



Latvijas Republikas tiesībsargs
Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia

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Written Statement for the 48th HRC session on The Republic of Latvia

Mr. President,

Distinguished members of the Human Rights Council, ladies and gentlemen, this statement is made on behalf of Ombudsman of Latvia, a national “A status” human rights institution.

Ombudsman welcomes the recommendations of the member states and in this statement would like to once more emphasize these areas of the recommendations that are the most crucial from the perspective of national human rights institution.

Rights of persons with disabilities

Ombudsman agrees with the recommendations of the member states concerning the rights of persons with disabilities and believes those to be of utmost urgency. In particular, the Ombudsman wants to point out areas concerning the provision of technical aids to children and accessibility of inclusive education. As well the ombudsman calls upon the state to implement and improve community-based services for persons with disabilities and accelerate the deinstitutionalization process.

Trafficking in human beings

Although the Ombudsman acknowledges the progress made by the state in tackling human trafficking, the Ombudsman still notes the concerns about the shortcomings regarding the co-operation between various stakeholders, undermining the identification and referral of victims to social service providers. Ombudsman since 2019 has called upon the Government to develop one comprehensive “umbrella” law to provide a clear referral mechanism for victims of trafficking, however such law still has not been drafted and come into force.

Hate speech and hate crimes

Additionally, The Ombudsman believes the government needs to increase its' efforts in combatting hate speech and hate crime through legislative and policy measures. The Ombudsman believes that the current penal code needs to be amended and the provision of information and education activities improved.

Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)

In conclusion, the Ombudsman notes, that although the government of Latvia has shown readiness for the ratification of the OPCAT and Ombudsman's capacity has been financially strengthened, as of September 2021 the ratification process has not been completed.

The Ombudsman would like to declare its readiness for constructive cooperation with the Latvian government in the implementation of the recommendations.

Thank you for the attention.