

Elections in Latvia: *status quo* for minorities remains?

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This article comments on the results of the recent parliamentary elections in Latvia and related implications for ethnic minorities. The authors examine in detail the pre-election programs, follow the developments before and after the elections, and come to the conclusion that the existing situation in the field of ethnic policy will remain in place for some time.

Parliamentary elections took place in Latvia on 2 October 2010. Due to economic crisis and harsh austerity measures including severe public spending cuts, ethnic policy issues have not been very high on the agenda in the pre-election and post-election period, unlike in previous years. Nevertheless, in the country where more than 40% of the population are persons belonging to minorities¹, minority issues are inevitably a part of the national debate.

After the elections, five alliances are represented in the *Saeima* (Parliament): centre-right 'Unity' (33 seats out of 100), social democratic 'Concord Centre' (29 seats), centre-right Union of Greens and Farmers (22 seats), right-wing nationalistic 'All for Latvia' – 'For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK' (8 seats) and centrist 'For a Good Latvia' (8 seats). Out of the 100 members 15 (13 ethnic Russians, 1 Karelian

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and 1 German) indicated that they belonged to minorities. Nine members did not indicate their ethnic origin.²

This article consists of three parts. In Part I we demonstrate the ethnic policy approaches of different political parties as formulated in the pre-election programs. In Part II we provide information on several issues mentioned in the pre-election discussions. In Part III we inform about the post-election developments and reflect on further perspectives.

Pre-election programs

In this part we will review the programs of the political parties which participated in the parliamentary election. For the parties which failed to get representation in the *Saeima* (Parliament), we will only consider their short pre-election programs submitted to the Central Election Commission³. For the parties which have secured seats in the parliament, we will look both at their short as well as the long, detailed versions of the programs, published on their websites and disseminated during the election campaigns.

Let us start the review with the programs of the parties which did not gain representation in the Parliament. Among these parties, the party 'PCTVL - For Human Rights in a United Latvia' (*PCTVL – Par cilvēka tiesībām vienotā Latvijā*), 1.43% of the votes; hereinafter - PCTVL) has the strongest and most articulated position on ethnic minority issues. It claims 'zero option' citizenship for all non-citizens, advocating 'the citizenship without exams and oaths'⁴. The party sees this as 'the first step towards united Latvia'. It also points out that the right to vote in the municipal elections should be granted to all permanent residents of Latvia. The party also commits itself to stopping discrimination, ensuring equal rights for all the

residents to work in the public administration, ‘making civil servants speak in the language of the taxpayer⁵’, granting official status to the Russian language in the cities and provinces where the number of Russian-speakers exceeds 20%, as well as ‘broadening the possibilities of the higher education export in the Russian and English languages’. It also stands for the state support to the Latgalian⁶ language.

The other parties, which failed to gain representation in the parliament, are less outspoken on the topic. The party ‘Made in Latvia’ (*‘Ražots Latvijā’*, 0.97% of votes) confines itself to the statement that ‘the inhabitants of Latvia should feel comfortable in their own land. The inhabitants of Latvia as well as its guests should respect the country. Incitement to hatred is not permissible. The economy doesn’t need integration – in a developed country (society) integration happens automatically’. ‘The Last Party’ (*‘Pēdējā partija’*, 0.88% of votes) emphasizes that its priority and main value is the freedom of an individual. It strongly condemns any discrimination. As it puts it, ‘Our friends are as different as the inhabitants of Latvia – Latvians and Russians, pensioners and children, women and men, people with special needs, believers and atheists, heterosexuals and gay, those who live in Riga and those in the province’.

Next three parties - ‘For the Presidential Republic’ (*‘Par prezidentālu republiku’*, 0.74%), ‘The Responsibility – the Social Democratic Alliance of Political Parties’ (*‘ATBILDĪBA – sociāldemokrātiska politisko partiju apvienība’*, 0.64%), ‘The People’s Control’ (*‘Tautas kontrole’*, 0.41%) - do not reveal their views on the issue of ethnic relations in their short programs.

The Christian Democratic Alliance (*Kristīgi demokrātiskā savienība*, 0.36%) includes two statements concerning ethnic issues into their program. The first is that ‘the Latvian language is the only state language in the Republic of Latvia’. The other

one is that ‘Everyone should feel socially protected, integrated and needed in the state of Latvia.’ The political party ‘Daugava to Latvia’ (*Partija ‘Daugava – Latvijai’*, 0.17%) stands for the state support for the traditional minorities together with the protection and development of the state language and folk traditions.

Now let us look at the programs of the parties which have won the election and are now represented in the Parliament. We will start with the party ‘Unity’ (*‘Vienotība’*, 31.21%, hereinafter - ‘Unity’) which has secured the most seats (33 out of 100) in the Parliament⁷.

The ‘Unity’ starts its official short program with the statement ‘Our aim is intelligent, healthy and wealthy nation of (ethnic) Latvians (*latviešu nācija*)’. In the long version, it states: ‘We see Latvia as a modern European state, with its main value (the foundation of the state) being the national identity; the Latvian language and qualitative cultural space is the basis for the consolidation of the (ethnic) Latvian nation and for the integration of the people in Latvia [...]’. Emphasizing that Latvia is different, unique and special, the party explains that ‘it is the Latvian language, the (ethnic) Latvian cultural space, and the Latvian nature which make (this country) unique and also impact and create its national identity’. It stresses that ‘the Latvian uniqueness is a value; we have to preserve and develop it creatively’.

There are three main topics related to ethnic issues in the program. The main attention is paid to the Latvian language. The necessity to protect, develop and strengthen the language is broadly described and heavily stressed. The party thus outlines its priorities: to strengthen the Latvian language as the foundation of the state identity, the language of unity and civic participation; to ensure that the Latvian language dominates in the public space; to allocate state financial and institutional

support for the purpose of the language enrichment and research; to introduce modern Latvian language training methods.

Another important issue in the program is the cultural policy. In the 'Unity's' view, culture has 'the ultimate importance in the development of the national state identity, so we will strengthen its unhindered development'. It acknowledges, that 'the Latvian cultural space has been enriched by the German and Jewish, Russian and Polish, Roma, Belorussian, Lithuanian, Estonian and others' contribution. The variety, the participation of ethnic minorities and the preservation of their individuality enriches us... The Song Festival is the foundation of the national identity and the criterion of its existence...'. It also indicates that the public television and radio have special importance securing cultural, moral, and ethic values, as well as patriotism. They undertake to fund broadcast programs promoting non-Latvians' integration into the Latvian language space. The party advocates for the increase of the funding of the culture from the current 1.8% to 2.3% of the GDP.

In the domain of education, it is stated 'our children have to acquire perfect Latvian, English and at least one foreign language... The significance of the education in the preservation of the Latvian identity is not to be forgotten. With this aim in mind we should ... emphasize the role of the Latvian language, society, history and culture research (in educational programs)'.

As regards naturalization, the 'Unity' states, that since the naturalization and citizenship acquirement rules are 'relatively simple', no amendments to the existing legislation are needed. It points out to the necessity to change the attitude and relations instead: 'A new will to integrate is needed... Exclusive, aggressive rhetoric towards Latvia's ethnic minorities and its representatives is not acceptable... The Latvian national state and the (ethnic) Latvian cultural space should be open and

welcoming to everyone who wants to integrate into it'. It maintains that each ethnic Latvian has the right to the Latvian citizenship. It also permits dual citizenship for those citizens of Latvia who are also the citizens of the EU and/or NATO states.

The party acknowledges the importance of the Liv⁸ culture and language: 'We should do everything possible to preserve and develop this language and culture and promote it in Europe and in the whole world'. As regards the Latgalian language, it indicates that 'special attention should be paid to the Latgalian written language as the historical form of the Latvian language, to its promotion in the family, school and life-long education in the region'.

The political alliance 'Concord Centre' (*Politisko partiju apvienība 'Saskaņas Centrs'*, 26.03%, hereinafter - SC) has secured 29 seats in the Parliament and has the second largest faction after the 'Unity'⁹. SC proclaims that interethnic harmony and trust is one of its main values and political goals. Its program states that the party's domestic policy is 'based on respect towards all ethnic groups, their values and historical experience... That means responsibility of all the residents of Latvia for the preservation of the Latvian language, proficiency in it and its usage; gratitude to the ancestors for the tremendous sacrifices they had to bear for the sake of freedom, democracy and human rights in Europe; commiseration with all the victims of different regimes... It also means the acknowledgement that all the inhabitants of Latvia, who are born here or settled here during the Soviet times, belong to Latvia and (their presence here) is a value'.

There are several important programmatic goals:

- to acknowledge the Russian culture and the Russian language, as well as other ethnic minorities' culture as the integral part and value of the culture of Latvia; make the state responsible for its preservation and development;
- to grant the right to vote to all non-citizens and people who have permanent residence permits and who have lived in the respective municipality for at least three years;

- to grant Latvian citizenship to every person who was born in Latvia;
- in the pension system, as well as regards the status of politically repressed victims introduce and put into practice equal treatment of citizens and non-citizens;
- to harmonize the Latvian legislation with the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Special attention is paid to three aspects. First, the right to use the minority languages in communication with the state and municipal institutions in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers. Second, the equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities if there is sufficient demand, and support for the willingness of the persons belonging to national minorities to get the education in their family language. Third, providing adequate opportunities for those teachers training who could teach in minority languages;

- to ratify the Protocol No.12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (general prohibition of discrimination);
- to implement consistently and fully provisions of the EU anti-discrimination directives;
- to adopt in the Parliament the declaration on interethnic trust;
- to adopt the Society Integration Program, which would take into account the interests of all ethnic groups in Latvia;
- to grant the official status to the Latgalian language.

The 'Concord Centre' resolves itself to the consistent implementation of society integration policy, 'using education as the main mean of integration in a multinational society'. It promises granting sufficient funding to the Song and Dance Festival as well as funding the ethnic minority culture in Latvia through a special state program.

The Union of Greens and Farmers ('*Zaļo un Zemnieku savienība*', 19.68%, hereinafter - ZZS) has gained 22 seats¹⁰. In its program the party indicates that '(ethnic) Latvians have found their state' for the sake of 'spiritual and material welfare'. It goes on to indicate that 'with this purpose in mind we should work to

eradicate the consequences of the occupation... We have to become the real masters of our land, who work themselves, care for their neighbours and are responsible for (the result of) their work and their decisions...' In the domain of culture, the party undertakes 'supporting the diversity of (ethnic) Latvian culture and its presence in all walks of life as the ethical and esthetical foundation on which the (ethnic) Latvian folk is based'. It promises to strengthen the status of the Latvian language and its usage 'in all public activities'. The program also contains the appeal to grant the status of a regional language to the Latgalian language. Ethnic minorities are not directly mentioned.

The National Alliance 'All for Latvia' – 'For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK' (*Nacionālā apvienība 'Visu Latvijai' - 'Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK'*, 7.67%, hereinafter - VL-TB/LNNK) has secured eight seats¹¹. The short program begins with the statement 'When wealthy and big (ethnic) Latvian families will feel like home in Latvia, we will consider our main mission accomplished'. It is explained in detail in the long version of the program: 'Latvia is the only place in the world where the (ethnic) Latvian people can live their lives full of value and develop, speak their language and define their own future... Our program establishes how to achieve welfare, justice and security in a national – (ethnic) Latvian Latvia'.

There is a separate chapter named '(Ethnic) Latvian Latvia' (*Latviska Latvija*) in the short program. Here are its main postulates:

- the role of the Latvian language, especially in the media and business, should be strengthened. In the full version of the program, the chapter 'Language and Culture' sheds more light on the subject: 'The language is the foundation of the national identity... We should struggle against the bilingualism and strengthen the positions of the Latvian language in all walks of life... We will strengthen the Official Language Centre and broaden its mandate';
- state financed education should be only in the official language. Ethnic minorities should be allowed studying their people's history, traditions and culture in their own language. As it is put in the program, 'We will encourage the schools financed by the state and municipalities to choose the first and the

second foreign language only from the official EU languages'. In the long version, the party proceeds to state, that '...in the higher educational establishments the studies may take place in the EU languages, but not in the Russian language';

- in the service sphere, persons without the knowledge of Russian should also be hired. As the party notes, 'It will eliminate the discrimination of (ethnic) Latvian youth in the labour market';
- every (ethnic) Latvian should have the right to get the citizenship of Latvia. Dual citizenship should be allowed. By the same token, 'Uncontrolled naturalization should be stopped; the amendments providing for depriving disloyal 'new citizens'¹² from citizenship should be introduced';
- (ethnic) Latvians should return home from abroad and 'disloyal non-Latvians should leave'. More can be found in the full version of the program: 'A new demographic policy is needed; it should stimulate birth rates of (ethnic) Latvians, decrease their emigration and promote the inclusion of the local non-Latvians into the society of (ethnic) Latvians... The engagement of the Russian-speakers into Russia's programs of repatriation should be encouraged... We will improve the immigration law not to allow the presence of guest workers from the former USSR, so that the Russian language self-sufficiency is not sustained at the expense of the state language... We will promote the 'Latvianization' of non-Latvians (*nelatviešu latviskošanas*) as well as the returning of those minorities that have been 'Russianized' (*pārkrievotas*) into their own cultural space, in cooperation with the minorities' home countries supporting Belorussian, Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish and other minorities' education and cultural establishments' activities'.
- Latvia should alienate itself from the Russian influence zone 'or the so-called 'Russian world', because Latvia belongs to the Western civilization';
- criminal liability established by the law for the denial of occupation should be implemented in practice; the usage of the USSR and the Russian Empire's symbols in the public sphere should not be allowed.
- the Liv cultural heritage and language should be preserved; the Latgalian culture should be preserved as well.

The political alliance 'For a Good Latvia' (*Partiju apvienība 'Par Labu Latviju'*, 7.65%, hereinafter - PLL) is also represented in the Parliament with eight seats¹³. In its short program the party declares that it expresses the will and expectations which are common to all Latvian people, disregarding their ethnic origin. The thesis 'The number of citizens of Latvia is crucial for the future of the country' is commented further on in the full version of the program: 'Every child of a Latvian citizen, born in Latvia or any other place in the world, will be the citizen of Latvia. (Automatic) citizenship (should be granted) to each non-citizen's child born in Latvia'.

In the section devoted to cultural policy, the alliance indicates, ‘One of the Latvian people’s existence foundations is strong (ethnic) Latvian identity... Public subscription to the media will serve for the purpose of strengthening culture and patriotism.’ The party also declares its adherence to the principles of inter-ethnic, inter-cultural dialogue and undertakes granting ‘the ethnic minorities’ opportunities to benefit from the (Latvian) cultural resources’.

Out of five alliances represented in the Parliament three (‘Unity’, ZZS and PLL) basically suggest to maintain the existing *status quo* with only minor changes in ethnic policy. SC advocates a more open policy, including promotion of minority rights, while VL-TB/LNNK suggests protecting the interests of ethnic Latvians.

Pre-election discussions

In summer and autumn 2010 the *Saeima* (Parliament) did not consider many laws having ethnic policy implications. The notable exception to be mentioned is adoption of the new Electronic Mass Media Law¹⁴ (in force since 11 August 2010). Section 32(3) of the new Law stipulates that the national and regional electronic mass media shall ensure that in the programmes produced by them at least 65 per cent of all broadcasts, except for the commercials, teleshops and teleshopping windows, are in the official language and that such broadcasts in the official language would take up at least 65 per cent of the transmission time. This provision applies since 1 January 2011 to both public and private electronic mass media, which distribute programmes using a terrestrial transmitter (Section 4(4)).

The wording approved by the Parliament in the third reading suggested that the new language quota should be introduced only for the national media, leaving aside the regional ones. Nevertheless, it was one of the reasons why the President had

declined promulgation of the Law and sent it back to the Parliament, referring to the role of the Latvian language as the main language of communication and a tool of social integration¹⁵. In the final text regional media are included, but there is no requirement to guarantee broadcasting in Latvian in prime-time.

Private TV and radio in Latvia were subject to similar restrictions until 2003: the broadcast time for programmes in 'foreign' languages (including the languages of minorities) could not exceed 25% of the total broadcast time. However the Constitutional Court removed these restrictions on the application of opposition members of the Parliament.¹⁶ The court stated that the language restrictions pose a significant limit on the freedom of information.

Adoption of the Law provoked debates on compliance of the Law with the ruling of the Constitutional Court. Representatives of SC and PCTVL did not support the re-introduction of the official language quota and spoke against it in media¹⁷.

There were several other initiatives concerning minority issues during the pre-election campaign. The party 'For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK' (a part of VL-TB/LNNK) collected signatures in support of amending Constitution¹⁸. The suggested amendment stipulated that since 1 September 2012 the state-supported school education would be provided in the Latvian language only¹⁹. The party failed to collect until the elections 10,000 signatures necessary for the second stage of the procedure, but a sister NGO continues this project²⁰.

Another party, PCTVL also collected signatures - in order to demonstrate public support for the application to the Constitutional Court. The application stated that some provisions of the Official Language Law stipulating that only the Latvian language is to be used in communication with authorities, do not comply with Article 10(2) of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the

declaration made by Latvia does not have any legal consequences modifying the effect of the Framework Convention. The application alongside with 9593 signatures was submitted to the Court on 7 December 2010²¹.

Post-election developments

After the elections the 'Unity' being the alliance of the Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis undertook the initiative of forming the Government. The first negotiations started within the former coalition of the 'Unity', ZZS and VL-TB/LNNK. But in parallel the 'Unity' started negotiations with SC. Nevertheless, the latter finished very soon, as the 'Unity' requested to recognize explicitly the Soviet occupation of Latvia. SC has been reluctant in doing so²². The main reason behind this arguably was the fact that the alliance is widely supported by the Russian-speaking linguistic minority, and many persons belonging to this minority came to Latvia during the Soviet period; many of them might be afraid of 'deoccupation'.

Some days later the 'Unity' and ZZS stopped negotiations with VL-TB/LNNK, as one of the 'Unity's' constituent parties SCP (which earlier advocated coalition with SC) had vetoed them²³. Thus, the Government has been formed by the 'Unity' and ZZS and approved by the Parliament on 3 November 2010.

Only a day after PLL and SC requested resignation of Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, a newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs. The investigative journalism portal *pietiek.com* published some e-mails exchanged by members of Mr Kristovskis' party PS (part of the 'Unity' alliance) in 2009. Aivars Slucis, a doctor of Latvian origin living in the U.S. stated in his letter, in particular, that he would not be able to return to Latvia, as he would be obliged to treat ethnic Latvians and ethnic

Russians equally but he could not. Mr Kristovskis allegedly agreed with Mr Slucis' e-mail. Later Mr Kristovskis denied that he had agreed with this particular e-mail; he also declared that he had an intention to criticise Mr Slucis' views but to do it in a diplomatic manner. On 8 November the PS board excluded Mr Slucis from the party, but on 9 November the Parliament voted against resignation of Mr Kristovskis²⁴.

Several ethnic policy issues are mentioned in the Government's Declaration²⁵. It is stated that it is our duty of the Government to strengthen the Latvian language, the Latvian cultural space and national identity, while being tolerant and taking charge of cultural contributions made by all nationalities living in Latvia, because diversity is a treasure. Extended use of the Latvian language, common Latvian language and cultural space, respecting and honouring the rights of minorities is proclaimed as the long-term political objective and priority. In the area of justice the Government promises to strengthen the positions of the Latvian language; in the area of education – to strengthening the linkage of the language policy and the education policy, ensuring qualitative mastering of the Latvian language as a mother tongue, foreign language, or second language.

In the area of culture the Government suggests to draft the state program for national identity and integration with a view to strengthen the sense of belonging to Latvia; to promote preservation and prevalence of the Latvian language – basis for identity of the national state, strengthening the Latvian culture space, support to uniqueness of the minority cultures; to preserve the diverse cultural heritage of Latvia, promote its full use, access and active circulation; to enhance the preservation and development of the uniqueness of regional cultures and languages strengthening the identity of the regions as a part of common national identity; to support diversity of the Latvian language dialects, strengthening the Latgalian language as a historic

variant of the Latvian language. The Government also intends to set the appropriate broadcasting time by law for programs in the Latvian language during the prime-time in electronic media.

As can be seen, the Government plans to protect and extend the use of the Latvian language and national identity, while preserving minority cultures. Specific measures are not suggested as yet, with some exceptions. The main general idea is to draft the state program for national identity and integration. The State Program 'Social Integration in Latvia'²⁶ currently in force was adopted by the Government on 6 February 2001. It focuses mainly on the integration of Russian-speakers. In 2010 the Ministry of Justice published draft 'Basic Principles for Social Integration Policy'²⁷. The document declares the sustainable development of democratic nation-state of Latvia to be the main aim of social integration policy.

In the meantime, the institutional framework for social integration policy is under review as well. Before 2009 the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration was responsible for implementation of state policies in the field of social integration, fight against racial discrimination and minority rights. In January 2009 the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs of Latvia took over the functions of the Secretariat and became the Ministry of Children, Family and Integration Affairs. In July 2009 the Ministry of Children, Family and Integration Affairs was eliminated, now only a department within the Ministry of Justice is responsible for the social integration policy. However, according to decision of the Government approved on 7 December 2010, since 1 January 2011 the Ministry of Culture will be responsible for elaboration and implementation of the social integration policy; since 1 June 2011 the Ministry of the Interior will take over responsibility for the immigrants' integration from the Ministry of Justice²⁸.

On 6 December the Government approved and submitted to the Parliament the draft budget for 2011. As in previous years, the ministries had to implement public spending cuts. In particular, the Ministry of Justice cut significantly the expenses of the Social Integration Fund's administration and subsidies to NGOs aimed at supporting projects in the field of social integration. In the meantime, the Ministry of Culture will apparently get additional support for drafting the state program for national identity and integration.

Conclusion

The results of parliamentary elections in Latvia have not brought any surprising results. The 'Unity' and ZZS, which formed a core of the previous Government, will most probably continue the line of maintaining existing *status quo* in the field of ethnic policy, although minor changes are possible. Their approach might change in the course of drafting the new state program for national identity and integration, as even within the alliances the viewpoints are very different – from liberal to national conservative. PLL will possibly follow the same line of preserving the current situation.

For VL-TB/LNNK ethnic policy is one of the dominant parts of their identity. Having remained outside the Government, the alliance will actively submit draft laws aimed at promotion of interests of ethnic Latvians, as they imagine such interests. Even if some conservative members of the 'Unity' or ZZS could support such initiatives, SC and PLL votes against them will guarantee that the rights of minorities will not be threatened in a radical way.

The most interesting part of the puzzle is the position of SC. Many of voters belonging to minorities presumably preferred voted for SC in hope that the alliance would join the ruling coalition and secure widening the scope of minority rights. Now it is time to carefully select their tactics: too much focus on minorities would diminish the chance to join the coalition, while too little attention would alienate the voters, who might prefer more outspoken advocates outside the Parliament. In any event, even within the ruling coalition SC would hardly have a chance to implement a lot of ideas from their program in the field of minority rights. It seems that at least for some months from now ethnic policy will remain in the phase of stability – or stagnation?

Notes

- 1 As of 1 January 2010, 59.4% of the population were ethnic Latvians; others were persons belonging to ethnic minorities (Russian – 27.6%, Belarusians – 3.6%, Ukrainians – 2.5%, Poles – 2.3%, Lithuanians – 1.3%). Data of the Central Statistical Bureau, available at <http://data.csb.gov.lv/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=IS0070a&ti=IS07%2E+RESIDENT+POPULATION+BY+ETHNICITY+AT+THE+BEGINNING+OF+THE+YEAR&path=../DATABASEEN/Iedzoc/Annual%20statistical%20data/04.%20Population/&lang=1> (accessed on 7 December 2010)
- 2 Data of the Central Statistical Bureau, available at <http://data.csb.gov.lv/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=PR0020a&ti=PR02%2E+ELECTION+RESULTS+OF+THE+10th+SAEIMA+%28PARLIAMENT%29+OF+LATVIA+BY+SEX%2C+AGE%2C+ETHNICITY+AND+FAMILY+STATUS&path=../DATABASEEN/visp/Annual%20statistical%20data/24.%20Politics%20and%20religion/&lang=1> (accessed on 7 December 2010)
- 3 The short programs of the parties available at the website of the Central Election Commission: <http://www.cvk.lv/cgi-bin/wdbcgiw/base/komisijas2010.cvkand10.sak>. (accessed on 7 December 2010)
- 4 The citizenship policy of Latvia is based on the concept of state continuity: only those persons, who had been citizens of independent Latvia in 1940, and their descendants, had their citizenship restored. The naturalization for other permanent residents began on 1 February 1995. There is a special procedure for stateless children born in Latvia after the restoration of independence – they can be registered as citizens upon application by their parents. In 1995 the Law on the Status of those Former USSR Citizens who do not have the Citizenship of Latvia or that of any Other State introduced a special legal status of non-citizens. It defined the status of those people who had registered domicile in Latvia on 1 July 1992 and who did not have citizenship of Latvia or any other country. The Constitutional Court mentioned that non-citizens are not Latvian nationals and are not considered stateless according to

- international law, but the Republic of Latvia recognises a certain legal link with non-citizens.
- 5 This is explained in detail in the long program: in the territories where the Russian-speaking population exceeds 20% the state and municipal institutions should inform the population both in the Latvian and Russian language. The residents should be able to submit documents in the Latvian, as well as in Russian and English. The long program is available at the website of the party:
http://www.pctvl.lv/index.php?lang=ru&mode=party&submode=program&page_id=10629. (accessed on 7 December 2010).
 - 6 The identity of the Latgalians (the population of Latgale, a region in eastern Latvia, close to the borders of Russia and Belorussia) is a subject of debate. Latgalian belongs to the Baltic group of languages, and thus has much in common with Latvian and Lithuanian. Some linguists believe Latgalian to be a separate language, while others insist it is a regional form of Latvian (the latter approach confirmed in the Official Language Law)
 - 7 The full version of the program named 'Latvijas cilvēkiem un valstij' ('For the People of Latvia and for the State') is available at
<http://www.vienotiba.lv/media/file/VienotibasProgramma.pdf> (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 8 The indigenous population of the areas bordering the Gulf of Riga, currently is put at only 180 people
 - 9 The full version of the program available at
http://www.saskanascents.lv/lv/musu_programma/ (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 10 No long version of the program is available
 - 11 The full version of the program available at
http://www.visulatvijai.lv/faili/VL/dokumenti/Nacionalas_apvienibas_VL_TB-LNNK_programma.pdf (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 12 Those who have obtained the citizenship through naturalization
 - 13 The full version of the program named 'Cilvēks pirmajā vietā!' ('An Individual in the First Place!') available at
https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http://parlabulatviju.lv/pdf/Par_Labu_Latviju_programma.pdf&pli=1 (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 14 English text is available at
http://www.vvc.gov.lv/export/sites/default/docs/LRTA/Likumi/Electronic_Mass_Media_Law.doc (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 15 Letter No.211 of 22 June 2010, available at
<http://www.president.lv/images/modules/items/PDF/elektroniplassazinaslikumi.pdf> (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 16 Judgment of 5 June 2003 in case No.2003-02-0106, available at
<http://www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv/upload/2003-02-0106E.rtf> (accessed on 7 December 2010)
 - 17 See, e.g., 'На ТВ возвращают языковые квоты' ('Language quotas to be returned on TV'), 'Телеграф' ('Telegraph'), 3 June 2010
 - 18 'TB/LNNK sāk vākt parakstus referendumam par izglītību tikai latviešu valodā' ('FF starts collecting signatures for a referendum on education only in Latvian'), LETA news agency, 30 January 2010
 - 19 In accordance with Article 78 of the Constitution, electors, in number comprising not less than one tenth of the electorate, have the right to submit a fully elaborated draft of an amendment to the Constitution to the President, who shall present it to the *Saeima*; if the *Saeima* does not adopt it without change as to its content, it shall then be submitted to national referendum.

- 20 'Vakar savākti 500 paraksti par valsts apmaksātu izglītību tikai latviešu valodā' ('500 signatures for state-supported education only in Latvian collected yesterday'), LETA news agency, 12 November 2010
- 21 'ЗаПЧЕЛ подготовил иск в Конституционный суд о несоблюдении Латвией Конвенции о защите национальных меньшинств' ('PCTVL has prepared an application to the Constitutional Court on in compliance with the Convention on the Protection of National Minorities by Latvia'), available at http://www.pctvl.lv/index.php?lang=ru&mode=main&submode=&page_id=1000 (accessed on 7 December 2010)
- 22 'Koalīciju veidos 'Vienotība' un ZZS; risinās sarunas ar VL-TB/LNNK' ('The 'Unity' and ZZS will form the coalition; there will be negotiations with VL-TB/LNNK'), LETA news agency, 18 October 2010
- 23 'Jaunajā valdības koalīcijā tomēr netiks iekļauta VL-TB/LNNK' ('VL-TB/LNNK will not be included into the ruling coalition though'), LETA news agency, 25 October 2010
- 24 'Kristovskis saglabā ministra amatu' ('Kirstovskis maintains the minister's position'), LETA news agency, 9 November 2010
- 25 English text is available at <http://www.mk.gov.lv/en/mk/darbibu-reglamentejosiedokumenti/valdibas-deklaracija-eng/> (accessed on 7 December 2010)
- 26 Valsts programma 'Sabiedrības integrācija Latvijā', at <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/LoadAtt/file37100.doc>
- 27 Sabiedrības integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes, projekts, at http://www.tm.gov.lv/lv/noderigi/sabiedribas_integracija/TMPam_200810_sit_rakst.pdf
- 28 'Integrācijas politikas jautājumus no Tieslietu ministrijas pārņems KM un IeM' ('Ministry of Culture and Ministry of the Interior will take over the issues of integration policy from the Ministry of Justice'), LETA news agency, 7 December 2010