

Appeal to EP for support for Latvian non-citizens' voting rights

We - individuals and members of various citizen groups all across Europe have signed this appeal in order to inform about legal situation of Latvian non-citizens and ask for support for non-citizens' voting rights.

Non-citizens of Latvia are the unique category of EU residents possessing no citizenship of any country of the world and no rights to participate in any elections. One-fifth of Latvian residents have the non-citizens' status, 32% of them are local born persons. The majority of other non-citizens have been living in Latvia for more than 40 years. Latvian government ignores recommendations of authorized international organizations regarding acceleration of naturalization for this category of local residents. In spite of long-term affiliation with Latvia the non-citizens are called in the official documents to be "aliens" and they are not entitled to take part in municipal as well as in European elections. On the other hand the real foreigners - newcomers possessing citizenship of any EU country enjoy the right to participate in municipal and European elections in Latvia. Latvian non-citizens' number provides the two additional MEP positions for Latvia, but non-citizens cannot participate in framing the destiny of these positions.

We regard this fact to be the violation of the principle of democracy – fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in Article 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union. In conditions when the 99 % of non-citizens have non-Latvian ethnic origin the discrimination of this category of EU residents may be regarded as to a kind of racial discrimination prohibited by the Community law. We see the proceedings under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union might be initiated in this case.

We hereby ask the members of the European Parliament to **induce the Latvian authorities to allow non-citizens to take part in local and European elections**. We see the consideration of special EP report concerning the situation with Russian-speaking community and non-citizens of Latvia would promote the normalization for non-citizens' legal status. We see the securing legal equality for Latvian non-citizens with EU citizens in the field of voting rights could become the first logical step in solving the non-citizens' problem.

Date: _____

Name and Surname of the sender (Name, Surname and position if sent on behalf of organization): _____

(Please send back this file at the following address: tatjana.zdanoka-assistant2@europarl.europa.eu)
