

**LEGAL ASPECTS  
OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION  
IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA**

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Workshop of the ECMI Project  
“Accession to the EU and National Integration in Estonia and Latvia”,  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) initiated the Baltic Project “Accession to the EU and National Integration in Estonia and Latvia”. In the framework of the project, one international seminar<sup>1</sup> and several regional workshops were organized in 2000 and –2001.<sup>2</sup> These events addressed different minority rights-related issues such as society integration and multiculturalism, state policies in the field of minority education and the use of minority languages, legislative reforms and the role of the third sector.

From 6 to 8 June 2002, in the Latvian resort town of Jūrmala, the ECMI workshop “Legal Aspects of National Integration in Estonia and Latvia” was organized in order to monitor recent changes in the legislation concerning minority protection in both countries. The workshop gathered MPs, government officials and minority representatives from Estonia and Latvia and was an excellent forum of exchange of information on relevant problems and practices (see the programme and the list of participants of the workshop in the appendix).

## II. OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP

Mr **Priit Järve**, ECMI Senior Analyst, opened the workshop. He welcomed the participants on behalf of ECMI and gave a short overview of ECMI and its previous activities in the framework of the project “Accession to the EU and National Integration in Estonia and Latvia”. He noted that ethnic tensions in Estonia and Latvia emerged after the restoration of independence ten years ago and have lasted ever since. Still, both countries have managed to avoid an eruption of violent interethnic conflict. In the course of the years, the competence of Estonian and Latvian

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<sup>1</sup> See Poleshchuk, Vadim. “Accession to the European Union and National Integration in Estonia and Latvia”, 7-10 December 2000, Tønder, Denmark. ECMI Report # 8, Flensburg, ECMI, February 2001.

<sup>2</sup> See Poleshchuk, Vadim “Multiculturalism, Minority Education and Language Policy”, ECMI Workshops “Multiculturalism and Minority Education”, 1-3 June 2001, Narva-Jõesuu, Estonia, and “Language Policy in Urban Environment”, 8-10 June 2001, Liepaja, Latvia. ECMI Report #10, Flensburg, ECMI, August 2001; and Poleshchuk, Vadim “Social Dimension of Integration in Estonia and Minority Education in Latvia”, ECMI Workshops “Social Dimension of Integration in Estonia” 19-21 October 2001, Pärnu, Estonia, and “Prospects of Minority Education in Latvia”, 1-4 November 2001, Daugavpils, Latvia. ECMI Report # 18, Flensburg, ECMI, December 2001.

authorities in steering the reconciliation between different ethnic and ethnolinguistic communities has been growing. Local efforts have been successful to the extent that the OSCE closed its missions to Estonia and Latvia at the end of 2001. This does not mean, however, that all minority problems have been solved, but it does mean that Estonia and Latvia are now considered as being able to tackle these problems without a continuous presence of the OSCE. Now, the aim of the official policies of Estonia and Latvia in the field of interethnic relations is social integration. In this context, efforts to intensify majority-minority dialogue on sensitive legal issues concerning minority rights have been undertaken with varied success. Recently, there have been several positive changes in the minority legislation of both countries.

Mr Järve welcomed the participation in the workshop of Estonian and Latvian MPs who had been actively pursuing these changes. He invited the participants to look more closely at minority-related law-making and implementation practices in order to promote minority protection in Estonia and Latvia.

### **III. FIRST SESSION**

Ms **Ingrīda Labucka**, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Latvia, gave a presentation on “Recent changes in minority-related legislation of Latvia”. She devoted most of her presentation to the institutional framework of the implementation of the national programme “Integration of Society in Latvia”, approved by the government in February 2001. The programme includes the following chapters: civic participation and political integration, social and regional integration, education, language and culture, and information issues.

In May 2000, the Latvian Council for the Integration of Society was formed by a Prime Minister’s decree. This council is a political body whose members are the Ministers of Culture, of Education and Science, of Justice, and of Welfare. One of its recent most important decisions was to support the elaboration of a system for integration monitoring.

Since June 2000, the Ministry of Justice has been responsible for integration issues according to its statutes. A special Department of Integration of Society exists under the ministry. Its main task is the coordination of the implementation of the national programme “Integration of Society in Latvia”.

In July 2001, the Latvian Parliament adopted the Law on the Foundation for the Integration of Society. This foundation is to support financially integration activities according to the guidelines stipulated in the programme. The project proposals submitted to the foundation are evaluated by special expert committees which prepare their suggestions for the Board of the Foundation.

Additionally, a special inter-institutional workgroup will be created by the Prime Minister to deal with the promotion of an integration-monitoring system. On the initiative of the Department of Integration, a special expert group has been set up for the elaboration of monitoring indicators and suggestions for the most adequate monitoring activities and methods, Minister Labucka concluded.

During the **discussion**, the participants raised questions concerning different aspects of the activities of integration institutions, e.g. the composition of the Board of the Integration Foundation, the rather small costs limits for NGO projects (1,000 Latvian Lats or 1,590 EUR), which were considered as insufficient for larger NGOs, etc. The Russian-speaking participants also expressed their concerns about the tendency to substitute the promotion of minority rights with integration rhetoric, and about a too broad scope of the integration programme which includes, *inter alia*, general alleviation of poverty in the society.

The Latvian officials explained that experienced, not “tamed” NGOs were invited to participate in the Board of the Integration Foundation. The financial means of the foundation were said to be rather limited. However, out of nine tenders, six were open for NGOs, including one that was opened exclusively for such organizations. As to the scope of integration programme, this was a political decision. Furthermore, there would be fewer chances to ensure the support for the programme if it had dealt only with the problems of ethnic non-Latvians. Many useful projects were supported to ensure the integration of social groups with special needs (e.g. disabled children).

The Russian-speaking participants also addressed the problem of the pending ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) by Latvia. In the opinion of a Latvian MP, this legal move will not be possible before the next elections in autumn 2002. The Latvian officials recognized that certain incompatibilities of the FCNM and national law should be solved before the ratification. Thus, it is not clear if the planned reduction of Russian-language teaching in minority schools is in line with the convention. As one Latvian official put it: “many people in Latvia do not consider the choice of language of instruction a human right”. The Russian-speaking participants stressed the importance of humanitarian aspects of the on-going minority school reform in Latvia. The bill of ratification of the FCNM submitted by the opposition was rejected by Parliament twice (in May 2000 and in March 2001).

The problem of mass statelessness in Latvia and Estonia was regarded as a challenging issue in the EU accession context. Some Latvian participants deemed a certain liberalization of the existing naturalization requirements useful, although not possible before the parliamentary elections in October 2002. One Latvian MP said that the EU should tell Latvia what to do with non-citizens. A Latvian official, acknowledging that amending minority-related laws is currently a very difficult process, hoped that a solution to the problem of statelessness would be found once Latvia has become a member of the EU.

#### **IV. SECOND SESSION**

Mr **Aleksej Dimitrov**, Executive Secretary of the Latvian Human Rights Committee (FIDH), gave a presentation on “Implementation of international standards of minority protection in Latvia: achievements and problems”. He noted that Latvia has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 1995, the Concluding Observations of the UN Human Rights Committee Regarding Latvia were made public. Latvia managed to solve several problems that were referred to in the observations. For instance, the so-called non-citizens have enjoyed a special status since 1995. A new chapter on human rights in the constitution makes only a few

distinctions between citizens and non-citizens. Additionally, age limitations for naturalization (“windows of naturalization”<sup>3</sup>) were abolished in 1998.

However, some restrictions of a political nature remained. Before the municipal elections in 1997, Ms *Antonina Ignatane*, a citizen of Latvia, was deprived of the right to run for office because a language inspector claimed that her language proficiency did not correspond to the certificate she possessed. She submitted an application to the UN Human Rights Committee, referring to Article 25 of the convention. When critical Views of the Committee were published in July 2001, the cabinet amended its regulation and banned inspectors from conducting additional examinations. In May 2002, the parliament abolished the language census for national and local level deputies in Latvia.

According to Latvian legislation, only Latvian-language private schools are entitled to public financial support. Mr Dimitrov noted that the UN Human Rights Committee found such a differentiation to be discriminatory in the case *Arieh Hollis Waldman v. Canada*.

In connection with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the speaker pointed out that there is no developed legislation and case law on the issue of discrimination in Latvia. A victim of discrimination is supposed to prove him/herself through a civil or administrative procedure that the discriminatory act took place. However, there are some exceptions (e.g. the new Law on Labour and the new Law on Administrative Court Procedure).

Speaking about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Mr Dimitrov mentioned the pending introduction of monolingual Latvian-language training in the upper classes (10-12) of minority high schools (gymnasiums) from 2004.<sup>4</sup> The Ministry of

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<sup>3</sup> According to a previous version of the Latvian Law on Citizenship, the “window” (opportunity) of naturalization was first opened for certain age groups only, and the number of these groups grew with each subsequent year. For instance, people born in Latvia were first, then persons who had arrived to Latvia as minors, etc. The system was designed for the period from 1994 to –2002, but due to international pressure it was abolished in 1998.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Transitional Provisions of the Latvian Education Law (adopted on 29 October 1998), “On September 1, 2004 – in the 10th grade of state and municipal general education institutions and in the 1st year of state and municipal vocational education institutions studies are begun only in the state language.” See at

Education and Science is elaborating a new programme for such minority schools where provisionally up to 30 per cent of all teaching would be organized in a minority language. Nevertheless, according to the Law on Education, all orphans could be taught only in Latvian regardless of their mother tongue and educational background.

Mr Dimitrov gave several examples of how Latvian residents used the right of complaint to the European Court of Human Rights on the basis of the European Convention of Human Rights. Thus, Latvia lost the case *Podkolzina v. Latvia* (language census for deputies at national elections). There are also pending cases concerning Latvian regulations on the spelling of personal names, language quotas on TV, allegedly unlawful expulsions from Latvia, etc.

Latvia has ratified the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. However, the former Soviet citizens, who became stateless after 1991, are claimed to be out of the scope of the Convention. The previous arguments of relatively easy access of such persons to Russian citizenship are not applicable any longer since the Russian Federation has adopted a new Law on Citizenship which is much more restrictive.

Mr Dimitrov hoped that the Latvian Parliament would soon consider the ratification of the European Convention on Nationality. However, the cabinet has suggested the/a ratification with six reservations, which may appear to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the convention. In the public discussion, there are claims to ratify the FCNM with several reservations as well. The proposed reservations seek to avoid amending laws which are in force, first of all the Law on State Language.

Mr Dimitrov argued that many Latvian politicians ignore the hierarchy of international and national legislation and try to modify international obligations to make them fit domestic regulations without any amendments to the latter. Answering to the questions, Mr Dimitrov stressed the importance of the modern concept of minority rights, and recommended to ratify the FCNM. In his opinion, Latvia needs a strong state institution for dealing with minorities, and a new law on minorities should be adopted.

During the **discussion**, the participants mentioned the special status of the Livs. This indigenous people is at the centre of attention of the Latvian authorities. There is a special Liv Institute in Riga. Programmes of preservation of the Liv language and culture have been adopted. The Law on State Language employs a rather liberal approach towards the use of the Liv language on the territory inhabited by the Livs. Nevertheless, the number of Livs is very small (there are approx. 800 Livs and only 14 per cent of them can speak their native language).

There are other ethnic minorities in Latvia, which are present in significant numbers. In the opinion of a local self-government representative, the legal regulation of minority-related issues should not create additional problems without providing effective mechanisms of their solution. Problems emerge, for example, when a local government has no money to translate into Latvian written submissions of Russian-speakers. One participant suggested that the discussion on the compatibility of the Law on Education with international standards of minority protection should be continued. Another participant emphasized that the policy of integration in Latvia ought to be based on minority rights. A Latvian MP expressed his doubts that a new law on minorities, a draft of which already exists, will be adopted soon. Estonian participants recommended that Latvian colleagues apply a more pragmatic approach in the field of minority protection to promote tolerance between majority and minorities.

## **V. THIRD SESSION**

The third session was dedicated to minority-related legislation in Estonia. Mr **Mihhail Stalnuhhin**, Estonian MP, gave a presentation on “Recent changes in minority-related legislation of Estonia”. He noted that positive changes in this legislation were already made by the previous, rather ethnocentric governmental coalition. The work of the current governmental coalition in various spheres of minority rights is based on common sense and pragmatism, said Mr Stalnuhhin, and characterized recent developments in the following areas.

*State language.* There is a requirement in Estonia that all employees of the public sector and many employees of the private sector pass language tests if they have not graduated from Estonian-language schools. In 1999, a new system of tests was introduced and the obligation to pass the tests anew was established. To pass the new system of tests at the highest level has proved difficult even for Estonian linguists. In 2002, the deadline of retesting was postponed. A special commission under the Ministry of Education was set up to deal with the problems of the Estonian language examination. Prior to that, in 2001, the Estonian Parliament abolished language requirements for local council and parliament deputies. However, at the same time Estonian was formally established as the only working language of the parliament and local councils. (Similar amendments of Latvian laws took place in 2002.)

*Education.* The parliament has postponed several times the deadline of the transition of minority gymnasiums (forms 10-12 of minority high schools) to Estonian as the language of instruction. The current deadline is the year 2007. It is a very challenging issue which has been causing a lot of ethnopolitical tension. In March 2002, however, a new amendment to the Law on Basic School and Gymnasium was adopted, which gave the board of trustees of minority schools the right to apply for the postponement of the 2007 deadline, and thus the tensions were eased off.

*Citizenship and Migration.* In this field, the Estonian parliamentarians have always been very conservative. Nevertheless, in 2000, a new amendment to the Law on Citizenship introduced a simplified naturalization procedure (without any exams) for most disabled individuals. Another liberalization of the migration quota is now under consideration in the parliament, Mr Stalnuhhin informed the participants.

Mr **Aleksei Semjonov**, Director of the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, Tallinn, Estonia, gave a presentation on “Implementation of international standards of minority protection in Estonia: achievements and problems”. In his opinion, most of the recent amendments to the minority-related legislation in Estonia are rather ambivalent. Very often, there has been no real solution to a problem; the terms for taking the final decision have just been postponed. He gave the following examples.

*Re-examination.* Sooner or later, the “old” language certificates will be regarded as invalid (the first deadline was 1 July 2002, a new one is 1 January 2004). However, it is not clear why the tests should be repeated in the first place. In Latvia, a new system of language testing has also been introduced recently, but the certificates issued under the previous system retain their legal validity.

*Education.* According to the above-mentioned amendment to the Law on Basic School and Gymnasium, a board of trustees of a school can apply for a prolongation of the transition period. Then, a decision has to be taken by a local authority and later by the government. The approval will depend on the good will of the authorities and consequently on the results of each subsequent election. Thus, the speaker concluded, there is no stable institutional framework for the preservation of Russian-language gymnasium education in Estonia.

*Citizenship and Migration.* The basic problem of Estonia in this field is a highly questionable approach which treats permanent residents as immigrants. Any change of legislation here should be aimed at the reduction of mass statelessness.

Mr Semjonov stressed that there is no effective law on national minorities in Estonia. The Law on Cultural Autonomy of National Minorities (1993) merely establishes many complicated and unnecessary procedures. Several provisions of Estonian legal acts are not yet in line with the FCNM requirements. Mr Semjonov concluded that international standards are not a burden for Estonia; the international experience, accumulated in these standards, is useful for the young democracy.

Commenting on the presentation by Mr Semjonov, Mr Stalnuhhin stressed the difference between politics as *the art of the possible* and human rights principles as perfect, but a bit idealistic standards. Mr Semjonov responded that human rights activists are not idealists but pioneers who promote positive changes in many spheres. For instance, the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights challenged in the Supreme Court the applicability of migration quota in certain cases of family reunification. As a result, the Estonian Parliament had to amend some provisions of the Law on Aliens, following the decision of the Supreme Court.

One Estonian MP argued during the **discussion** that the transition of gymnasiums to Estonian as a language of instruction in 2007 would not be possible. However, such a requirement could be an incentive for both pupils and teachers. Nevertheless, up to 40 per cent of all teaching is already possible in a minority language in all educational institutions. Other participants underlined that the proper balance between studies in a mother tongue and in the state languages is of primary importance.

One Latvian MP expressed his concerns about the absence of effective mechanisms of consultation between minorities and majority in Latvia, which would be similar to the Presidential Roundtable on National Minorities in Estonia. In his opinion, Estonian minorities prefer domestic protection mechanisms to international ones. He also mentioned that the tone of the Russian-language press in Estonia is more positive. Estonian participants referred to the unsolved problems that were tackled in the Opinion on Estonia of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.<sup>5</sup> This document includes criticism of several aspects of minority legislation in Estonia, first of all those which are related to the public use of languages.

## **VI. FOURTH SESSION**

Ms **Brigita Zepa**, Baltic Institute of Social Studies, Latvia, and Mr **Elmārs Vēbers**, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, gave a joint presentation on “Attitudes in Latvia towards bilingual education”. Ms Zepa presented the results of a sociological survey of the attitudes towards bilingual education, conducted in early 2002 in Latvia. Pilot projects of bilingual education have been carried out in Latvia since 1995. In 1999, bilingual education became compulsory in minority schools from the first form. Still, many problems are associated with the reform. Thus, some minority school teachers argue that despite the fact that the pupils’ knowledge of Latvian has improved, their general progress has declined and that the children suffer from additional stress. According to Ms Zepa, “it is the question of time and quality.

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<sup>5</sup> See the Council of Europe document ACFC/INF/OP/I(2002)5; published at <http://spunk.mfa.ee/eesti/oigusloome/Konventsioonid/2001cm159.pdf>.

There will be less stress if teachers are well trained'. Some teachers among the respondents claimed that they could not work according to a bilingual scheme. Many teachers complained that the style of the Ministry of Education and Science is authoritarian. Only 10 per cent of the teachers said that they had received some information about bilingual education from the ministry. Schools do not report properly to the ministry about the progress in bilingual education.

Ms Zepa presented the following results of the research regarding the preferred bilingual model for minority schools. About half of all minority parents, pupils, teachers and headmasters supported the so-called 50-50 model (half in Russian, half in Latvian). Around 30 to 40 per cent in all surveyed groups supported education mostly in Russian.

In 2004, all 10<sup>th</sup> forms of state and municipal minority high schools are supposed to start teaching in Latvian only. During the survey, a definitely negative or rather negative approach to this reform was claimed by 46 per cent of the headmasters, while 52 per cent supported or rather supported it; among the teachers, parents and pupils these figures were 52 and 42 per cent, 48 and 42 per cent and 58 and 40 per cent respectively. According to the survey, approximately half of all Russian-language schools have difficulties and are not ready to switch to Latvian as a language of instruction in 2004. Policy-making should take this real situation into consideration, the speaker concluded.

Mr **Elmārs Vēbers** singled out several periods of ethnic policy in newly independent Latvia. Until the mid-1990s, the social development was opposed to integration. However, with the start of naturalization in 1995 and 1996, the idea of a political nation was offered to public discussion. From 1997 to 2000, experts elaborated a theoretical basis and the very programme of integration. Nowadays, the process of integration is institutionalized. However, public interest and relevant public activities have started to decline.

Mr Vēbers underlined that the survey included questions about preferable models for minority schools, while the law explicitly stipulates a monolingual model for the forms 10 to 12 of minority high schools. Teachers did not assess the practical

consequences of the reform unanimously; about 30 per cent of them claimed that the knowledge of the subjects would decline, 16 per cent believed that the knowledge of the pupils would improve if the subjects were taught in Latvian only. Mr Vēbers pointed out that there are no comprehensive data on the knowledge of Latvian among the graduates of Russian-language basic schools.

Answering to the **questions**, the speakers informed the participants that the respondents included pupils of the 6<sup>th</sup> and –7<sup>th</sup> forms (at this age, they are not politicized). Most of the parents were positive about bilingual education although the language policies might be more flexible. It was evident that the majority of the respondents support bilingual, not the officially proposed monolingual, education in the upper forms (10 to 12) of minority high schools.

Mr Vēbers recognized that even the school headmasters are not always aware of the proper meaning of bilingual education. Attitudes were often dependent on the ethnic origin of a respondent (Latvian – non-Latvian). There were regional differences as well. For instance, Riga seemed to be less prepared for the reform. Around 35 per cent of the surveyed teachers were non-citizens.

## **VII. FIFTH SESSION**

“Legal and other measures of protection of the Latvian language” was the topic of the presentation by Professor **Ina Druviete**, Vice-Chairperson of the Latvian State Language Commission. In her opinion, every language needs protection. Even languages such as Russian, French, German, etc. have certain protective mechanisms. To protect a language, one should consider not only its official status, but also its factual situation. Estonian and Latvian are majority languages, but their qualitative parameters do not correspond to this status. Mechanisms of language protection are widespread in the EU, and Latvian language policies cannot be regarded as rigid in the comparative perspective.

According to Ms Druviete, the preservation of Latvian is the task of all residents of Latvia. The preservation of minority languages is possible if the state language enjoys

proper protection. Latvian is not always in a good position in the linguistic competition e.g. in the local economy. The aim of the Latvian integration programme and the Draft Programme on the State Language Protection is to preserve all local languages and the stable development of Latvian in Latvia – the only place where this language is spoken.

For the coordination of Latvian language policies, the President has called the Latvian State Language Commission. It is a collegial institution whose task is the analysis of the respective legislation and the problems of state language training. The commission pays special attention to the qualitative (in the linguistic sense) development of the Latvian language, to the enforcement of the Latvian linguistic milieu, and to the development of new methods of language study. According to Ms Druviete, there is not enough funding of language policies in Latvia.

Answering to **questions**, the speaker argued that both positive and negative incentives should be used in language policies. “However, we should avoid any repression which will contradict our international obligations,” she explained. She did not support the idea of minority and majority schools in one building. She had doubts that the Latvian language would dominate there. Bilingual education in predominantly non-Latvian territories (such as Daugavpils) is a necessary tool of society integration. She considered the adoption of a special law on minority languages quite possible.

Some Russian-speaking participants argued that the so-called socio-linguistic concept of Ms Druviete is hardly compatible with the minority rights concept. They argued that the case of Quebec has proved that excessive protective mechanisms for only one local language can have a very negative impact on the economic situation. They wondered how the Latvian language could be in danger if non-Latvians are in a minority and 98 per cent of the Latvians speak Latvian. In their opinion, there are two options: Latvians recognize Russians or Russian-speakers as a minority and grant them all minority rights. If the Russians are not recognized as a minority, then the Russian language should have a special status.

According to Ms Druviete, the concept of individual rights does not provide effective solutions for a language. Therefore, she prefers to talk about collective linguistic

rights. Latvian is not endangered as a language spoken at home. However, any tendencies that could potentially lead to its assimilation must be fought against. There may be a “vacuum-cleaner effect” when Russian defeats Latvian by using its powerful economic position, she explained. Ms Druviete rejected the opinion that the Latvian State Language Commission duplicates other institutions and serves the financial needs of linguistic research, but recognized that the whole system of language policy-oriented institutions should be reconsidered. She was positive about the start of the cooperation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on language policy in the framework of the Baltic Assembly. In her opinion, the ratification of the charter on minority or regional languages is more probable in Latvia than the ratification of the FCNM.

During the **discussion**, the participants addressed the problems of studying the Latvian language in Latvian schools. Furthermore, these schools are not always ready for multiculturalism, for a diverse ethnic composition of the pupils. The Latvian participants did not support the idea of some Russian-speaking participants regarding the individualist approach to human rights but stressed the importance of collective linguistic rights.

## VIII. CLOSING SESSION

Ms **Eiženija Aldermane**, Head of the Latvian Naturalization Board, drew several conclusions on the “Latvian” part of the workshop proceedings:

1. There is evident progress in public debates on integration and minority rights issues in Latvia; this is, *inter alia*, the result of the ECMI Baltic project.
2. It is not always appropriate to aim integration programmes at minorities only; in such a case, the integration projects will be insufficiently funded by ethnocentric parliaments.
3. Latvia needs an institution which will specially deal with minority problems, possibly on the level of a minister without a *portfolio*.
4. A system of integration-related institutions must be promoted.

5. The problem of how to motivate non-citizens to naturalize has not yet been solved.
6. One should be careful with the word “protection” when talking about the state language; the use of terms ought to be reconsidered.

Mr **Priit Järve**, who moderated the workshop, thanked Minister Labucka, the MPs, the speakers and all the participants for their active and fruitful work during the workshop.

## **IX. ECMI CONCLUSIONS**

On the basis of the presentations, distributed materials and discussions at the workshop “Legal Aspects of National Integration in Estonia and Latvia”, organized by the European Centre for Minority Issues from 6 to 8 June 2002 in Jūrmala, Latvia, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. This workshop was attended by Estonian and Latvian officials and MPs, NGO and minority leaders and prominent local experts. In the context of national integration and development of national systems of minority protection, the workshop became a forum for the distribution of information on relevant good practices in both Estonia and Latvia.
2. The systems of integration and language policy institutions in Latvia are in need of more clarity in order to raise their overall efficiency. The authorities may wish to pay more attention to the composition of the Board of the Integration Foundation.
3. The ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is a challenging issue for Latvia. It is worth stressing that the reservations concerning the ratification of this instrument and of the European Convention on Nationality should not be incompatible with the object and purpose of these conventions.
4. Several positive changes have recently been introduced into minority-related legislation in Estonia. However, in some cases, the final solution of problems has

been simply postponed by these changes. This concerns the future of minority gymnasiums and the repetition of language testing of employees in Estonia.

5. According to a recent sociological survey in Latvia (2002), the idea of bilingual education enjoys the support of the parents, pupils and staff members of minority schools. On the other hand, there is a weak support of the monolingual model for the upper forms (10 to 12) of minority high schools starting from the year 2004. A proper balance between minority languages and the state language should be found for minority schools in Latvia.
6. There is no unanimous approach towards the essence of linguistic rights among the representatives of Estonian and Latvian majorities and minorities. Still, all activities to promote the position of the state languages should be accompanied with measures aimed at the protection of minority languages.
7. In view of the pending changes in the language of instruction in Latvian minority high schools in 2004, and taking into account that opinions on this issue differ drastically in Latvia, it should be regarded as urgent tasks to promote dialogue and exchange of information between the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Russian-language schools of Latvia.

## X. APPENDIX

### A. Programme of the Workshop

<b><i>Thursday, 6 June 2002</i></b>	
Arrival and accommodation of participants in the hotel "Lielupe", Jurmala, Latvia	
19:30	Meeting of participants in the hotel "Lielupe"
<b><i>Friday, 7 June 2002</i></b>	
9:30 – 10:00	Registration of participants in the hotel "Lielupe"
10:00 – 10:30	Opening of the seminar in the hotel "Lielupe" <i>Introduction</i> <b>Priit Järve</b> , Senior Analyst, European Centre for Minority Issues
10:30 – 12:00	<b>First session</b> <i>Recent changes in minority-related legislation of Latvia</i> <b>Ingrīda Labucka</b> , Minister of Justice of Latvia  Discussion
12:00 – 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 – 14:00	<b>Second session</b> <i>Implementation of international standards of minority protection in Latvia: achievements and problems</i> <b>Aleksei Dimitrov</b> , Executive Secretary, Latvian Human Rights Committee  Discussion
14:00 – 14:30	<b>Press conference</b>
14:30 – 15:30	Lunch
15:30 – 17:00	<b>Third session</b> <i>Recent changes in minority-related legislation of Estonia</i> <b>Mihhail Stalnuhhin</b> , Member of the Estonian Parliament  <i>Implementation of international standards of minority protection in Estonia: achievements and problems</i> <b>Aleksei Semjonov</b> , Director, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, Tallinn  Discussion

17:00 – 17:30	Coffee break
17:30 – 19:00	<p><b>Fourth session</b>  <i>Attitudes in Latvia towards bilingual education</i>  <b>Brigita Zepa</b>, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Riga  <b>Elmārs Vēbers</b>, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia</p> <p>Discussion</p>
20:00	Dinner

<b><i>Saturday, 8 June 2002</i></b>	
10:00 – 11:30	<p><b>Fifth session</b>  <i>Legal and other measures of protection of the Latvian language</i>  <b>Ina Druviete</b>, Vice-Chairperson of the Latvian State Language Commission</p> <p>Discussion</p>
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 – 13:30	<p><b>Closing session</b>  General discussion</p> <p><i>Concluding remarks</i>  <b>Eiženija Aldermane</b>, Head of the Latvian Naturalization Board  <b>Priit Järve</b>, Senior Analyst, European Centre for Minority Issues</p>
13:30 – 14:45	Lunch
15:00	Departure of participants

## B. List of Participants

Mr Reinis Āboltiņš	Latvian Ministry of Justice, Society Integration Department
Ms Līga Andersone	Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Human Rights Policy Division
Ms Eiženija Aldermane	Head of the Latvian Naturalization Board
Ms Aina-Edīte Balaško	Head of the National Minorities Department, Latvian Naturalization Board
Mr Boris Cilēvič	Member of the Latvian Parliament ( <i>Saeima</i> )
Mr Aleksei Dimitrov	Executive Secretary, Latvian Human Rights Committee (NGO)
Ms Ina Druviete	Head of Department, Institute of the Latvian Language, University of Latvia, Vice-Chairperson of the Latvian State Language Commission
Mr Rafik Grigorjan	Counsellor to the Estonian Minister of Population Affairs
Ms Līvija Jankovska	Deputy Chairperson, Daugavpils City Council, Latvia
Ms Ingrīda Labucka	Minister of Justice of Latvia
Ms Signe Martišūne	Project leader, Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies
Mr Mart Nutt	Member of the Estonian Parliament ( <i>Riigikogu</i> ), Pro Patria faction
Ms Evija Papule	Head of the Department of Integration, Ministry of Education and Science
Mr Juris Pēkalis	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Human Rights Policy Division
Mr Igor Pimenov	Supporting association for schools with the Russian language of instruction in Latvia (NGO)
Mr Vadim Polestchuk	Legal Adviser, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (NGO), Tallinn, Estonia
Mr Nils Sakss	Director, Society Integration Foundation
Mr Antons Seiksts	Member of the Latvian Parliament ( <i>Saeima</i> )
Mr Aleksei Semjonov	Director, Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (NGO), Tallinn, Estonia
Ms Ilona Stalidzāne	Latvian Naturalization Board, Acting Head of Information Centre
Mr Mihhail Stalnuhhin	Member of the Estonian Parliament ( <i>Riigikogu</i> ), Centre party faction
Mr Vjačeslav Vasin	"Civil Initiative XXI" (NGO), Latvia
Mr Elmārs Vēbers	Leading researcher, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia
Mr Vladimir Velman	Member of the Estonian Parliament ( <i>Riigikogu</i> ) Centre party faction
Ms Brigita Zepa	Director, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Latvia

### ECMI Staff

Mr Priit Järve	Senior Analyst, European Centre for Minority Issues, Germany
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