



CLSF Latvijas Cilvēktiesību komiteja
F.I.D.H. Latvian Human Rights Committee
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To: Tenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues
minorityforum@ohchr.org

Contribution to the recommendations of the Forum

We kindly suggest to include the following statements in the recommendations of the forum, in the chapter on education:

1. The existence of schools with minority language of instruction should be interpreted as an asset, not segregation. If the quality of education in such schools is lower than average, the quality of education should be raised, without blaming the medium of instruction.
2. Distinction in scope of mother tongue education provided for different minorities, when based on objective numerical criteria, should not be interpreted as discrimination.
3. Social cohesion, integration and the need for promotion of the official languages should not be used as pretexts for denying education in native language for minorities.
4. The option of receiving exam tasks and giving answers in minority language should be promoted, as reasonable accommodation, and not presented as discriminating.
5. Differentiated requirements for official language exams for graduates of official-language-only schools, bilingual schools and schools with minority language of instruction should be promoted, as reasonable accommodation, and not presented as discriminating.
6. The freedom of private schools to choose language of instruction should not be limited. Thresholds which can be established, in a non-discriminatory way, for public schools should establish minimum scope of minority language use, not a maximal one.
7. In areas populated by minorities traditionally or in significant numbers, teaching their languages to the majority population should be promoted.
8. The minimum number of pupils for establishing minority classes or schools must not be higher, and should be lower than that for classes or schools with education in official languages only.
9. Special status of official or working languages of regional integration organisations should not be used as a pretext for stricter limits on using other minority languages in education.

The underlying approach is based on, among many other authorities, UNESCO education position paper "Education in a multilingual world", Convention against Discrimination in Education, OSCE Hague recommendations, Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7.

Yours faithfully,

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delegate to the Forum