



Правозащитный Центр

**Alternative Report for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial
Discrimination of United Nations**

(English version starts on page 2)

**Альтернативный отчёт для Комитета по ликвидации расовой
дискриминации при Организации Объединенных Наций**

(На русском языке начиная со страницы 37)

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Introduction

This document is an alternative report based on report¹ containing twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports of States parties due in 29 August 2018 for Estonia CERD/C/EST/12-13. Alternative report is made by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”, which operates in Estonia. Main target of NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh” is monitoring and supporting the rights of Russian minority of Estonia in the area of education. As we are seeing that all the matters which concern the rights of national minorities are strongly politicized in our country, which leads to suppression of national minorities, we are looking for different paths to convey this information to the public around the world. We hope that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of United Nations with the due attention will handle provided within given alternative report.

This alternative report is built in the following way: first it contains an excerpt from the commented report CERD/C/EST/12-13. Each excerpt is followed by a comment provided by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”. The excerpts and corresponding comments are given in the order following the CERD/C/EST/12-13 report.

Using this opportunity, we would like to thank the the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for the mechanism provided for building and delivering alternative reports.

NOTE! The word “Russian” in this document should be understood as a reference to ethnicity and not as reference to a citizenship and/or to a state, unless it is clearly stated otherwise.

Author:

Mstislav Rusakov

web: <http://kitezh.eu/>

@: mstislav.rusakov@gmail.com

Address:

NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”

Tuukri 19

10152 Tallinn

Estonia

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https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fEST%2f12-13&Lang=en

Alternative report of NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”

I. Introduction

7. The report was submitted for comments and opinions to three NGOs: the Estonian Human Rights Centre, the Estonian Institute of Human Rights (EIHR) and the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (LICHR). The latter two provided feedback, which has been reflected in the report.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Two out of those organizations are GONGO (Government-organized non-governmental organizations). The third one has not conducted human rights defence activities for the last 5 years. In addition, the state report was not given for getting the opinion of NGO “Russian School of Estonia”, which has sent its Alternative report based on 10th and 11th state reports by Estonia, which led to a number of recommendations given by the Committee. Also, the state report was not submitted for getting opinion of the human rights defence center “Kitezh”, which has sent its alternative report in 2015 pointing out that Estonia does not fulfill recommendations of the Committee received in 2014.

8. Estonian reports to international human rights treaty bodies are published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.vm.ee>) and are publically available after submission. This report was prepared in Estonian, translated into English, and published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs both in Estonian and in English. The Committee’s concluding observations have also been published on the website in Estonian and English.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The Committee has also recommended Estonia to publish its recommendations also in Russian language. However, it was not done. For the appeals to different institutions (Ministry of Justice, The Chancellor of Justice) from the human rights defence center “Kitezh”, the responses were received that **Estonia is not obliged to fulfill the recommendations**. And that is taking into account that the recommendation of the Committee was easy to fulfill in that case, as the translation to Russian language was made by the Committee itself and was openly accessible on the web site of the UN. The state report under consideration was also not prepared in Russian language, which can be preferred by 30% of the country’s population, and who are being concerned by that state report, as the report describes a situation with the fulfillment of their rights given by the Convention.

II. Information on article 2–7 of the Convention

9. Estonia has always considered it important to ensure and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms nationally and internationally. Estonia condemns all racial discrimination and continues making efforts to eliminate manifestations of racial discrimination from legislation and practice.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Estonia continues not to do efforts towards elimination of racial discrimination, but makes matters worse.

For instance, the parliament of Estonia has continuously discussed plans of full elimination of schools with Russian language of instruction and even that for kindergartens. On the 10th of September 2019 by the initiative of the then in-opposition Estonian Reform party was another voting procedure made in the parliament for the full elimination of Russian schools and kindergartens. It was supposed then that the kindergartens shall be transferred to the Estonian language of instruction on the 1st of September 2020².

This legislative initiative did not pass, however, the then right-wing nationalist parties in power on the same day proposed their plan for the estonianization of Russian education, which differed from the opposition's plan only in terms. On July 9, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science developed the Program for the Development of the Estonian Language for 2021-2035, which provides for the complete elimination of education in Russian, starting with kindergartens.

³

In January 2021, due to a corruption scandal, the ruling coalition disintegrated and a new government coalition was formed, consisting of the Reform and Center parties. The coalition agreement contains a clause providing for the launch of the transition to a unified Estonian-language education system, starting with kindergartens⁴. The Ministry of Education has formed a working group that will draw up a detailed plan for the complete transition of the education system to Estonian by November⁵. On April 23, 2021, the first meeting of the working group under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Research took place, which is

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<https://rus.err.ee/978770/rijgikogu-vnov-ne-podderzhal-plan-reformistov-perevesti-vse-obrazovanie-na-jestonskij-jazyk>

³ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/eesti_keelee_arendukava_2021_2035_eelnou_9.07.2020.pdf

⁴

<https://valitsus.ee/ru/soglashenie-o-formirovanii-pravitelstva-partii-reform-estonii-i-centristskoy-partii-estonii-i-#Nutikad%20inimesed>

⁵

<https://rus.err.ee/1608183643/detalnyj-plan-perehoda-na-jestonojazychnoe-obrazovanie-razrabotajut-k-nojabru>

tasked with drawing up an action plan for the transition of the education system to Estonian by the end of November⁶.

Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid in almost every address to the people demands the elimination of Russian education⁷. Her last speech on the Independence Day of Estonia on February 24, 2021 was no exception, in which she stated that sending Russian children to Estonian schools is not only the right of Russian parents, but also their obligation⁸.

In the city of Keila, the only Russian primary (9-year) school was closed in 2019⁹. Despite the fact that the number of students in this school is at the national average. 6 students are enough to maintain the same nine-year Estonian school in a small village¹⁰. The school (in which about 200 Russian children study) is closing as, according to the authorities, this will save money in the city budget, about 1,500 euros per month. The amount is ridiculous and will not cover the additional costs associated with the adaptation of Russian children (help of a psychologist, speech therapist, payment for transport for children who will be forced to study in another city). At the meeting of the city assembly, at which the decision was made to close the Russian school, the mayor of the city honestly said that the purpose of closing the Russian school is to create a single Estonian community in the city (this is included in the records of the meeting)¹¹.

On June 21, 2021, the Estonian Supreme Court rejected the appeal challenging the closure of the Russian school in Keila¹². Estonian judges believe that in this case, the rights were not violated, since national minorities in Estonia have no rights. Local government itself has the right to decide whether to leave the Russian school in the city or not, and its right to make such a decision is absolute and indisputable. This law enforcement practice is very sharply at odds with the statement cited above that *Estonia has always considered it important to ensure and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms nationally and internationally. Estonia condemns all racial discrimination and continues making efforts to eliminate manifestations of racial discrimination from legislation and practice.*

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<https://rus.err.ee/1608190003/sostojalas-pervaja-vstrecha-rabochej-gruppy-po-perehodu-sistemy-obrazovaniya-na-jestonskij-jazyk>

⁷ <https://president.ee/ru/official-duties/speeches/14994-24-2019/index.html>

⁸ <https://www.president.ee/ru/official-duties/speeches/16451-2021-02-24-16-28-05/index.html>

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%bc%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b2-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b2-%d0%be-%d0%bb%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%b4%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d0%b8-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d1%81%d0%ba/>

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<https://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/delfi-graafik-vaata-millistes-koolides-on-koige-rohkem-ja-millistes-koige-vahem-opilasi?id=67018624>

¹¹ <https://dokole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29.10volikoguprotokoll.pdf>

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%b3%d0%be%d1%81%d1%81%d1%83%d0%b4-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b6%d0%b0%d0%bb-%d0%bb%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%b4%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%8e-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b9/>

At the same time and according to the same scheme, an attack was launched on a Russian school in the city of Kallaste.¹³ Descendants of Russian Old Believers who settled in Estonia more than three hundred years ago live in this city¹⁴. As a result of the administrative reform that took place in 2017¹⁵, aimed at enlarging the parishes, parishes of the descendants of the Old Believers were liquidated by merging them with the Estonian parishes. As a result, the new parishes became predominantly Estonian, and the descendants of the Russian Old Believers lost their self-government. As a result, the first thing Estonian parishes did was to liquidate the Russian schools located on their territory. Earlier, the gymnasium stage (grades 10-12) was taken away from the Russian school in Kallaste, and it became a basic school (9-year). Now, the parish authorities decided that the school had too large a building, and therefore the students of this school should be transferred to a small village school in the village of Kolkja.¹⁶ The larger unit was combined with the smaller one. In Kallaste school it was taught in Russian. There are also Russian children in the village of Kolkja, but they study according to the so-called “immersion” program in Estonian. On July 1, 2021, the Russian school in Kallaste was closed¹⁷.

In 2021, the same problem arose with a Russian school in the city of Kiviõli. Kiviõli is a city with a population of 5 thousand people, located in the North-East of Estonia (Ida-Virumaa county). The Kiviõli Russian School was founded in 1927. This school, as in previous cases, was first taken away from the gymnasium stage (grades 10-12), making it basic (9-year) school. The population of the city is predominantly Russian. However, the share of the Estonian population is also large - up to 40%. As a result of the administrative reform already mentioned above, the city was merged with the surrounding Estonian villages, which was not necessary, since the population of the city almost met the minimum requirements without it. However, as a result of the unification, the percentage of the Estonian population in the parish increased and, as a result, the interests of the Russian population were no longer taken into account. The authorities of the Lüganeuse parish decided to liquidate the Russian school. This caused protests from teachers and parents. Separately, it should be noted that the parish received its name not by the name of the Russian city with a population of 4.8 thousand, but by the name of the Estonian village of Lüganeuse with a population of 450 people.

In 2019, an Estonian gymnasium with 100% teaching in Estonian was opened in the predominantly Russian town of Kohtla-Järve. To fill it, three Russian city gymnasiums were

¹³ <https://eadaaily.com/ru/news/2019/12/01/v-estonii-opasayutsya-za-sudbu-eshchyo-odnoy-russkoy-shkoly>

¹⁴ <http://www.starover.ee/ru/>

¹⁵

<https://rus.delfi.ee/daily/virumaa/god-posle-administrativnoj-reformy-kak-ona-skazalas-na-narve-i-ee-sole-dyah?id=84297665>

¹⁶

<https://baltija.eu/2020/10/09/zhiteli-kallaste-uzhe-dva-goda-boryutsya-s-rukovodstvom-volosti-iz-za-budushhego-russkoj-shkoly/>

¹⁷

<https://dokole.eu/%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D1%83-%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85-%D0%B2-%D1%8D%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%BF/>

previously closed. The Russian teachers of these grammar schools were also fired. Due to the 100% teaching in Estonian and the Russophobia of the administration of the gymnasium, Russian students began to leave it en masse¹⁸.

Earlier in 2015, a state gymnasium was opened in Jõhvi. For this, the municipal gymnasium was also closed there. Teaching at this state gymnasium, at first, was conducted mainly in Estonian, in a 60/40 ratio. However, the government has plans to transfer it 100% into Estonian language.

¹⁹

Also alarming is the persecution by the state against persons who raise issues of violation of the rights of national minorities. The NGO Russian School of Estonia is in a strict information blockade by the pro-government media. So, since 2018, not a single press release has been published from the NGO Russian School of Estonia. With the support of the Estonian government, the website <https://www.propastop.org/> was created, which specializes in the victimization of activists of the Russian community. Any opinion that deviates from the mainstream is persecuted.

Nationalism and Russophobia are considered the norm among Estonian political parties. The only party that was an exception to this general rule, the United Left Party of Estonia, was persecuted by the state and is now in a state of paralysis and on the verge of liquidation. A criminal case was fabricated against the leader of the party on false denunciation. It was charged with “submitting incorrect data to the party register”. The punishment for this crime is up to three years in prison. On July 8, 2019, the police searched the apartment of the party leader Mstislav Rusakov and the office of the NGO Russian School of Estonia. Mstislav Rusakov was taken to the police station and spent several hours in the interrogation²⁰. On March 8, 2020, the case against Mstislav Rusakov was closed “for lack of grounds for initiating a criminal case”²¹.

However, in April 2021, the Estonian tax authorities became interested in him and the persecution continued with their help. The illegal actions of the tax authorities have already been partially recognized by them. However, the bulk of the requirements for Mstislav Rusakov remained valid. An unjustified tax audit with gross interference with private life is apparently used by the authorities as a means of putting pressure on a human rights defender.

¹⁸

<https://dokole.eu/mstislav-rusakov-o-kohtla-yarveskoj-gosgimnazii-eshhe-para-let-i-tam-ostanutsya-odni-estoncy/>

¹⁹ <https://rus.err.ee/938457/majlis-reps-jyhviskaja-gimnazija-skoro-stanet-polnostju-jestonozjazychnoj>

²⁰ <https://rus.err.ee/959993/chlen-pravlenija-olpje-mstislav-rusakov-poluchil-status-podozrevaemogo>

²¹ <https://rus.err.ee/1061261/prokuratura-prekratila-ugolovnoe-delo-protiv-mstislava-rusakova>

Former “Russian Ombudsman” Sergei Seredenko was arrested on March 3, 2021²². A criminal case was initiated against him under Article 235-1 of the Penal Code²³, the punishment for violation of which is up to 6 years in prison. He is charged with “maintaining relations against the Republic of Estonia”. Detention was chosen as a preventive measure. At the moment, the human rights defender has been in Tallinn Prison for the fifth month without presenting suspicions and his term of detention has been extended until September 3, 2021²⁴. Sergei Seredenko, having two higher educations, in recent years was forced to work as a janitor in a school gymnasium, unable to get a job in his specialty. In this modest position, he had no access to state secrets. It can be assumed that the opposition publicist, most likely, became a victim of political intrigue and "spy mania". As a bold and brilliant author, Seredenko has repeatedly appeared in various media with critical articles. He is the chairman of the Council of the United Left Party of Estonia. He ran for elective positions in local government. For more than ten years, a human rights lawyer fulfilled the public duties of the “Russian Ombudsman of Estonia”, defending representatives of national minorities in courts. He is the author of a number of scientific studies, books and monographs. Sergei Seredenko is well known in Estonia and abroad as a highly intelligent and politically correct person. His only weapon has always been the word. And for this, in democratic European countries, as you know, they do not go to jail.

In the Report of the Estonian Security Police issued on April 12, 2021²⁵, and also in the following article in the mainstream press²⁶ preserving education in the Russian language in Estonia is called the "goal of the Kremlin", and the defenders of Russian schools living in Estonia are called agents of the Kremlin. The author of the Report has presented a rebuttal to this absurd claim. However, it was ignored²⁷.

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b0%d0%bd-%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%bd%d1%8b%d0%b9-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b7%d0%b0%d1%89%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%ba-%d1%81/>

23 <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/502062021003/consolide/current>

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%85%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d0%bf%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b5%d1%82-%d0%b2-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b6%d0%ba%d1%83-%d1%81%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b4%d0%b5/>

25 https://www.kapo.ee/sites/default/files/public/content_page/Annual%20Review%202020-2021.pdf

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<https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/93156651/mestnye-russkie-propagandisty-vystroili-v-estonii-celuyu-infrastrukтуру-dlya-usileniya-protestov-protiv-koronavirusnyh-ogranicheniy?fbclid>

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%bc%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b2-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b2-%d0%be%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b3-%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%81%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80/>

13. In paragraph 6 of its 2014 concluding observations, the Committee recommended establishing an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.

14. The Paris Principles, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993, impose on states an obligation to establish an independent national human rights institution based on the conditions formulated in the resolution. In addition to the CERD Committee, the establishment of a national human rights institution has also been recommended by other international bodies, such as the UN Human Rights Committee, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Committee against Torture. Representatives of Estonian civil society have also drawn attention to this issue.

15. On 13 June 2018 the Riigikogu adopted an Act Amending the Chancellor of Justice Act, according to which the Chancellor of Justice performs in Estonia the internationally assumed function of a national human rights institution (NHRI) as of 1 January 2019. This allows the Chancellor of Justice to apply for accreditation as an NHRI. As an NHRI, the Chancellor of Justice's role also includes issues concerning the prohibition on racial discrimination covered by the ICERD. This step has also been warmly received by EIHR.

16. The Committee's recommendation has thus been implemented, and the establishment of an NHRI and the commencement of its activities can be considered one of the most important developments compared to the previous reporting period.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre "Kitezh":

According to The Paris Principles The composition of the national institution and the appointment of its members, whether by means of an election or otherwise, shall be established in accordance with a procedure which affords all necessary guarantees to ensure the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society) involved in the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly by powers which will enable effective cooperation to be established with, or through the presence of, representatives of:

- (a) Non-governmental organizations responsible for human rights and efforts to combat racial discrimination, trade unions, concerned social and professional organizations, for example, associations of lawyers, doctors, journalists and eminent scientists;
- (b) Trends in philosophical or religious thought;
- (c) Universities and qualified experts;
- (d) Parliament;
- (e) Government departments (if these are included, their representatives should participate in the deliberations only in an advisory capacity).

In this case, there were no independent elections and the pluralist representation of the social forces (of civilian society) involved in the protection and promotion of human rights. Only one

clause has been added to the Law on the Chancellor of Justice stating that The Chancellor of Justice performs the functions of protection and promotion of human rights on the basis of the UN General Assembly Resolution No 48/134 of 20 December 1993 “National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights”. But at the same time, the Chancellor continues to be a government official who shall be appointed to the office by the Riigikogu on the proposal of the President of the Republic for a term of seven years (art 5 of the Chancellor of Justice Act)²⁸. The addition of the above paragraph does not make the Chancellor of Law an independent national human rights institution consistent with the Paris Principles.

As for the fact that this step has also been warmly received by the EIHR, then the GONGO EIHR is funded by the government to approve all of its actions. Estonian Institute of Human Rights is engaged in the protection of human rights outside Estonia (in Tajikistan, Georgia, Crimea and Kyrgyzstan)²⁹. In Estonia, they only organize events dedicated to the June 1941 deportation with manic persistence³⁰ and the March 1949 deportation³¹, so that the hatred of Estonians towards Russians does not subside. All these activities are funded from the state budget. The EIHR has never dealt with the rights of national minorities, and indeed human rights in general. Therefore, it is not surprising that the government decided to enlist the support of this organization, instead of the NGO Russian School of Estonia specializing in protecting the rights of national minorities and the KitezH Human Rights Center.

17. The Chancellor of Justice and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner play important roles in promoting equality and ensuring and exercising supervision over compliance with existing legislation. This report gives an overview of issues and complaints that they have dealt with in recent years and that concern ICERD issues.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “KitezH”:

The Chancellor of Law and the Equality Ombudsman are highly ineffective. This is especially true for issues of racial discrimination. In the previous alternate report, we described in detail the cases proving this.³² Nothing changed. The decisions of the Equality Ombudsman are still advisory in nature. There is no practice where the Chancellor of Law is protecting, as an ombudsman, from racial discrimination by the state. The conciliation procedure for racial

²⁸ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/528052020006/consolide>

²⁹ <https://www.humanrightsestonia.ee/en/international-cooperation-projects/>

³⁰

<https://rus.postimees.ee/6996575/na-ploshchadi-vabaduze-v-chest-zhertv-deportaciy-ustanovlen-vagon-s-lez>

³¹

<https://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/po-vsej-estonii-projgut-meropriyatiya-v-pamyat-o-zhertvah-martovskoj-deportacii-1949-goda?id=85672583>

³²

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/EST/INT_CERD_NGO_EST_17812_E.pdf

discrimination by individuals has also remained unchanged. The consent of the person suspected of discrimination is required to initiate the reconciliation process. In the absence of consent, the conciliation procedure does not begin. There has not yet been a single case in which a person suspected of discrimination has agreed to this procedure. As a result, we have not protection against racial discrimination, but fiction. In judicial practice, there are also no positive examples of protection against discrimination. The reason for this is, among other things, the aforementioned attitude of Estonian judges that national minorities in Estonia have no rights. Since the rights do not exist, then it is impossible to violate what does not exist. The rights specified in international instruments do not apply in the absence of corresponding provisions in national legislation. The Constitution is also not directly applicable law. Moreover, it is being interpreted in an extremely bad faith. Thus, the right to study in one's native language, enshrined in the Constitution, is completely ignored. That is why Estonia is trying to divert the conversation to discrimination on other grounds. The situation there is not so hopeless, but it has nothing to do with the implementation of the Convention.

22. In 2015 there were 209 inquiries concerning various types of discrimination. Of these, 70 concerned gender equality, 35 disability, 16 age, 13 nationality, 6 sexual orientation, 3 religion and views, 2 employment, 1 trade union membership, 48 lack of competence, and 15 multiple types of discrimination.

23. In 2016 there were 332 inquiries concerning various types of discrimination. Of these, 157 concerned gender equality, 52 disability, 30 age, 21 nationality, 7 sexual orientation, 5 religion and views, 1 employment, 4 racial discrimination, 2 language proficiency, 2 trade union membership, and 58 lack of competence.

24. In 2017 there were 440 inquiries concerning various types of discrimination. of these, 227 concerned gender equality, 87 disability, 22 age, 18 nationality, 7 sexual orientation, 13 religion and views, 2 employment, 1 trade union membership, 92 lack of competence, and 2 multiple types of discrimination.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The above statistics shows that in 2015 there were only 13 complaints related to racial discrimination. In 2016 there were 25 of them, in 2017 - 18. This clearly demonstrates the ineffectiveness of such appeals. In addition, we do not see in how many cases of discrimination was established, and in what cases the respondent agreed with the opinion of the Equality Ombudsman. Perhaps there were no such cases at all.

There is not a single member of a national minority among the employees of the Office of the Equality Ombudsman. Only Estonians work in it³³. During the reporting period, only women.

³³ <https://volinik.ee/meist/>

Three men have recently been recruited. A third of men in the state can talk about some kind of gender balance. However, the absence of representatives of national minorities in the entire history of this institution is an unkind sign and, unfortunately, is typical for Estonia, where issues concerning national minorities are resolved without their participation. The most striking example here is the liquidation of Russian schools (see also the commentary to item 9).

The head of the bureau, Liisa Pakosta, was a former member of the far-right nationalist party Isamaa³⁴. The fact that representatives of the Isamaa Party are involved in human rights at the state level and in the GONGOs is also typical for Estonia. For example, Mart Rannut, head of the Estonian Institute for Human Rights, was also a member of the Isamaa Party³⁵. It's like an SS man heading the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Therefore, we can expect from Ms. Pakosta protection from any kind of discrimination, except ethnic.

29. Since one-fifth of conscripts do not speak Estonian at home, those who are not proficient in the official language can take an Estonian language course during their basic soldier training. Estonian citizens of different nationalities participate equally in military service, and military service is a great opportunity for young people to integrate, including by learning the language. According to the Ministry of Defence, there have not been any complaints concerning discrimination on grounds of nationality or race.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

It may indeed be that due to fears of victimization, there have been no formal complaints of ethnic discrimination. However, the Human Rights Center “Kitezh” received an appeal about the fact that Russian conscripts were forced to learn the so-called “Song of the Forest Brothers” as a drill³⁶, in which there were such lines “now I walk through swamps and paths and kill Russian *tibla-s*”³⁷. *Tibla* is an offensive name for Russians.

The head of the Kitezh Human Rights Center was defamed on social networks for raising this issue. There were demands to open a criminal case for “inciting ethnic hatred” and to open a source. Fortunately, there is no punishment in Estonia for “inciting ethnic hatred”. Otherwise, it would, as in neighboring Latvia, be applied not to those who incite hatred towards national

³⁴ https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liisa_Pakosta

³⁵ <https://www.humanrightsestonia.ee/tootajad/>

³⁶ The Forest Brothers are Nazi collaborators who, after World War II, out of fear of punishment for their war crimes, hid in the forests and attacked civilians. Recently, the Estonian authorities have been glorifying Estonians who fought on the side of Germany during World War II, including the “forest brothers”.

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<http://kitezh.eu/%d0%bd%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%be%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8/%d0%b2-%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b5%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b9-%d0%bf%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%bd%d0%b5-%d1%8d%d1%81%d1%82%d0%be%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b9-%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%bc%d0%b8%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b8%d0%b7/>

minorities, but to those who raise these problems. Nationalist police and courts would hardly pursue their own kind for Russophobia, since the latter is practically part of state policy.

40. In 2015 EIHR carried out a survey on the integration of Estonia's Russian-speaking population. The survey showed that integration has improved considerably in the past twenty years. EIHR made recommendations to reduce language segregation in the areas of education, language, media and security.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Here it is worth drawing the attention of the distinguished Committee to the fact that by “integration” the Estonian authorities and GONGO mean assimilation, often violent, as in the case of the elimination of education in the Russian language (see commentary to paragraph 9). Segregation means the right to study in Russian. From the point of view of Estonian nationalists and Russophobes, this is segregation. At the same time, as is customary in Estonia, the opinion of the representatives of national minorities themselves is not asked.

According to p. 16 of the Explanatory Memorandum to ECRI general policy recommendation N ° 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination the *voluntary act of separating oneself from other persons does not constitute segregation*³⁸.

Also in accordance with p. 27 Recommendations of the 2008 HRC Forum on minority issues The creation and development of classes and schools providing education in minority languages should not be considered impermissible segregation, if the assignment to such classes and schools is of a voluntary nature³⁹.

43. The general objectives in the field of education and culture are to guarantee all residents of Estonia equal opportunities to acquire education within the inclusive education system and to guarantee conditions to preserve their language and culture. Educational integration focuses on students by supporting the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to function in Estonian society, including learning the Estonian language and how to manage in a multicultural environment.

³⁸ <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-7-revised-on-national-legislatio/16808b5aae>

³⁹ <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/10/11/Add.1>

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Professor Aleksander Pulver and Professor Aaro Toomela state in the study “A non-Estonian speaking child in an Estonian school” (Institute of Psychology, Tallinn University, Tallinn 2012)⁴⁰ that non-native-speaking students with higher abilities have an academic performance comparable to that of children learning their mother tongue - incapable of ability. The lower academic level is characteristic of non-native-speaking children with average ability. It also turns out that in the school environment with Russian as the language of instruction, significant academic development took place in all ability groups. Russian-speaking students with low and medium abilities are able to rise to a better group in acquiring knowledge of mathematics. While the development of Russian-speaking students with high abilities is not slowed down, these students tend to maintain their high academic level. On the other hand, the development results in the group of bilinguals with similar abilities who study with Estonian as the language of instruction are significantly worse. Namely, the development trajectory of low-ability bilingual students also remained low at the academic level, the potential of high-ability bilinguals was not realized in learning outcomes, and medium-ability bilinguals rather moved to the low-academic group. It is important that the potential of high-ability multilingualism is not realized in learning outcomes, and that medium-ability students rather moved to a low-academic group. As a result of the aforementioned difficulties, the general self-esteem of non-Estonian-speaking children tends to decline over time. Monolingual children do not experience this change at the same time. This means that we cannot talk about equal opportunities to acquire education. We can talk about a deliberate decrease in the competitiveness of Russian children. Showing results below their abilities, they are limited in obtaining education and especially in continuing it at a higher level (at the gymnasium and university).

The inclusive education system means the elimination of education in the Russian language (see comment to clause 9). This in itself excludes the preservation of their language and culture. In practice, a Russian child who enters an Estonian school is assimilated. And if it is still a choice of parents, then in the future there will be no other choice, that is, assimilation will become violent.

44. The objective of cultural integration is to support national minorities in acquiring and preserving their mother tongue and culture in Estonia, to favour civil activity and contacts between people of different citizenships and cultural backgrounds, and also to promote a common cultural and information space and introduce the cultural diversity of Estonian residents to Estonians and the Estonian culture to national minorities living in Estonia. The right of every person to their native language and culture is acknowledged. In the field of culture, support is provided to activities that favour the work of cultural societies of national minorities, the involvement of representatives of different nationalities in Estonian cultural

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http://dspace.ut.ee/bitstream/handle/10062/40681/Keel_muukeelnelaps.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

life, and the introduction of Estonian cultural spaces. In the field of culture, priority is given to tightening contacts between Estonians and other nationalities and supporting joint activities.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The multicultural environment is a myth, since there are actually two linguistic communities in Estonia: Estonian-speaking (68%) and Russian-speaking (31%). Only 1.5% of the population have a different native language. Nevertheless, the Estonian authorities use the myth of multiculturalism to oppress the Russian-speaking population. So, for example, the head doctor of the hospital, in response to a complaint about the refusal to serve a patient in Russian in a Russian-speaking city, reports that Estonia is a country of a hundred nations and a doctor is not required to know a hundred languages.

The assertion that the objective of cultural integration is to support national minorities in acquiring and preserving their mother tongue sounds like a mockery. The Integration Center does not organize courses in the Kazakh language or other “hundred nations”. The objective of cultural integration in Estonia is the assimilation of national minorities. Support for fake national minorities is aimed at additional discrimination of the Russian national minority, which is 25%. So in the oldest association of national minorities in Estonia, the Association of the Peoples of Estonia, there is no Russian national minority⁴¹. When signatures were collected for the Minority Safepack in 2017, the only organization of national minorities that was involved in this was the NGO Russian School of Estonia. The semi-fake organizations of semi-fake national minorities fed by the government did not do this, as they support the government's actions aimed at assimilating national minorities. If the government needs support in actions aimed at squeezing the Russian language out of all spheres of life, then it can always enlist the support of these fake associations.

Also, the Plan for the Elimination of Education in Russian can hardly be called the right of every person to their native language and culture is acknowledged.

45. Social and economic integration aims to ensure that all residents of Estonia have equal opportunities for economic self-assertion and social success irrespective of their nationality, language or residence.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Russians are practically ousted from many important spheres of the Estonian economy. And so far, for example, in a very important financial sphere for the economy (in banks, in organizations such as Enterprise Estonia and KredEx), there are practically no Russians in leadership positions, and the Estonian elite mainly distributes European money among their own people. It

⁴¹ <https://rahvused.ee/rahvused/>

is much more difficult for a Russian entrepreneur in Estonia to obtain a loan than for an Estonian. As a result, inequality in Estonia is growing, the Gini index is increasing, this is noted by all studies. The Estonian clans have taken over all the important industries in the country. Research data show that almost 50% of all property and finances in Estonia belong to a small group of "elite"⁴².

46. Legal and political integration measures guarantee by law that all Estonian residents have equal opportunities for self-assertion in social and political life irrespective of their nationality or language. Efforts are made to increase mutual tolerance between ethnic and cultural groups, to form common state identity and to promote the naturalisation process.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Estonian laws are aimed at restricting the rights of national minorities and the dominating position of the national majority. So in a country where a third of the population speaks Russian, there is no official status of the Russian language both at the state and local levels. Official communication with all branches of government is possible only in Estonian. Even in those regions where the number of Russian speakers approaches 100%. Half of the Russian population is deprived of the right to vote, since they are not Estonian citizens. At the same time, we are not talking about new migrants, but about those who have not been living in Estonia in the first generation. Excessive language requirements are aimed at limiting the ability to work in both the public and private spheres. These obstacles are artificially created in order to lower the competitiveness of the Russian population, marginalize it, and create Estonia for Estonians. The latter has already practically succeeded. We are not talking about tolerance either. Politicians who indulge in Russophobic statements are either already on the political Olympus, or later make dizzying careers in politics.

51. During the implementation of the 2013–2018 Integration Plan the following positive developments took place: 1) Estonian language proficiency in basic school and upper secondary school improved and the number of children speaking a language other than Estonian grew in Estonian language nursery schools; 2) more contacts between Estonians and people of other nationalities; 3) the number of persons with undetermined citizenship decreased; 4) increased trust in the state of Estonia by residents whose native tongue is other than Estonian; 5) Estonians were more willing to involve people of other nationalities in their decision-making processes and consider their opinions; 6) residents of other nationalities started reading Estonian publications more and their trust in Estonian

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b4%d1%80-%d0%ba%d0%be%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%be%d0%b2-%d0%bd%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%bc-%d0%b2-%d1%84%d0%b8%d0%bd%d0%b0/>

publications grew, especially among young people; 7) young people of different nationalities who graduated from vocational schools had equal opportunities to continue their studies or take up employment; 8) the results of lower level language exams improved significantly and Estonian language proficiency in communication among the non-native speaking population improved.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

In Art. 2 of the Convention states that the states parties are obliged to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, as well as to take the necessary measures to protect and develop national groups. The government in paragraph 51 of the Report boasts of its successes in the violent and semi-violent assimilation of national minorities. In Estonia, the fight against racial discrimination takes place through the assimilation of the discriminated minority. If the national minorities living in Estonia abandon their culture and become Estonians, they will accordingly be subject to less discrimination as non-Estonians. This approach is fundamentally contrary to that enshrined in Art. 2 of the Convention, the principle according to which it is the **preservation** and **development** of ethnic groups that is important.

57. The Estonian 2008–2013 Integration Plan is responsible for closer relationships between Estonians and people of other nationalities. The number of non-Estonians living in Estonia— mostly Russians—who had no contact with other nationalities was cut in half.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

In Estonia, integration is perceived exclusively as assimilation. Moreover, it was involuntary. In the described plans, we are talking, first of all, about acculturation and accommodation. At the same time, socio-economic integration, which is real integration, is not given due attention. On the contrary, all kinds of obstacles are created for successful self-realization. Even proficiency in Estonian does not help. According to sociological studies, Russians who know the Estonian language successfully compete with Russians who speak it poorly, but cannot compete with Estonians. Thus, we are talking not only about mass discrimination on the basis of language, but also on ethnic grounds. The so-called “glass ceiling” has been created. As a result, only 3% of officials are non-Estonians, moreover, as a rule, they are either people from mixed families or people who are married to Estonians.

There is a high degree of Russophobia and xenophobia in the Estonian environment. In the plans for integration, it is necessary to increase not the contacts of Russians with Estonians, but Estonians with Russians. Among Russians, 50% have contacts with Estonians, while among Estonians only 10% have contacts with Russians. At the same time, the fight against discrimination in Estonia takes place in a specific way. In Tallinn, they hang up posters of a Russian who has managed to become the Vice-Chancellor of the finance ministry, and sign

them - he managed to break the glass ceiling and you will succeed too. That is, the problem of discrimination against Russians is allegedly their lack of motivation. At the same time, no work is carried out with discriminators. They are ideal from the point of view of the organizers of anti-discrimination campaigns, who are also Estonians.

It is also worth noting that it is not new migrants who are “integrated” in Estonia, but people who have been living in Estonia for several generations, which in itself is absurd. A person who has successfully worked for many years in a high or middle position is fired for allegedly insufficient knowledge of the Estonian language, which he may not need at all for work, and then they begin to “integrate” him, “integrate” a person who has found himself on the sidelines life due to repressive language policies.

58. Social and economic integration objectives were not achieved or were achieved only in part. An exception was the objective relating to the number of participants in language courses, which have been due to there being more language study programmes than planned. The achievement of objectives was also hindered by the 2008-2010 economic crisis, which mostly hurt the industry and construction sectors. The crisis greatly affected Ida-Viru County, where a large part of the population consists of Russian speakers, but the post-crisis unemployment rate fell quicker among people of other nationalities.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Regardless of the crises, the Russian regions in Estonia are purposefully and methodically underfunded. As a result, the poorest local governments in Estonia with a predominantly Russian population. The poorest local governments are the cities of Ida-Viru County: Narva, Kohtla-Järve, Sillamäe. Maardu, located near Tallinn, is also among the poorest five⁴³. All these are local governments with a predominantly Russian population.

59. This was characterised by a slow but steady naturalisation process. From 2008 to 2013 the percentage of people who were granted Estonian citizenship grew from 49% to 51%. The integration programme involved local governments participating in integration activities: state and local government officials received training and there was improvement in the availability of information and public services to non-native speakers.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Contrary to the Committee's recommendation in paragraph 11 “e” Concluding observations on the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of Estonia consider ratifying the Convention

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<https://severnojepoberezhje.postimees.ee/6523124/narva-kohtla-yarve-i-sillamyae-samye-bednye-samou-pravleniya-estonii>

relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, this was never done. As a result, people born in Estonia are still not eligible for citizenship of their country of residence. The naturalization requirements are clearly overstated and humiliating. As before, half of the Russians living in the country do not have Estonian citizenship and are deprived of their political and civil rights.

61. There were no significant differences in the participation in civic associations and the public sphere by native and non-native Estonian speakers; perception of unequal treatment decreased. The Integration Plan objective concerning political involvement among persons with undetermined citizenship and citizens of other countries was achieved.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Persons who do not have Estonian citizenship cannot be party members. They also cannot be officials, both state and municipal. They have no opportunity to participate in the political life of the country. Therefore, it is not clear what their participation is written in the Government Report. It is also extremely difficult for non-Estonians to participate in civic associations, as their projects are rarely supported by Estonian foundations. This is a well-known problem in Estonia, which is deliberately not solved in order to create additional preferences for the representatives of the national majority. There is also not a single party left in Estonia whose program would include the protection of national minorities. The number of non-Estonians among parliament members is extremely low, and their participation in the country's politics is akin to the participation of KAPO in helping the administration of Nazi concentration camps. They do not defend the rights of national minorities, but serve the ethnic majority by working off their official salaries.

65. The development plan is executed through implementation plans, which detail the activities required to achieve the strategic objectives. The Ministry of Culture, which is responsible for coordinating this area, reports annually to the Government of the Republic on the execution of the implementation plans. The strategic management of the Integration Plan involves collegial bodies—the steering committee and steering group of the Integration Plan, are comprised of representatives of local government representative organisations, and civic associations, the latter of which includes advisory bodies of national minorities.

66. The development plan was created after surveys, discussion seminars and involvement meetings, which thousands of people in Estonia attended. The development plan furthers integration policy by focusing on bilateral integration and development of international contacts.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The Ministry of Culture is recruiting representatives of semi-fake ethnic minority associations from the GONGO to develop the Integration Plan. They are only needed to approve any government plans to assimilate national minorities. As mentioned above, the only association of

national minorities that collected signatures under the Minority SafePack in 2017 was the NGO Russian School of Estonia. It is obvious that an association of national minorities, which is not interested in protecting the rights of national minorities, is not such and pursues purely mercantile goals of using grants received from the government.

81. There is no genocide, apartheid or racial segregation in Estonia. Estonia deems it important to combat the most serious international crimes not only nationally but internationally, and is interested in international cooperation.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The existing political regime in Estonia has signs of apartheid. Half of the Russian population does not have Estonian citizenship and, as a result, is deprived of its civil and political rights. Without Estonian citizenship, the Russian population of Estonia, as a rule, living in the country for more than the first generation, cannot be a deputy and an official, both at the municipal and state levels, cannot be a party member, etc. Even those with Estonian citizenship, due to structural discrimination, cannot occupy high positions in both the public and private spheres.

85. The International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January has been commemorated in Estonia since 2003. It was declared a worldwide remembrance day by UN General Assembly Resolution 60/7 of 1 November 2005, and it was first commemorated in 2006. To commemorate the international Holocaust day, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Jewish Community in Estonia traditionally organise a commemoration ceremony at the Rahumäe Jewish cemetery in Tallinn, attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education and Research and the Jewish Community. In 2018 Riigikogu hosted a Holocaust remembrance day event in cooperation with the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory and the Ministry of Education and Research, which aimed to give primarily teachers, but also the wider public, a better idea of Jewish culture and those continuing it, and to recall from the historical perspective the origin of hatred of Jews.

86. On 5 September each year the Jewish Community in Estonia together with foreign embassies honour the victims of the Holocaust by the memorial for the victims of Nazism at Kalevi-Liiva. During World War II thousands of Jews and Roma were executed at Kalevi-Liiva in Jõelähtme Rural Municipality in Harju County. The event is also attended by representatives from state and local authorities and public organisations.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The government forgot to mention that during World War II Estonia was the first country to declare Judenfrei. Moreover, the crimes of Nazism on the territory of Estonia were done by the hands of Estonian collaborators. So the concentration camp guards consisted of Estonians. Instead of repentance and contrary to the UN Resolution against the glorification of Nazism, the Estonian authorities proclaim Nazi collaborators as national heroes and freedom fighters. For

more than 20 years, every year in the village of Sinimäe, a gathering of veterans of the 20th SS Division has been held⁴⁴. The event is funded from the state budget. It is often attended by politicians and officials.

At the same time, on the day of the liberation of Tallinn from the Nazi invaders, declared a day of mourning⁴⁵ (Public Holidays and Days of National Importance Act art 3 par 4-3⁴⁶).

Also, on Victory Day, which is important for every Russian living in Estonia, the country's authorities consider it a day of mourning, those who celebrate it with hostile elements. The organizers of the Immortal Regiment are being persecuted. Cases are brought against them⁴⁷, they are fired from their jobs.

89. The Chancellor of Justice's role includes verification of compliance of legal instruments with the Constitution and laws, and supervision over the activities of representatives of public authority. The Chancellor protects people from arbitrary actions of public authority and officials and makes sure that the actions of authorities performing public law functions do not violate people's rights or freedoms arising from the Constitution. Another function of the Chancellor is to arrange for conciliation proceedings in discrimination disputes between persons governed by private law, and to promote the principles of equality and equal treatment. Each year the Chancellor reports to the Riigikogu.

Summary of complaints to the Chancellor due to discrimination 2014-2018

Discrimination grounds	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
Nationality and ethnicity	2	1	3
Race	1	1	0
Language	4	1	2
Religion or views	2	4	2
Sexual orientation	3	2	3
Age	3	2	6
Gender	2	2	3
Disability	1	1	1

⁴⁴ https://baltnews.ee/tallinn_news/20180730/1016833236.html

⁴⁵ <https://regnum.ru/news/1327926.html>

⁴⁶ <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530112020001/consolide>

⁴⁷ http://www.prosvet.ee/ArtNews.aspx?news_id=13411

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

As you can see from the statistics, the Chancellor of Law is an extremely unfortunate advocate against discrimination. To this it should be added that not a single complaint was satisfied. A conciliation procedure in case of discrimination enables the discriminator to refuse to participate in it. And so far there has not been a single case when the discriminator did not use this right. Thus, the conciliation procedure in discriminatory disputes is dead, inoperative.

115. Parliamentary elections were held on 3 March 2019. Electronic voting on the Internet has grown more and more popular over the years, and it has won the complete trust of voters. The first e-voting occurred at the local elections of 2005. Voters have had the chance to cast their votes electronically on 10 occasions: at the local elections of 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2017; at the parliamentary elections of 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019; and at the European Parliament elections of 2009 and 2014.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Electronic voting raises many doubts and questions. For ordinary voting, there are strict rules, such as, for example, a person must be alone in the voting booth, there must be curtains on the booth, etc. In the case of electronic voting, we do not know whether a person votes himself, or his relative, or he does it under pressure from someone, for example, an employer, or he simply sold his vote and votes in the presence of the buyer. There are also certain doubts that electronic elections can be falsified by the election commission⁴⁸.

117. At the 2019 parliamentary elections 28 women were elected out of 101 members of the Riigikogu, which is the highest number so far.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

It is wonderful that there are 28 women among the deputies of parliament. Moreover, at the moment three main positions in the state (president, prime minister, chancellor of law) are held by women. But this is a report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. And here Estonia has nothing to brag about. There are only 12 non-Estonians among the members of parliament. Despite the fact that even among Estonian citizens there are 20% non-Estonians, not to mention the fact that non-Estonians make up 31% of the entire population of Estonia. It is also worth noting that these non-Estonians are members of the Estonian parties, in the programs of which there are no provisions on the protection of the rights of national minorities, but in the program of each parliamentary party there is a clause on the liquidation of Russian schools, the only difference is in terms.

⁴⁸ <https://rus.err.ee/617819/ekre-trebuuet-otmenit-je-golosovanie-na-vyborah>

119. Estonia has consistently taken various legal and broader integration policy steps to reduce the proportion of persons with undetermined citizenship and promote their applications for Estonian citizenship. The procedure for applying for citizenship has been simplified on a number of occasions considering, above all, the interests of the most vulnerable groups, such as minors, the elderly and disabled people. Through the years the issues of citizenship and the groups concerned have also been major points of focus in national integration plans.

120. The Committee's recommendation has been carried out, and Estonia has gone through a major development in reducing the number of persons with undetermined citizenship from 32% in 1992 to 5% in 2018. Since Estonia regained its independence, more than 160,000 people have been given Estonian citizenship or had it restored.

121. According to the Population Register, in 2018 the Estonian population was divided by citizenship as follows: 84.4% Estonians, 6.5% Russians, 3.4% citizens of other countries and 5.7% persons with undetermined citizenship. The number of persons with undetermined citizenship has decreased primarily by gaining Estonian citizenship, but there are also other factors contributing to the decrease, such as by persons gaining citizenship of other countries or dying. According to the Population Register, on 1 May 2018 there were 76,566 people either with undetermined citizenship and a valid residence permit or with a valid right of residence or residence permit whose registered place of residence was in Estonia.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre "Kitezh":

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in paragraph 11 (e) Concluding observations on the combined tenth and eleventh periodic reports of Estonia recommended consider ratifying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. This recommendation has not been implemented. The fact that 16% of Estonian residents still do not have citizenship of their country of residence is a very serious problem. It is worth emphasizing here that we are not talking about new migrants, but about people who have been living in Estonia for several generations. The number of new migrants is insignificant. The fact that in almost 30 years only 160 thousand people have received Estonian citizenship is also quite typical. As before, more than half of the national minorities living in Estonia are deprived of their rights. They do not even have legal ways to fight for their rights, since they cannot be members of parties, deputies, both local and state levels, and also cannot be officials.

128. There are more and more options for learning Estonian for free. The Integration Foundation offers personal counselling for persons with undetermined citizenship concerning employment, education, social services, legal aid, social welfare, health care,

state benefits, language studies, adjustment courses and possibilities for applying for citizenship. There is also a free helpline at 800-9999.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Free courses are extremely difficult to take advantage of. The number of seats does not match the demand and even those who manage to get on them have a lot of problems⁴⁹.

131. Persons with undetermined citizenship are ensured social and economic rights equal to those of Estonian citizens. In general, undetermined citizenship does not limit the possibilities of people in the labour market, but Estonian citizenship is required for some public administration positions and higher positions in the labour market hierarchy. The existing integration services have been adjusted to suit beneficiaries of international protection who have arrived in Estonia in the context of resettling and relocating beneficiaries of international protection under the EU Agenda on Migration. The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research offer adjustment programmes and primary services to beneficiaries of international protection in their areas of responsibility.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Non-citizens (as well as citizens of non-EU countries) have restrictions on holding a number of positions. In particular, a non-citizen has no right to be:

- an official, both state and municipal,
- a member of a political party,
- a notary,
- bailiff,
- sworn translator,
- patent attorney,
- the captain of the port,
- the captain of an Estonian ship,
- the operator of the shipping control center,
- a person whose work duties are related to aviation security,
- an entrepreneur - an individual who provides security services, the head of security or the head of the internal security service.

In addition, stateless persons (and citizens of non-EU states) do not have the right to:

- vote in elections to the Estonian parliament,

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<https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/88825493/vzglyad-iznutri-hto-na-samom-dele-proishodit-na-besplatnyh-kursah-estonskogo-yazyka>

- be a member of both the Estonian Parliament and the rural municipality (city) councils,
- be considered a national minority and enjoy the rights arising from this status,
- to participate in the work of the bodies of national cultural autonomy,
- to acquire real estate in border areas⁵⁰.

132. **The Committee made recommendations in paragraph 9 of its concluding observations for addressing the issue of minorities' need for self-identification by facilitating, inter alia, the use of patronyms through appropriate administrative measures.** The Government notes the Committee's recommendation and explains below the regulatory framework for patronyms applicable in Estonia and the options for using patronyms.

133. From the historical perspective, patronyms have not been used as part of personal names in Estonia and it is not an official part of a person's name. Surnames are used in Estonia. The use of names is governed by the Names Act, according to § 3 (1) of which a personal name consists of a given name and a surname. The Act provides for the principles and procedure for the assignment and application of names of natural persons (their personal names) and the bases for the uniform use of personal names of Estonian citizens and aliens residing in Estonia.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre "Kitezh":

The middle name has been used in Estonia since ancient times. So the name of the Estonian epic "Kalevipoeg" literally translates into Russian as Kalevich (son of Kalev)⁵¹. The name of the hero is not mentioned. Patronymic only. Middle names were used in Estonia during tsarist times (until 1917). They were also used in the first Republic of Estonia (1918-1940). As evidenced by archival documents, the middle name (isanimi) was used in identity documents⁵², in membership cards, in questionnaires of state institutions⁵³ etc. In Estonia, it was abolished only in the 1990s. And if for modern Estonians the patronymic has lost its significance, for Russians it is an important part of the full name.

134. Regardless, no one is prevented from using a patronym if they so wish. The use of patronyms in private relationships is in no way governed or restricted by law. Persons may also use their patronyms in communication with authorities and local government agencies and when contacting them with various applications and letters that are answered pursuant to general procedure. Moreover, a person may apply to the authorities for use of their patronym in official documents as part of their name, i.e. their additional name. Lack of legal

⁵⁰ <https://www.mke.ee/mnenie/negry-v-estonii-kak-reshit-vopros-bezgrazhdanstva>

⁵¹ <https://erb.nlib.ee/?kid=18004908>

⁵² https://et.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fail:Eesti_Vabariigi_isikutunnistus_1920.jpg

⁵³ https://www.riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/naitused/august_rei_125.pdf

recognition of patronyms does not prevent the use of patronyms, and it does not interfere with individual rights guaranteed by the Convention.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Taking this opportunity, we express our deep gratitude to the Government for the fact that it allows the Slavic population of Estonia to use the patronymic in everyday life, and even has not yet introduced criminal liability for its use. The very assumption about the prohibition of patronymics in everyday life and in the use of it in official correspondence that has no legal significance suggests that the government proposes to be glad that there is still no totalitarian dictatorship in Estonia that controls even the utterances among loved ones. I would also like to recall that the Committee recommended recognizing patronymics in the public sphere, in particular in documents issued by the state, and not in everyday life, and the fact is that the government did not comply with these recommendations.

140. Lõppjäreluste punktis 10 palutakse esitada täiendavat infot keeleoskusest tingitud tööhõivemäära ja palgalõhe vähendamisega seonduvatest meetmetest.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

In 2020, the employment rate was 66.7%, the unemployment rate was 6.8%. In total, there were 47,900 unemployed in Estonia, which is 16,600 more than a year earlier. The unemployment rate among Estonians was 5.8% and among Russians - 9.4%. There were 25,300 men and 22,600 women unemployed. The highest unemployment rate among the working-age population is in North-East Estonia, especially in Ida-Viru County. The majority of the population of this region is Russian. The government helps, first of all, those regions where the majority of the Estonian population lives. Thus, the policy of discrimination in the labor sphere has not undergone significant changes.⁵⁴ Also, there is not a single non-Estonian among the 50 most paid officials⁵⁵.

188. Estonia has 628 nursery schools: 516 Estonian, 106 Russian and 6 English language based. 4.9% of nursery school children participate in the language immersion programme; 78.2% of children are in groups with Estonian as the language of instruction and 17% with Russian (data from academic year 2017/18 in the Estonian Education Information System).

Table: Children in pre-school child care institutions by language of instruction in academic year 2017/18 (source: database Haridussilm)

⁵⁴ <https://rus.err.ee/1608109531/za-poslednij-god-v-jestonii-stalo-na-16-600-bezrabortnyh-bolshe>

⁵⁵

<https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/93295913/top-50-direktor-transportnogo-departamenta-daleko-vpered-i-vseh-kto-i-z-goschinovnikov-imeet-samye-vysokie-zarplaty>

Language of instruction	Number of students
Estonian	52,345
Estonian (language immersion)	3,214
English	89
Russian	11,247
Total	66,895

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

On July 9, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science developed the Program for the Development of the Estonian Language for 2021-2035, which provides for the complete elimination of education in Russian, starting with kindergartens⁵⁶. In the absence of Russian kindergartens, the choice will disappear and parents will be forced to send their children to Estonian kindergartens. Placing Russian children in Estonian kindergartens often produces very poor results. At best, they are assimilated. At worst, they become mentally retarded. While there is an opportunity to transfer such children to Russian kindergartens, which they can finish at least with a lag, but if there are no Russian kindergartens, then normal children will be turned into children with special needs with speech disorders and speech therapy problems. Here we can already talk about signs of genocide in the form of forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Art II (e) of Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide).

192. The legislation governing basic education has not changed compared to the previous reporting period.

Table: Full-time students in academic year 2017/18 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	Number of students
Estonian	95,876
Estonian (language immersion)	7,099
English	520

⁵⁶ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/eesti_keelee_arengukava_2021_2035_eelnou_9.07.2020.pdf

Finnish	66
Russian	22,188
Total	125,749

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

On July 9, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science developed the Program for the Development of the Estonian Language for 2021-2035, which provides for the complete elimination of education in Russian, including basic (9-year) schools.⁵⁷

Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid in almost every address to the people demands the elimination of Russian education⁵⁸. Her last speech on the Independence Day of Estonia on February 24, 2021 was no exception, in which she stated that sending Russian children to Estonian schools is not only the right of Russian parents, but also their obligation⁵⁹.

In the city of Keila, the only Russian primary (9-year) school was closed in 2019⁶⁰. Despite the fact that the number of students in this school is at the national average. 6 students are enough to maintain the same nine-year Estonian school in a small village⁶¹. The school (in which about 200 Russian children study) is closing as, according to the authorities, this will save money in the city budget, about 1,500 euros per month. The amount is ridiculous and will not cover the additional costs associated with the adaptation of Russian children (help of a psychologist, speech therapist, payment for transport for children who will be forced to study in another city). At the meeting of the city assembly, at which the decision was made to close the Russian school, the mayor of the city honestly said that the purpose of closing the Russian school is to create a single Estonian community in the city (this is included in the records of the meeting)⁶².

⁵⁷ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/eesti_keelee_arengukava_2021_2035_eelnou_9.07.2020.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://president.ee/ru/official-duties/speeches/14994-24-2019/index.html>

⁵⁹ <https://www.president.ee/ru/official-duties/speeches/16451-2021-02-24-16-28-05/index.html>

⁶⁰

<https://dokole.eu/%d0%bc%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b2-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b2-%d0%be-%d0%bb%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%b4%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d0%b8-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d1%81%d0%ba/>

⁶¹

<https://www.delfi.ee/news/paevauudised/eesti/delfi-graafik-vaata-millistes-koolides-on-koige-rohkem-ja-millistes-koige-vahem-opilasi?id=67018624>

⁶² <https://dokole.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29.10volikoguprotokoll.pdf>

On June 21, 2021, the Estonian Supreme Court rejected the appeal challenging the closure of the Russian school in Keila⁶³. Estonian judges believe that in this case, the rights were not violated, since national minorities in Estonia have no rights. Local government itself has the right to decide whether to leave the Russian school in the city or not, and its right to make such a decision is absolute and indisputable.

At the same time and according to the same scheme, an attack was launched on a Russian school in the city of Kallaste.⁶⁴ Descendants of Russian Old Believers who settled in Estonia more than three hundred years ago live in this city⁶⁵. As a result of the administrative reform that took place in 2017⁶⁶, aimed at enlarging the parishes, parishes of the descendants of the Old Believers were liquidated by merging them with the Estonian parishes. As a result, the new parishes became predominantly Estonian, and the descendants of the Russian Old Believers lost their self-government. As a result, the first thing Estonian parishes did was to liquidate the Russian schools located on their territory. Earlier, the gymnasium stage (grades 10-12) was taken away from the Russian school in Kallaste, and it became a basic school (9-year). Now, the parish authorities decided that the school had too large a building, and therefore the students of this school should be transferred to a small village school in the village of Kolkja.⁶⁷ The larger unit was combined with the smaller one. In Kallaste school it was taught in Russian. There are also Russian children in the village of Kolkja, but they study according to the so-called “immersion” program in Estonian. On July 1, 2021, the Russian school in Kallaste was closed⁶⁸.

In 2021, the same problem arose with a Russian school in the city of Kiviõli. Kiviõli is a city with a population of 5 thousand people, located in the North-East of Estonia (Ida-Virumaa county). The Kiviõli Russian School was founded in 1927. As in previous cases, first the gymnasium stage (grades 10-12) was taken away, making it the main (9-year) school. The population of the city is predominantly Russian. However, the share of the Estonian population is also large - up to 40%. As a result of the administrative reform already mentioned above, the city was merged with the surrounding Estonian villages, which was not necessary, since the population of the city

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<https://dokole.eu/%d0%b3%d0%be%d1%81%d1%81%d1%83%d0%b4-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b6%d0%b0%d0%bb-%d0%bb%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b2%d0%b8%d0%b4%d0%b0%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%8e-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b9/>

64 <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2019/12/01/v-estonii-opasayutsya-za-sudbu-eshchyo-odnoy-russkoy-shkoly>

65 <http://www.starover.ee/ru/>

66

<https://rus.delfi.ee/daily/virumaa/god-posle-administrativnoj-reformy-kak-ona-skazalas-na-narve-i-ee-sole-dyah?id=84297665>

67

<https://baltija.eu/2020/10/09/zhiteli-kallaste-uzhe-dva-goda-boryutsya-s-rukovodstvom-volosti-iz-za-budus-hhego-russkoj-shkoly/>

68

<https://dokole.eu/%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0-%D1%83-%D1%80%D1%83%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%85-%D0%B2-%D1%8D%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%BF/>

almost met the minimum requirements without it. However, as a result of the unification, the percentage of the Estonian population in the parish increased and, as a result, the interests of the Russian population were no longer taken into account. The authorities of the Lügänuuse parish decided to liquidate the Russian school. This caused a protest from teachers and parents.⁶⁹ Separately, it should be noted that the parish received its name not by the name of the Russian city with a population of 4.8 thousand, but by the name of the Estonian village of Lügänuuse with a population of 450 people.

In its report, the government did not cover the issue of the gymnasium level of education (grades 10-12). The gymnasiums have already been translated into Estonian. In addition, there has recently been a tendency to create state gymnasiums in the Russian cities of Ida-Viru County. Education there takes place 100% in Estonian, without taking into account the fact that Estonian is not the mother tongue for the majority of students.

An Estonian gymnasium with 100% teaching in Estonian was opened in 2019 in the predominantly Russian town of Kohtla-Järve⁷⁰. To fill it, three Russian city gymnasiums were previously closed. Due to the 100% teaching in Estonian and the Russophobia of the administration of the gymnasium, Russian students began to leave it en masse⁷¹.

Earlier in 2015, a state gymnasium was opened in Jõhvi. For this, the municipal gymnasium was also closed there. Teaching at this state gymnasium, at first, was conducted mainly in Estonian, in a 60/40 ratio. However, the government has plans to transfer it 100% into Estonian⁷².

195. In academic year 2017/18 there were 33 vocational educational institutions in Estonia, of which 26 were state, three municipal and four privately owned. Vocational education can also be acquired in six state institutions of professional higher education. The language of instruction in one vocational educational institution is Russian (3%); in 14 both Estonian and Russian (36%); in one Estonian, Russian and English; and in one Estonian, English and Latvian. There are 22 institutions with only Estonian as the language of instruction (56%).

Table: Share of students by the language of instruction in vocational education in academic year 2017/18 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	Number of students
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⁶⁹

<https://sputnik-meedia.ee/society/20210303/120400/Vozmuschaet-otnoshenie-russkij-direktor-shkola-refo-rma-estonski-Ida-Virumaa.html>

⁷⁰

<https://prospekt.ee/the-country-and-the-world/13436-ratas-i-reps-otkryli-gosgimnaziju-v-kohtla-jarve.html>

⁷¹

<https://dokole.eu/mstislav-rusakov-o-kohtla-yarveskoj-gosgimnazii-eshhe-para-let-i-tam-ostanutsya-odni-estoncy/>

⁷² <https://rus.err.ee/938457/majlis-reps-jyhviskaja-gimnazija-skoro-stanet-polnostju-jestonojazychnoj>

Estonian	19,102
English	6
Latvian	
Russian	5,035
Total	24,143

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

On July 9, 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science developed the Program for the Development of the Estonian Language for 2021-2035, which provides for the complete elimination of education in the Russian language, including vocational schools⁷³.

199. In Estonia it is possible to acquire higher education in Estonian, Russian or English in 20 educational institutions. The language of instruction is mostly Estonian; in academic year 2016/17, 86% of first and second level students studied in Estonian, 12% in English and 2% in Russian.

Table: Share of first and second level students by languages of instruction in academic years 2012/13–2017/18 (source: database Haridussilm)

Language of instruction	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Estonian	92%	92%	90%	89%	87%	86%
English	4%	6%	7%	9%	11%	12%
Russian	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

As you can see, teaching in Russian was halved and remained at the level of statistical error. Moreover, it is carried out by private universities and at the first level.

⁷³ https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/eesti_keelee_arengukava_2021_2035_eelnou_9.07.2020.pdf

203. In 2015 an additional young people’s hobby support system was developed, intended for additional support from the state to encourage young people aged 7–19 to take up hobbies and provide them with versatile, regular, guided and creative hobby education. In 2017 the Youth Work Act, the Private Schools Act and the Hobby Schools Act were amended to allocate funding from the state budget in addition to local governments’ contributions to hobby education aimed at young people. Additional funds allocated to rural municipalities and cities are based on elements such as the number of young people, the number of young disabled people, the number of young people aged 7–19 living in families who have difficulties in coping, the financial capacity of the relevant local government, and the regional availability of hobby education. Local governments are supported to improve the availability and versatility of the hobby education of children and young people, and to increase participation by those from socio-economically weaker population groups.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Research decided to halve the allowance allocated to local governments for hobby activities: from the previous 14.25 million to 7.25 million⁷⁴.

207 cases of discrimination whereby certain groups are excluded arise in Estonia from prejudices, stereotypes, and society’s below-average awareness of the principle of equal treatment. Legal specialists’ inconsistent knowledge of the Equal Treatment Act and its interpretive possibilities may cause problems in providing legal aid and making decisions. LICHR also brought attention to limited knowledge about the Equal Treatment Act among the population.

217. The court awarded damages to a well-known actress who filed an action against anonymous online commentators who had insulted her and whose comments included incorrect and inappropriate value judgements about her. (Supreme Court judgment of 6 June 2018, case No. 2-16-14655). The judgment showed that persons who post anonymous insults online are not protected against judicial proceedings, their identities can be established and they can be required to pay damages. People who offend others’ honour and dignity online must consider that victims are subject to judicial protection even from anonymous posts, and the offenders are at risk of facing pecuniary claims or having their identities disclosed. Victims may also demand, for instance, that offenders apologise and/or retract their words under their real names.

74

<https://rus.postimees.ee/7235327/gosudarstvo-pokushaetsya-na-finansirovanie-detskih-kruzhkov-po-interesam>

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The above case has nothing to do with the Convention, as it is about an Estonian actress who was insulted as a woman. Moreover, this case is isolated. Protection against online abuse, especially from anonymous commentators, is highly ineffective. On the most visited portal <https://www.delfi.ee/>, insults in the comments to articles are on stream. And some of them are on ethnic grounds. This is done deliberately to increase traffic. The editorial board practically does not react to complaints. It has become common to comment on behalf of other people. This is done systematically, over the years. The editorial board does not respond to complaints, although it would be possible at least to block a commentator who is appropriating someone else's identity. Perhaps this is done with the assistance or encouragement of the special services to defame the activists of the Russian community.

In addition to anonymous commentators, a website has been created, <https://www.propastop.org/>, which specializes in defaming the activists of the Russian community. The site is hosted by members of the state-funded Defense League. The authors are anonymous.

Every year, a report by the Security Police is published, in which, in the section “protection of the constitutional order,” representatives of the Russian community are harassed who are trying to defend the rights of national minorities. So in the last report, the desire to preserve Russian schools is called the Kremlin's desire to maintain segregated bilingual education in Estonia in order to divide society has not disappeared (p. 7)⁷⁵. It turns out that our organization, the NGO Russian School of Estonia, realizes the interests of the Kremlin. And “for promoting the interests of the Kremlin” in Estonia have already begun to go to jail, as happened with the Russian ombudsman Sergei Seredenko⁷⁶. 4 days after the Security Police Report, an article appeared in the Estonian-language newspaper Eesti Ekspress⁷⁷ with translation in Russian Delphi⁷⁸. The article says, among other things: To spread lies about the coronavirus, even separate portals were created, which did not exist before. For example, ***the head of the Russian School of Estonia, who lobbies for pro-Kremlin sentiments, and an activist of the Left Party, Mstislav Rusakov, created the portal “Dokole?”*** That is, the NGO “Russian School of Estonia” is not a union of parents who are fighting to preserve Russian schools, but a pro-Kremlin

⁷⁵ https://www.kapo.ee/sites/default/files/public/content_page/Annual%20Review%202020-2021.pdf

⁷⁶

<https://dokole.eu/%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b0%d0%bd-%d0%b8%d0%b7%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%bd%d1%8b%d0%b9-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%be%d0%b7%d0%b0%d1%89%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b8%d0%ba-%d1%81/>

⁷⁷

<https://ekspress.delfi.ee/artikkel/93143547/provokatsioonide-rada-turvamehed-ohkavad-see-oli-juba-teine-kord-kui-sama-punt-kais-viru-keskuses-neilt-ketukat-anumas>

⁷⁸

<https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/93156651/mestnye-russkie-propagandisty-vystroili-v-estonii-celuyu-infrastrukturu-dlya-usileniya-protiv-koronavirusnyh-ogranicheniy?fbclid>

organization hostile to Estonia. A rebuttal has been filed against lies and defamation⁷⁹, but it was ignored. Having no other formal opportunity for criminal or administrative prosecution, Mstislav Rusakova immediately after the report of the Security Police fell into the sphere of interest of the tax services, which began his tax audit.

In the same report of the Security Police, the celebration by Russian schoolchildren of the Victory Day over Nazism is called activity hostile to Estonia (pp. 7-8)⁸⁰. This is at odds with the state ideology, which proposes to consider the Estonians who fought on the side of Germany in the 20th SS Division as heroes.

221. Prisoners have the option to file with the authorities complaints concerning various aspects of their imprisonment: conditions of detention, inadequate medical care, not being allowed to smoke, actions of prison officials, limited access to the Internet, etc.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Human rights activist Sergei Seredenko has been in Tallinn Prison for the fifth month without presenting suspicions and his term of detention has been extended until September 3, 2021⁸¹. All this time he is in complete isolation from society. He is not allowed to meet with his family and correspondence is prohibited.

232. In the fall of 2015 Estonian Public Broadcasting launched a Russian-language television channel, ETV+. There are also private Russian-language channels in Estonia. The most popular Russian-language radio channels are Russian Radio and Radio 4 a public channel.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

ETV + was created to distribute state propaganda among the Russian population. It silences existing problems or levels them out. It is trying to show that Estonia is a country in which the Russian population has a lot of opportunities for self-realization, there is no discrimination and the Russians need to quickly assimilate. A typical example here can be the case when the only Russian school in the city of Keila was closed. ETV + invited the mayor who closed the school

⁷⁹

<https://dokole.eu/%d0%bc%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%81%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b2-%d1%80%d1%83%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%ba%d0%be%d0%b2-%d0%be%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b2%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b3-%d1%80%d0%b0%d1%81%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d1%81%d1%82%d1%80/>

⁸⁰ https://www.kapo.ee/sites/default/files/public/content_page/Annual%20Review%202020-2021.pdf

⁸¹

<https://dokole.eu/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b8%d1%85%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d0%bf%d0%b8%d0%ba%d0%b5%d1%82-%d0%b2-%d0%bf%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b6%d0%ba%d1%83-%d1%81%d0%b5%d1%80%d0%b5%d0%b4%d0%b5/>

to the studio, but did not invite the parents, who protested against the closure. The mayor, who at the meeting of the city meeting motivated the closure of the Russian school with the aim of eliminating the Russian community, spoke on ETV + about what the right decision was and how good it would be for Russian children. Parents who believed that the closure of the Russian school was an assimilation and violation of the rights of children were not given the floor on this channel. It is also worth noting that this channel, despite state funding, has extremely low ratings and the share of the on-air audience is 1%⁸².

234. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2016, 17% of books, 157 periodical issues, 42 magazines and 36 newspapers were issued in minority languages, including one national daily newspaper in Russian. There are national online media portals in Russian: rus.err.ee, delfi.ru, dv.ee, veneportal.ee, rus.postimees.ee, mke.ee, vecherka.ee.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The daily newspaper in Russian ceased to appear just in the aforementioned 2016⁸³. Also, only mainstream portals are listed here. Moreover, vecherka.ee no longer exists, and veneportal.ee is at a marginal level (80 visitors per day)⁸⁴. At the same time, the government forgot to mention Sputnik-Estonia, which was closed on pain of criminal prosecution of journalists⁸⁵ and the portal of the Russian community www.baltija.eu.

235. Two Russian-language journals of literature and culture (Vyshgorod and Plug) publish the work of Russian and Estonian-Russian authors, and about 20 Russian-language commercial magazines are published in Estonia. The Ministry of Culture, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and the Council of Gambling Tax support the publishing of Russian-language culture magazines and the translation of the Estonian children's magazine “Täheke” (“Starlet”) into Russian.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

The magazine "Plug" ceased to be published in 2019⁸⁶.

251. The bankruptcy of the Krenholm Manufacturing Company in 2010 came as a shock for the residents of Narva because the company was an essential part of Narva's identity and an important employer in the region. The Krenholm Quarter, however, has major potential to

⁸²

<https://rus.err.ee/1608072832/v-dekabre-samym-populjarnym-telekanalom-byi-etv-nejestoncy-bolshe-vse-go-smotrel-i-rtr-planetu>

⁸³ <https://rus.postimees.ee/3854673/gazety-den-za-dnem-i-postimees-na-russkom-yazyke-zakryvayutsya>

⁸⁴ <https://pr-cy.ru/site-statistics/?domain=veneportal.ee>

⁸⁵ <https://dokole.eu/allan-hantsom-novyj-34-j-estonii-vnov-grozit-epoha-molchaniya/>

⁸⁶ <https://dokole.eu/elena-grigoreva-plug-2009-2019-kak-zakonchennyj-fenomen-mestechkovoju-kultury/>

become a centre of attraction. State investments and different public cultural events attempt to improve the city's living environment and make it attractive to younger people. From 2015-2018 a number of investments were made and new inclusive cultural projects were initiated in Ida-Viru County, including Narva. In 2015, working together with Narva Gate OÜ, the Estonian Academy of Arts Foundation started building a residential complex in the historic Krenholm Quarter. Narva Art Residency is a multifunctional residence/creative centre, cultural centre and educational institution, and a place where Estonian Academy of Arts students can complete their practical training. Narva Art Residency plays an important role in diversifying the region's cultural life and making it more international.

Comment by NGO Human Rights Defense Centre “Kitezh”:

Narva is the poorest local government in Estonia⁸⁷. It is obvious that the Russian regions are deliberately underfunded. The above “investments” are so insignificant that they did not affect this situation in any way. And they are clearly ostentatious. Information noise is created, but nothing changes in essence.

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<https://severnojepoberezhje.postimees.ee/6523124/narva-kohtla-yarve-i-sillamyae-samye-bednye-samou-pravleniya-estonii>