



CLSF Latvijas Cilvēktiesību komiteja  
F.I.D.H. Latvian Human Rights Committee  
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To: European Regional Forum on Education, Language and  
the Human Rights of Minorities  
[regionalforum@tomlantosinstitute.hu](mailto:regionalforum@tomlantosinstitute.hu)

Contribution to the recommendations of the Forum

We kindly suggest to include the following statements in the recommendations of the forum:

1. National legislation should include minimum provisions for the use of minority languages in public education, not limits on it. There should be full freedom of using languages in private education.
2. Status of languages in international organizations, such as the EU, should not be misused to restrict the opportunities to use other minority languages in education.
3. Member states should use definition of segregation consistent with the ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, in order not to confuse segregation with freedom of choice.
4. Member states should implement their standing invitations to UN Special Procedures so that they are efficient.
5. UN and regional human rights expert committees should popularize their country-related documents in the members states, with special visits to the ground, press releases in and translations to local languages.
6. Member states should refrain from dismissing treaty bodies findings by alleging lack of information available to the experts.
7. To improve involvement of minorities themselves, member states should support creation of a UN Voluntary Fund for Minorities, along the lines of the existing fund on indigenous peoples.
8. The European Commission should elaborate specific legislative proposals based on language-related and education-related parts of the Minority Safepack Initiative (this recommendation should not be interpreted as opposition to the other parts of the initiative).
9. Identity of democratic societies should be interpreted as an idea supporting linguistic diversity, not suppressing it.
10. Differentiated approach should be implemented in language exams for pupils of majority and minority schools.

The underlying approach of these recommendations is based on our experience in Latvia, including in particular:

- The ethnicized 2014 preamble to the 1922 constitution;
- lack of differentiation in Latvian language school exams;
- the Constitutional Court judgment in the case 2018-12-01, which upholds limits on the use of minority languages by: invoking the aforementioned preamble in a way contrary to its declared respect for ethnic minorities; confusing segregation with freedom of choice and integration with lack of pluralism; accepting discrimination between minority languages

based on them having an official status in the EU and by dismissing concerns by UN CERD and FCNM Advisory Committee;

- standing invitation to UN Special Procedures, which does not prevent delays in practice.

Yours faithfully,

Aleksandrs Kuzmins, LL.M.  
LHRC secretary-executive