



REFERENCE: CERD/101<sup>st</sup> session/FU/MJA/ks

24 September 2020

Excellency,

I wish to inform you that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, during its 101<sup>st</sup> session, considered the follow-up report submitted by the Government of Latvia, pursuant to article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 (1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.

The Committee welcomes the submission of the report, in response to its request to receive information within one year on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 21 (a) and (b) and 23 (d) of the Concluding Observations (CERD/C/LVA/CO/6-12), adopted following the consideration of the State party's combined 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> periodic reports, at its 96<sup>th</sup> session, held in August 2018.

The Committee appreciates the opportunity provided to continue its dialogue with the State party and would like to draw the State party's attention to the observations mentioned below. The Committee requests that comments and responses on actions taken by the State party on these issues be included in its combined 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> periodic reports, to be submitted in a single document by 14 May 2021.

### **Paragraph 21 (a) of the Concluding Observations**

The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to facilitate access to the naturalization process, including the introduction of reductions and exemptions from naturalisation fees for certain vulnerable groups, the launch of a project by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs in April 2019 to promote naturalization through awareness-raising campaigns on citizenship procedures, and the introduction of self-testing measures to help applicants pass their naturalization exams. While welcoming the steady decrease in the number of non-citizens in the State party, the Committee notes with concern that the number of those non-citizens who annually receive citizenship of Latvia or another country has remained stable.

His Excellency Mr. Bahtijors Hasans  
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It is also concerned that the reported yearly decrease in the number of non-citizens is to a certain extent attributed to non-citizens passing away. The Committee considers the response to this recommendation partially satisfactory and encourages the State party to strengthen its efforts to facilitate access to naturalization in order to further decrease the number of persons without nationality.

### **Paragraph 21 (b) of the Concluding Observations**

The Committee welcomes the adoption, in October 2019, of a law that enables children born in Latvia to two 'non-citizen' parents to automatically be entitled to Latvian citizenship by birth, which is deemed a positive step to prevent statelessness of such children and terminate the separate legal category of non-citizens in the State party. It also welcomes information on simplified acquisition of Latvian citizenship for older non-citizen children to encourage their citizenship registration. However, the Committee regrets that the State party has not taken any measures to extend automatic citizenship to all non-citizen children in Latvia who are currently under 15. The Committee considers that the response to this recommendation is partially satisfactory and requests that the State party provide, in its next periodic report, information on further measures taken to phase out the separate legal category of non-citizens, as well as on their impact.

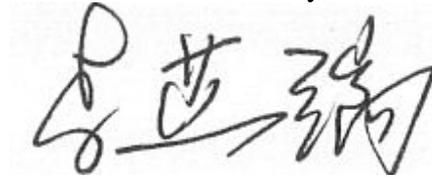
### **Paragraph 23 (d) of the Concluding Observations**

The Committee notes the information on the measures taken by the State party to address the continued stigma and socioeconomic discrimination against members of the Roma community, in particular the provision of various tools and mechanisms for the Ombudsperson to combat discrimination, improve cooperation and dialogue with the Roma community and its representative organizations, and ensure their involvement in the development and implementation of relevant Roma integration policies and programmes. It also notes that, in 2018, the Latvian Roma Platform project III was implemented by the Ministry of Culture to combat Antigypsyism in society, foster intercultural dialogue between the Roma community and the general population, and exchange best practices on Roma integration at the local and regional level. The Committee regrets, however, that appropriate action has not been taken to implement its recommendation and considers the response of the State party unsatisfactory. The Committee reiterates its recommendation to reinstate the post of Roma consultant in the Office of the Ombudsperson and requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, further information and data on the alternative measures currently used to help increase visibility and consultations with the Roma community on issues concerning them.

Rest assured, Excellency, that the Committee looks forward to continuing its constructive dialogue with the Government of Latvia, with a view to providing it with assistance in its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Yanduan Li  
Chair

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination