

Mr. Aleksandrs Kuzmins - Human Rights Committee (NGO)

Thank you Madam Chair.

I would like to, firstly, recommend and include into the recommendations the reference that any possible gradual introduction of the dominant language as the medium of instruction, should not negatively affect the quality of education. As it happens in Latvia now, where the majority language is being introduced as the medium of instruction in forms 10 to 12 despite the will of most minority student parents. Negative impact of this reform is shown within studies conducted by both non-governmental organisation and by Rīgas city department of education in its 2005 yearbook.

Secondly, I would recommend to include a statement that private minority education institutions should have the same access to get public co-funding as the majority private educational institutions have. This is contrary to the current proposal in the Latvian government, supported by Latvian parliament in the first reading. And lastly, I would like to mention that reducing existing level of minority protection would be unacceptable, as this also happens in Latvia now, where public universities have ceased teaching in Russian despite that it is native for more than 1/3 of the population. Only higher education in Linguistics remained in Russian in public universities.

Thank you.