sealed ballot box is checked, opened and the number of valid and invalid ballot papers are counted, balanced and recorded in the final vote count minutes.
- (ii) Valid ballot papers are separated, counted and recorded between "amended" and "unamended". Amended means that a voter has placed a mark "+" against a candidate or crossed out the name of a candidate.
- (iii) Unamended ballot papers are packaged.
- (iv) Amended ballot papers cast for the same list of candidates are grouped into three parts in relation to the first candidate on the list (i.e. no mark, "+" mark, name deleted) then counted, balanced and recorded. This procedure is followed in relation to each subsequent candidate on the respective list. The exercise is repeated at least twice by different persons and the accuracy

checked before the amended ballot papers are packaged separately for each list of candidates.

- (v) Chairperson of PSC delivers packed documents and second copy of minutes to the respective City, Town, Village Election Commission.

6.5 Referendum Count at PSC Level

The procedures for the counting of the votes for the Referendum are similar to those for the Saeima Elections with the following variations:

- (i) Ballot papers are sorted into three groups as follows:
 - "+" mark in the diamond (box) for "FOR";
 - "+" mark in the diamond (box) for "AGAINST"; and
 - Invalid ballot papers.
- (ii) Invalid ballot papers are those where neither diamond has been marked or both diamonds have been marked, or the ballot papers are torn or do not bear the official PSC stamp.
- (iii) After counting balancing and recording and before any intermission the PSC informs the respective Election Commission of the result for the polling station and displays the result in the polling station.

6.6 Consolidation and Tabulation of Results

Outside the main Cities there is a two-tier structure for the consolidation and tabulation of polling station results prior to the final process by the CEC. In the main cities PSCs deliver their results and material directly to the City Election Commissions whereas in the more rural areas results and packages are delivered to the respective Town or Rural Municipality or Village Election Commission before onward transmission to the respective District (Regional) Election Commission.

On receipt of material from the PSCs the respective Elections Commission records the time of receipt and the number of packages received, checks the figures in respect of election envelopes and ballot papers as indicated in the minutes and that the figures balance. Any errors in PSC calculations have to be corrected by the PSC.

A report of the Town or Rural Municipality or Village Election Commission summarizing all the relevant figures and signed by the members of the Election Commission together with the PSC members are forwarded to the District (Regional) Election Commission where, after a check, figures from the minutes are electronically processed.

At City Election Commission level the PSC vote counting minutes are processed, by electronic means, directly.

Minutes of the final vote count at District and City levels are completed and signed by all the respective members. These documents together with their text on floppy disc and the PSC minutes and reports are forwarded to the CEC.

At CEC level the material received from the District and City Election Commissions is processed and the following established:

- (i) Result of the Public Referendum;
- (ii) Number of votes cast for each candidate list in each polling station, in each constituency and in all constituencies;
- (iii) Number of votes for each candidate in each polling station and in the entire constituency;
- (iv) Which candidates have been elected in each constituency.

7. Contestations and Appeals

Various laws provide for the review of decisions taken by the various electoral bodies. The procedures for claims and appeals within the election administration are as follows:

- (a) The Saeima elect the Mandate and Submissions Committee which checks the election documents and complaints about the elections **if** such complaints have been submitted to the CEC not later than 4 days after the official election results have been announced.
- (b) The CEC investigates complaints about resolutions and activities of the Elections Commissions and may annul actions considered unlawful.
- (c) The CEC investigates any actions or questions related to the Referendum and implementation of the Election Laws.
- (d) In respect of breaches of the Law in polling stations affecting the results of the Saeima Elections or Referendum the CEC may annul the results in a particular polling station and report persons to the respective state and local government institutions.
- (e) The resolutions of the CEC are appealable as dictated by the Law.
- (f) A person who has submitted a list of candidates, as well as the nominated candidates themselves, have a right of appeal against the decision of the Election Commission. The appeal must be submitted to the CEC within seven days of the decision and also the CEC decision may be appealed against in court.
- (g) Appeals made by electors against the election procedure in a particular polling station are filed with the Chairperson and registered in a special appeals book. These are examined immediately by the Commission and a reply issued to the claimant.
- (h) Complaints regarding Polling Station Commissions resolutions may be submitted by individuals certified to register lists of candidates and the

registered candidates themselves within seven days after the resolutions adoption in the Regional (City) Court. The decision of the Regional (City) Court is unappealable. However, if transgressions within the Election Commissions jurisdiction are determined after seven days complaints may be submitted to the CEC and any decision may be appealed to the court.

- (i) The result of the Referendum may be contested in the Constitutional Court by an appeal supported by no less than 20 members of the Saeima on the grounds that the result does not reflect the will of the people.

8. Political Parties Standing for the Seventh Saeima Elections

For the Seventh Saeima Elections 21 political parties/coalitions/formations were registered by the CEC to contest the elections on 3 October. These included two new parties namely "People's Party" and "The New Party". The candidates validly nominated on the various lists totalled 1083. The CEC reported that under Article 13(2) only two candidates had been deleted from the lists, and following appeals to the Court, the CEC's decisions were upheld.

The List of Parties/Coalitions/Formations contesting the Seventh Saeima Elections is set out in Appendix 2.

9. Preliminary Results - Seventh Saeima Elections and Public Referendum

The preliminary results of the ballot for the Seventh Saeima Elections and for the Public Referendum were announced at a press conference at noon on Sunday 4 October 1988 by the Chairman of the Central Election Commission.

Results were still awaited in respect of those Latvian citizens residing abroad. Although the number of such electors totalled 30,218, approximately one fifth only had expressed a wish to exercise their right to vote and this would not have a significant effect on the overall results.

The revised total electorate figure for citizens within Latvia was 1,313,739. The turnout for the Saeima Elections was 72.5% and for the Public referendum was 67.4%. The total number of valid ballots for the Saeima Elections was 946,590. The total number of voters participating in the Public Referendum was 885,546 and the total number of valid ballot papers was 868,019. Thus 17,527 (1.9%) of the ballot papers for the Public Referendum were declared invalid. The Chairman of the CEC stated that most of the invalid ballot papers for the Public Referendum had either been marked in both "FOR" and "AGAINST" boxes or there was no mark at all.

The number of valid votes FOR the repeal of the law "Amendments to the Citizenship Law" was 398,505 (i.e. 45% of the total votes cast) and AGAINST the repeal 469,514 (i.e. 53.02% of the total votes cast).

Of the 21 parties contesting the Saeima Elections only six obtained more than the minimum 5% threshold required to secure seats.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 In general the various legal and administrative provisions provide the necessary framework for participation in the electoral process and for their proper conduct and administration.

Despite the concern raised in the OSCE/ODIHR Report on the Observation of the Parliamentary Elections held on 30 September and 1 October 1995, Articles 5, 13 and 15 still contain restrictive provisions, as regards eligibility to stand and be elected, on persons who took part in support of the Communist Party and related structures after 13 January 1991. Thus the spirit of the OSCE Commitments, as set out in Article 7.5 of the Copenhagen Document of 1990, is still not being fully upheld.

- 10.2 The provision by the CEC of sets of Instructions to the various electoral bodies, in addition to training sessions, went some way in ensuring efficiency, consistency and uniformity of practice, particularly at polling station level, and this is to be commended.
- 10.3 There was a high level of commitment on the part of those administering the electoral process and the integrity of the process was upheld by competent commission members who displayed impartiality and independence and conducted the various procedures in an efficient and transparent way. In this respect it is noted that the political parties expressed their confidence in the overall election administration and no complaints were evidenced.
- 10.4 Inevitably, given the size and complexity of organizing any election and particularly two ballots on one day for the first time, there were imperfections and a number of issues which need to be considered for future elections in order to further improve efficiency, transparency and security. These issues are referred to later.
- 10.5 The electoral commissions were well supported by the central and local public administration and there is a clear distinction between the role of the public administration and the election administration.
- 10.6 The procedure for the election of the various election commissions is set out in paragraph 4.8 of this Report. However, Article 22 of the Law on City, District and Rural Municipality Election Commissions and Polling Station Commissions together with Article 29 of Decision 103 of the CEC issued on 7/9/98 in respect of organizing Referenda provide for additional persons to "secure the election procedures and vote count" State officials (civil servants) as well as other specialists from amongst the electors are contracted to provide assistance. It is noted that these additional persons carried out a broad range of activities at polling station level including compilation of the lists of voters, monitoring the ballot boxes and counting of the votes.

Accordingly, whereas each PSC would comprise seven members, many polling stations were staffed by over twice this number. In one particularly large polling station, in Gulbene Town, with an expected turn-out of over 4,000 voters some 20

additional "aides" were contracted.

The need for additional polling station staff is recognized in view of the fact that polling was being held on one day and not over two days as hitherto, combined with the additional burden of two ballots on one day. However, there should be clear provisions in the law concerning the nomination, selection, appointment, role and responsibilities of such additional persons on the same lines as for members of the PSCs and other Election Commissions.

- 10.7 Party observers are able to play an essential role in safeguarding the electoral process. Article 18 (and subsequent Articles) of the Election Law provides for "authorised observers from political organisations (parties) and associations of such organisations and their territorial structure units possessing the authority of legal persons (hereinafter 'authorised observers') to be present at the various stages of the electoral process. Only the CEC has the competence to accredit party observers. Parties contesting the election request a general accreditation. The PSCs receive a list of all parties with accredited observers and each individual observer has to attend the Regional (District) or City Election Commission with a letter of authority from his or her party in order to be accredited.

Accredited party observers may be present at any polling station and there would appear to be no limit on the number of party observers at any particular polling station. Some PSCs thought the limit was two observers whereas others considered that there was no limit. It is considered that the Law should more clearly define the provisions and arrangements for accreditation of party observers.

- 10.8 The presence of state and municipal police at polling stations is, in the Latvian context, not believed to pose any real problems. They can play an important role in support of the Election Commissions by providing security and by maintaining an election environment in which the electors feel confident to express their views and exercise their right to vote.

The presence of Zemessardze (Home Guard) is considered unnecessary and undesirable. The presence of any security personnel should be restricted to outside polling station rooms. In a number of instances security personnel actively participated in the electoral process by volunteering to oversee the ballot boxes and control admission by the inspection of passports. No matter how well intentioned these actions may be they should not be permitted. The role of the security personnel should be restricted to one of security at the direction of the PSC Chairperson.

- 10.9 The political campaign for both the Saeima Elections and the Public Referendum was a relatively low-key affair with no reported incidents of any significance. Activity did increase as polling day approached with a variety of methods used, including public meetings and rallies. There was little in the way of posters, leaflets and other printed material. Television, radio and the newspapers were considered to be the most influential and the parties used these media either through paid advertising or through the legal provision for timed campaign spots.

- 10.10 The absence of a Register of Electors combined with the facility for electors to vote at any polling station in any constituency is of concern given a proportional electoral

system with five multi-seat constituencies. In such circumstances there is no control mechanism so as to prevent large numbers of electors being transported to a particular constituency in order to vote in that constituency.

The preparation and publication of a Register of Electors in separate parts for each constituency would assist in the determination of number of seats to be allocated to each constituency thus subscribing to the principle that all votes should carry the same weight to ensure equal representation.

Apart from the additional safeguard which a polling station register of electors provides, the determination of the number of electors per polling station would remove the uncertainty as to the number of electors who may attend particular polling stations which affects the supply of materials and administration of the process.

- 10.11 So as to safeguard the 'one person, one vote' principle the criteria and procedures for identifying eligible voters are crucial. This is particularly so in the absence of a Register of Electors and the ability to choose any polling station to exercise the right to vote.

Article 20 of the Election Law prescribes that "the Latvian citizen's passport shall be the identity document of an elector". However, additional means of identification were acceptable in the form of Certificates issued by the Citizenship and Migration Department. These Certificates did not bear citizens photographs. Some PSCs were aware of this provisional measure, however many PSCs were unclear about the procedure to be followed.

Serious consideration should be given to the implications arising from departing from the acceptance of only one means of identification.

- 10.12 In respect of the issue of ballot papers to electors practices varied from polling station to polling station. In some polling stations electors attended separate tables in order to receive the Saeima Election ballot paper lists and the Referendum ballot paper. In so doing each elector could choose whether or not to participate in one or other of the ballots. In other polling stations electors attended a table where papers for both ballots were issued and passports stamped with the electors not being given the option.

Clarification of the procedure for issuing ballot papers at combined ballots is called for.

- 10.13 The detailed provisions for the sealing of the ballot boxes is noted, however the exercise was more symbolic than practical in respect of the cardboard ballot boxes which were provided at most polling stations to supplement the number of wooden ballot boxes available.

Sufficient financial resources should be made available to the CEC for ballot boxes, which provide for a high level of security.

- 10.14 In respect of the Saeima Elections each voter receives a set of ballot papers corresponding to the lists of candidates for the constituency as well as an official envelope in which to place the selected ballot paper (list). This procedure is described

at paragraph 6.2 of this Report.

There is nothing in the Election Law to prevent the elector taking away the ballot papers (lists) not selected by him or her. Reports of employers instructing their employees to hand over the discarded ballot lists as proof of support for a particular party (list) resulted in action being taken by the CEC with all Regional and City Election Commissions being advised to arrange for additional spare ballot papers (lists) to be made available to voters in the polling stations so as to counteract this activity.

Apart from the above, the voting practice of an option to place an unmarked ballot paper (list) with no official stamp in an envelope which then becomes the check/control mechanism is a practice which should be reviewed so as to safeguard the voting process.

It is considered that, irrespective of an elector's preference marks for individual candidates on a list, each elector should be required to make a mark indicating the ballot paper (list) of their choice in order to avoid the situation of unmarked ballot papers being valid. A special box on the ballot papers (lists) could be provided for this purpose. In addition, all the non-selected ballot papers (lists) should be retained in a suitable receptacle in the polling station and not be taken away by the elector.

- 10.15 As referred to in paragraph 6.2 of this Report, for the Referendum ballot a voter is required to place a mark "+" in the respective box (diamond) against the word "FOR" or the word "AGAINST" on the ballot paper. There was considerable concern about the way the question to voters was expressed on the ballot paper and a general unease as to whether or not electors, particularly the elderly, would understand the question so as to vote according to their preference.

Paragraph 5.5 of this Report explains the legal provision as regards the formulation of the wording of the Referendum ballot paper resulting in a voter voting "FOR" to reject the amendments and "AGAINST" to adopt the amendments to the Citizenship Law. Given this legal constraint and possible confusion on the part of the electorate a voter education exercise was conducted by the CEC through the electronic and print media. As well as the availability at polling stations prior to polling day of booklets with the provisions of the Citizenship Law and the highlighted amendments thereto, the CEC provided guidance notices for display in polling station rooms and polling booths on polling day.

This voter education activity immediately prior to polling day was supported by the political parties as well as the media who played a part in clarifying the Referendum question.

All of this activity to enable voters to mark their ballot papers in accordance with their due preference is to be commended. However, a review of the legal provisions is strongly recommended so as to provide for the formulation of a Referendum ballot paper question in a more direct and uncomplicated manner thus avoiding such juridically phrased ballot papers at any future Referendums.

- 10.16 As referred to in paragraph 5.3 of this Report signatories to the Referendum were required to have their passports stamped. Such an entry in a citizen's passport could be construed as an indication of the citizen's voting preference. This is in direct contravention of the secrecy of the vote principle. It is considered that no such mark should be made in passports of those citizens supporting a petition for a referendum.
- 10.17 Although there is provision for an elector to vote in secrecy, or privacy, many voters chose not to do so. Family voting was widespread and a generally accepted practice. Voting outside the polling booths at tables or other surfaces, irrespective of whether polling booths were occupied, was also a common practice.
- Although the practices may not be regarded by the electoral administration as problematic as regards possible intimidation or manipulation, they are nevertheless to be discouraged and the principle of the secrecy of the vote fully enforced. Additional polling booths should be provided and the number of electors inside the polling room at any time should be no more than the total number of polling booths.
- 10.18 Consideration should be given to the out of polling station (i.e. mobile ballot box) procedure as regards its disruption to the activities in the polling station on polling day. The Chairman of the CEC reported that there had been complaints that requested visits had not been made by certain PSCs. Consideration may be given to bringing forward such a voting facility to the day before polling day or to introduce an absent voting by post facility for those persons not able to attend a polling station in person for health reasons.
- 10.19 A review of the location of polling station rooms in buildings is required. Many polling station rooms were located on upper floors of buildings thus creating access difficulties for elderly or infirm electors wishing to exercise their right to vote in person.
- 10.20 At the majority of polling stations visited there was a high level of competence in respect of the counting procedures. Only when PSCs failed to follow the CEC Instructions, particularly as regards the order of the various stages of the count, did difficulties arise resulting in delays, which could have been avoided. However, it is considered that instructions for combined ballot counts should be reviewed with a view to simplification and clarification of the various activities.
- 10.21 Contrary to CEC Instructions in respect of the procedure to be followed when an intermission in the PSC vote counting occurs, material was not packaged and placed in ballot boxes at a number of polling stations. A policeman was found to be providing the necessary security, however, there was an absence of the required member of the PSC.
- 10.22 Two copies of the PSC Minutes are required to be completed. The second copy is delivered to the next commission level, however, it is unclear as to what happens to the first copy. Article 34/3 of the Election Law provides for authorized representatives to have the right to familiarize themselves with the Minutes of vote counting, however, there is no clear provision in respect of the publication of the Saeima Election preliminary results at polling station level on conclusion of the PSC counting exercise.

- 10.23 The two-tier structure (prior to CEC level) for the consolidation and tabulation of results outside the main cities is described under paragraph 6.6. Many Rural Municipality or Village Election Commissions also act as Polling Station Commissions and this dual role caused confusion in certain rural areas when it came to the completion of the respective Minutes.

In Rezekne the Regional (District) Election Commission received Minutes and materials directly from all PSCs, thus omitting the Rural Municipality/Village Commission stage which in any event is limited to a checking procedure as opposed to a tabulation and consolidation procedure. Consideration should be given to the need for this additional tier of the electoral administration in rural/village areas.

- 10.24 Paragraph 6.6 of this Report explains the various stages of the consolidation and tabulation of the results. At Regional (District) and City Election Commission level results were computerized. Each Commission recorded the preliminary results from the PSC Minutes and these were transferred to the CEC by e-mail, not on Internet lines but on special lines usually reserved for governmental instructions and not linked to the public telephone network. Figures were entered into a computer and saved on floppy disk. On completion of the exercise the disk, PSC Minutes and report of Election Commission are forwarded to the CEC for the final tabulation procedure.

The computer programmes for processing the results were installed in Microsoft Windows and an Excel spreadsheet was used to record the figures. The operators were contracted by the Chairpersons and attended a training session in Riga. Their first task was to collect and transmit to the CEC the preliminary results as telephoned in by the PSCs and this was completed by early Sunday morning. Entry of the figures was done only once and operators claimed that the controls of the protocols prevented entry errors. The fields of numbers representing the different protocols were totalled and the Election Commission protocol produced and e-mailed to the CEC. Print-outs of the protocols were not offered to party representatives nor to Chairpersons of the PSCs which facility would heighten the transparency of this important stage of the process.

At Rezekne Regional (District) Commission two mistakes were found in the control check formula. All of the pre-formatted Excel sheets for counting procedures were supposed to be protected, however it was possible without a special password for an incorrect formula to be changed thus the particular cell was not protected.

A review of the procedures for the computerization of the results should be undertaken particularly as regards access, control and check procedures. It is considered that specially designed software, as opposed to an Excel spreadsheet arrangement, should be introduced for future elections.

- 10.25 In order to foster confidence in any electoral process a series of checks and balances should be created whereby the activities and decisions taken are open to review by the provision of claims and appeals procedures at the various levels within the election administration and before the judiciary.

Paragraph 7 of this Report sets out a number of provisions for contestations and

appeals, however, given the short timescale of this mission, it was not possible to assess this part of the electoral process. However, it is considered that there is a need to clearly define the procedures for claims and appeals particularly as regards the competent bodies and the times by which claims and appeals may be lodged and adjudicated. This could be achieved by the production of a detailed timetable.

- 10.26 The transparency of the overall process could be further enhanced by the production of a detailed election timetable listing the various activities, the bodies responsible and the latest day/time by which each activity must be carried out.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN SIXTH SAEIMA

Union "For Fatherland and Freedom" / LNNK - *(20 members)*

Democratic Party "Saimnieks" - *(18 Members)*

Latvia's Way - *(13 Members)*

The Union of Labour Party, Christian Democrats and Latvian Green Party -
(11 Members)

Latvia's Farmers' Union - *(7 Members)*

For Latvia - *(7 Members)*

National Harmony Party - *(5 Members)*

Members of Parliament with no faction affiliation - *(19 Members)*

**PARTIES STANDING FOR SEVENTH
ARRANGED ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL ELECTORAL**

1. People's Group "Freedom"
2. Party Mara's Ground (MZ)
3. Conservative Party (KP)
4. Alliance "Latvia's Way"
5. Social Democratic Women's Organisation
6. People's Harmony Party (TSP)
7. The New Party (JP)
8. Coalition of Labour Party, Christian Democrats and the Latvian Green Party (DP-KDS-LZP)
9. Latvian Farmer's Union
10. Democratic Party "Saimnieks"
11. People's Movement for Latvia
12. Latvia's National Reform Party
13. National Progressive Party
14. People's Party (TP)
15. Latvian Social Democratic Union
16. Latvian Unity Party (LVP)
17. Union "For Fatherland and Freedom / LNNK"
18. Latvian National Democratic Party
19. Democratic Party (DP)
20. P/o "Helsinki 86"
21. Latvia's Revival Party

ATTENTION VOTERS!

You have been given 21 ballot papers.
You must choose one - the one corresponding to the list of candidates whom you will vote for.

If you are especially **in favour** of a certain candidate s election then make a **mark +** in front of these candidates in the designated place

Name of the Candidate	55
List	
1. NAME SURNAME	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. NAME SURNAME	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. NAME SURNAME	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. NAME SURNAME	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. NAME SURNAME	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you are especially **against** a certain candidate s election, then **cross out** these candidates names or surnames

You may also insert in the envelope an unaltered ballot paper (one without markings)



The envelope must be sealed and personally dropped in the ballot box in the company of a polling station commission member.

HOW TO CORRECTLY MARK THE BALLOT PAPER

REFERENDUM BALLOT PAPER

Are you for the repeal of Amendments of the Citizenship Law of June 22, 1998?

Use + to mark the answer you have chosen - for or against

FOR  **AGAINST** 



Ballot paper in which both for and against are marked, or in which neither are marked, will be considered invalid.

Use + to mark the answer **FOR** if you do not support the Amendment of the Citizenship Law and **wish this Law to be repeated**

REFERENDUM BALLOT PAPER

Are you for the repeal of Amendments of the Citizenship Law of June 22, 1998?

Use + to mark the answer you have chosen - for or against

FOR  **AGAINST** 

Ballot paper in which both for and against are marked, or in which neither are marked, will be considered invalid.

Use + to mark the answer **AGAINST** if you do support the Amendment of the Citizenship Law and **wish this Law to come into force**

Attention! The ballot paper in which both diamonds are marked, or in which neither are marked, will be considered invalid