

Monday, 29 September 2014

10 a.m.–1 p.m. *Working session 10 (specifically selected topic): Rights of persons belonging to national minorities*

During last 25 years, the official politics of Estonia can be called as a Russophobia. Thus, it is worth mentioning that according to the Estonian laws, Russians are not a “national minority”. In general, the term “national minority” is not used in Estonia. Instead the direct translation can be put as a “small nationality”. For the external observers, Estonians easily transform the term “small nationality” to the “national minority”. The distinctive feature for “small nationality” is that, in accordance with Estonian laws, the people who belong to it are exclusively citizens of Estonia, although the Estonian citizenship was stolen from the majority of Russians in 1992, which has led to the stateless status for these people.

Many international organizations were repeatedly criticizing given approach of Estonian state telling that it has a “freezing effect”, but that critics made no effect on Estonian lawmakers. For us, it is principal that this approach, besides having a “freezing effect”, contradicts humanitarian standards, as **the rights of national minorities belong to the human rights, and not to the rights of citizens.**

Another aspects, which is important to highlight here is the extreme politization of ethnical relationships in Estonia, which has found deep roots in the country laws. There is no a single law in Estonia, which would allow to take non-political decisions on the matters concerning ethnical relationships. In other words there is no a single such law, which would have some criteria for making decisions in the area of ethnic relationships and would allow a decision maker to “forget” his or her ethnicity, when making a decision.