

2014

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I am representative of Russian-speaking minority in Estonia and speak on behalf of NGO Russian School of Estonia. Russians and other peoples who had been living for centuries in Estonia and other Baltic countries woke up as foreigners in their homes after the dissolution of Soviet Union. 32% of Estonian population became stateless in 1992.
2. Estonia ratified many international treaties on human rights. However, some important treaties are still not ratified. Therefore, I consider it necessary to strengthen those items of the draft Recommendations which are under-implemented in Estonia and other states that also did not ratify certain treaties on human rights.
3. Contrary to the concluding remarks on Estonia delivered by Human Rights Committee, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, UN Committee against Torture, and other UN treaty-based bodies, Estonia still abstains from the ratification of Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, we ask for Estonia to reconsider this. As the result, children are still born stateless in our country.
4. Item 16 of the draft Recommendations mentions statelessness. However, this issue is dealt with from the point of view of obtaining citizenship by immigrants, not native persons. Citizenship should be granted automatically to native persons, i.e. Russian-speaking population living in Estonia before 1992. This issue should be resolved by legislation in accordance with the international norms.
5. Estonia also abstains from the ratification of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and other UN bodies regularly recommended to improve Estonian education policy. Nevertheless, the governmental actions in this regard are not fully compliant with the needs of the Estonian society and recommendations of the above-mentioned bodies.
 - 5.1. Item 16 of the draft Recommendations deals with the system of education. However, given the importance of intercultural education, teaching of history, culture and traditions of minorities, this item needs to be supplemented
 - 2.1. By the right of national minorities to conduct their own educational activity, including managing schools or usage of their own languages in accordance with the educational policies of each state pursuant to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, Art. 5.
 - 2.2. By the right of national minorities to enjoy their culture, to profess religion and worship, and use the native language, inter alia, for the purposes of getting education (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 27; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 30;

Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Art. 4).

2.3. In order to create conditions for choosing native language as a teaching language in preschool, primary and high school education along with professional and higher education, states are obliged to respect regional conventions in addition to the UN treaties.