



LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS
SAEIMA



■ Meeting of the Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee

Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee

The Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee (hereinafter—Committee) has been working with the current name since November 2014. Prior to that, from its establishment in 1994 to April 2012, it was called the Citizenship Law Implementation Committee, and from April 2012 to October 2014—the Social Cohesion Committee.

All the political parties elected to the 14th Saeima are represented in the Committee. Its Chair is Gunārs Kūtris (Union of Greens and Farmers parliamentary group), Deputy Chair is Anna Rancāne (THE NEW UNITY parliamentary group), and Secretary is Ingmārs Līdaka (“THE UNITED LIST—Latvian Green Party, Latvian Regional Alliance, Liepāja Party” parliamentary group).

The main tasks of the Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee include conducting parliamentary scrutiny of the implementation of a unified and coordinated state policy in the fields of social integration (social cohesion) and the diaspora, supervising the implementation of the Citizenship Law, and migration issues.

Within the scope of its competence, the Committee views *social cohesion* and *social integration* as relations among members of different ethnic groups or nationalities.

The Committee’s activity focuses on creating a social integration governance model and ensuring measures that promote social cohesion on a common basis



■ Gunārs Kūtris, Chair of the Committee

of all people living in Latvia notwithstanding their ethnicity and self-identification.

The common basis is the Latvian language, the feeling of belonging to the State of Latvia and its democratic values, respect for Latvia’s unique cultural space, development of a shared social memory, strengthening civic participation. A cohesive society is an essential and integral element of any state and society for it to function as a united system as it allows avoiding conflicts. Social cohesion is the emotional capacity of being united and proud of belonging to Latvia, the capacity of prioritising common universal and patriotic values over disputes among separate groups.

Objectives of the Committee

- To facilitate the formation of interethnic cohesion in the society, which would form a strong basis ►



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for the development and global competitiveness of Latvia as a nation state.

- To oversee the implementation quality of citizenship and migration policy, as well as the socio-economic integration of immigrants in Latvian society.
- To maintain ties with Latvians living abroad and facilitate their return.

Functions of the Committee

- To conduct parliamentary scrutiny over social cohesion development processes, resolving citizenship and

migration issues, as well as defining policy guidelines in these areas.

- To propose legislative initiatives based on the results and analysis of the actual social integration process, conclusions of studies, and ideas arising from dialogue between experts and the public at large.
- To promote dialogue among stakeholders in order to balance their interests with developing a cohesive society and nation state.
- To raise awareness among MPs and society about social cohesion.

While supervising the implementation of a unified and coordinated state policy in the field of social cohesion, the Committee monitors developments and works on legislative initiatives pertaining to the promotion of interethnic cohesion and improving the implementation and coordination of integration policy. The Committee gathers and analyses the information and results of studies carried out by relevant institutions and prepares and submits proposals aimed at streamlining social cohesion policy.

In order to ensure social cohesion, an important part of the Committee's work is strengthening ties with Latvian expatriates, improving policies concerning the diaspora, and supervising the implementation of measures to foster the diaspora's connection with Latvian culture and identity, economy and science, accessibility of the Latvian language, culture, and traditions to members of the diaspora, and to promote remigration.

The Committee conducts parliamentary scrutiny over the implementation of the Citizenship Law and monitors whether the procedures for acquisition and loss of citizenship comply with statutory provisions. The Committee considers matters related to granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to the world-renowned ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. The Committee has elaborated regulations to determine the procedure for considering submissions and independent motions on granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia, which are available on the website of the Committee: <http://saliedetiba.saeima.lv/en/>.

Latvia. In the field of migration, the Committee deals with the integration, social and economic inclusion of immigrants in Latvia, as well as the integration capacity of the state, namely, its ability to provide high-quality integration regardless of the number of immigrants. The Committee closely follows the implementation of the asylum policy, especially with regard to the socio-economic integration into Latvian society of refugees and persons with an alternative status.

The Committee examines and replies to submissions filed by private entities on matters within the scope of its competence. Since 2021, the Committee examines submissions by members of the national resistance movement and may prepare draft resolutions on granting the status of a member of this movement.

The Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee has its own website; it contains the agenda of the Committee, information on matters considered and decisions adopted during Committee meetings, as well as working documents.

The Committee cooperates with line ministries (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, etc.), the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, the Society Integration Foundation, and NGOs. ■



Interesting facts

The Citizenship Law and the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima require the Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee to consider submissions and independent motions on granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia. During the work of the Committee, citizenship has been granted to 184 individuals for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia. The largest number of people were granted Latvian citizenship prior to the 1998 amendments to the Citizenship Law (in 1995, citizenship was granted to 25 individuals, in 1996–to 30, in 1997–to 56, in 1998–to 62, and in 2000–to 1 individual). Since 1999, the Saeima has granted Latvian citizenship for special meritorious service to 30 individuals on the basis of special laws; these citizens include such distinguished individuals as conductor Mariss Jansons, stage director Mihails Gruzdovs, cyclist Pēteris Ugrjumovs, etc. On 27 April 2017, the Saeima granted Latvian citizenship for special meritorious service to the world-renowned ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. The Committee has elaborated regulations to determine the procedure for considering submissions and independent motions on granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia, which are available on the website of the Committee: <http://saliedetiba.saeima.lv/en/>.



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