

6th session of the Forum on Minority Issues

IV. Promotion and protection of the identity of religious minorities

Latvian Non-Citizens Congress on Item IV

Thank you Madame chair,

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OHCHR for selecting me for the 2014 minority fellowship program and the opportunity to participate in this forum. Today I am speaking in the name of Latvian orthodox old believer community. 20th century, all believers are being witnesses of the establishing of independent Latvian Republic, incorporation into the Soviet Union, regaining its independence, and joining European Union. The practice and maintaining of religion for Orthodox old believers is closely connected to the maintaining of culture and traditions, based on Russian language. Therefore, we support the approach of the forum to broaden the discussion involved religious minorities. Giving the attention to full arrange of minority rights. Not only in Latvia, but also in Europe, we are witnessing the rising of confessionalism and the attempt to worsen the situation of minorities. For the Russian linguistic minority, the situation is also because of political tensions between Europe and Russia. Therefore, we are grateful to the opportunity to discuss this issue in the international level, growing attention to equal treatment of distinguished minority. The participation if decision-making is already mentioned in the draft recommendation. We encourage the state to develop innovative strategies for participation of minorities in all areas of life, including decision-making by allocation of funds for education, culture and vocational trainings. Concerning consultation of religious minorities we recommend to promote direct election of their representative in such consultative bodies, providing transparency and trust as well as ensuring taking into account (...) for youth within minority groups. The informative action in form state funding are very (...) campaigns are necessary to encourage and support open ended and equal in respectful dialogue between minority and majority groups. The support of the recommendation aiming engaging the states for cooperation neighbouring and (..) state of minorities. In modern times, we are all minorities, and effective participation of minorities it is a question about function of our democracies. Therefore, we fully support the idea of measuring the of the minority protection mechanisms not only in the international but also in the local level, admitting that minority and majority positions can interjoin not only though the history but also through the territory of the state. To address this challenge the regional cooperation and participation mechanisms has to be developed overcoming administrative and national borders.

Thank you very much Madame.