



Annual Report 2024

2025

Contents

Contents.....	2
Year in figures	6
Discrimination	13
Prevention of violence against women	28
Right to a fair trial	30
Right to a fair trial in pre-trial proceedings.....	32
Enforcement of rulings	34
Right to liberty and security.....	36
Right to freedom of expression	38
Respect for private and family life	41
Right to property	43
Right to work.....	46
Right to social security.....	48
Right to housing	50
Right to health protection.....	52
Right to education	54
Right to culture	55
Right to enabling environment	56
Rights of children and youth	59
System for the protection of children rights	61
Child's right to safety	63
Child's right to identity	64
Child's access rights	66
Child's right not to be subject to violence	68
Child's right to health protection	70
Child's right to education	72
Child's right to family and social security	75
Child's property rights and maintenance.....	77
Rights of orphans and children without parental care	79
Rights of children with special needs	82
Rights of people with disabilities	84
Rights of prisoners.....	86

Rights of foreigners and the stateless, legal status of persons	88
Prevention of trafficking in human beings.....	90
Business and human rights	92
Good governance	94
National preventive mechanism	98
Financial resources and performance.....	102
Research	106
Personnel	107
Information and involvement of the public	108
Priorities for 2025.....	111
Ombudsman's recommendations and their implementation.....	112

Welcome, dear readers!

The year 2024 is over and I thank my team for their professional work, for their ability to find new ways to enhance and strengthen the security of our society, to help the people of Latvia.

Security is the main topic of 2024. It is a multifaceted and broadly perceived construct, encompassing the personal, societal and national security of each individual. At the same time, human rights and security are two interlinked concepts. Human rights must not be forgotten neither in security, nor in danger. And in the same way, we must think about security when striving for perfection in respect for human rights. This year we have worked hard to ensure that the information we disseminate is accessible to everyone, because security also means being informed.

In 2024, we stood up for the right to health for children and young people. A good night's sleep is a prerequisite for health and development, so parents and educational institutions should adapt their daily routines to the needs of children and adolescents. The key message is that children and adolescents need enough sleep and that society needs to raise awareness about the impact of sleep on children's development. Child's physical and mental health is a matter of safety for both the child and the society. This year we have seen that parents can put their child's health and life at risk by making the ill-considered decision not to vaccinate. Parents who choose not to vaccinate their children should be informed of the potential medical and legal consequences of their decision.

Last year, I raised the alarm that children and young people abusing addictive substances are not getting the help they need. Working preventively and repeatedly assessing the situation in Cēsis Juvenile Detention Centre, we called for improved access to mental health services for young people.

The argument "education is the foundation of everything" is popular, but in 2024 there have been several situations that suggest otherwise. In our view, denying social scholarship as a state safety cushion to young people studying abroad violates the principle of legal equality this, which is why we appealed to the Constitutional Court. We also found that there were shortcomings in the allocation of state-funded budget places at universities to young people who had volunteered for national defence service - several young people were refused a budget place. These situations were resolved after our involvement, but I hope that these precedents will be a lesson for other educational institutions.

One of the aspects of security is the confidence that the law is fair and correctly applied. Unfortunately, the imprecise wording of the Law on Immovable Property Tax has led to diverging practices among municipalities in applying increased real estate tax to buildings that have reached the end of their maximum construction period. In some municipalities, following our involvement, the practice has been changed, but in some cases the instructions have been ignored.

Continuing with the topic of finances, I would like to highlight one important step for safe access to financial services: in 2024 we developed practical recommendations for guardians, solicitors, courts,

Orphan and Custody Courts and credit institutions on the provision of banking services to people with reduced legal capacity.

The part of society that has become more active in various ways is advocating for the safety of the Latvian language. We identified the unjustified use of foreign languages in employment and participated in the drafting of amendments to the Labour Law, representing the idea that the legal framework is correct, but there are problems in its application. Also, in the context of national security, we need to be aware that unreasonable foreign language requirements weaken us as a nation and state.

Regarding the power and importance of language, I would like to highlight the discussion on aggressive behaviour on the internet and its impact on freedom of expression. Fearing of suffering from cyber-violence, people tend to refrain from expressing their opinions. This threatens both freedom of expression and the fundamental principles of democracy. Our aim is to reduce the sense of impunity for those who are hostile and bravura online.

Unfortunately, it is not only on the internet where people face violence. In our research, we found that the use of temporary protection against violence is increasing, which is a sign of public awareness. While the mechanism works, improvements are needed. Cooperation between the courts and the public authorities involved is essential, as is more public awareness of the mechanism.

In 2024, we continued carrying out preventive visits to prisons to identify problems and gain insight into the processes involved in the reform of the prison grading system, which came into force on 1 September 2024. The prison monitoring visits will continue in 2025, as will the study on the mechanism of temporary protection against violence.

I think that one of the current issues in the legal and security system is the effort to reconcile the use of artificial intelligence with respect for fundamental rights. With the adoption of the EU Artificial Intelligence Act in 2024, the Ombudsman's Office became one of the bodies monitoring this area.

I know clearly that it is not the law that empowers us, it is us - the people. Documents are only part of the results of people's work. Documents serve people, not people serve documents. It is also our choice and our maturity to see and acknowledge the shortcomings in law and practice, and to address the problems to enhance the quality of life, security and vitality of everyone, regardless of age, gender or social status. Safety is not a coincidence. Safety is a set of decisions and actions. I wish that together we can make the right decisions, take the right actions and ensure safe environment for everyone!

Yours sincerely

Ombudsman Juris Jansons

Year in figures

Number of submissions

Division / Unit	2022	2023	2024
Civil and Political Rights Division	804	676	823
Prevention Unit, Civil and Political Rights Division	1	2	0
Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Division	577	625	644
Children's Rights Division	238	405	420
Discrimination Prevention Division	0*	0*	49
Other staff	14	10	9
Total	1634	1718	1945

* Discrimination Prevention Division started work on 2 January 2024

Submission topics

Topic	2024 (n)	2024 (%)
Children's rights	421	15.12
Principle of good governance	370	13.29
Right to a fair trial	347	12.46
Right to health	168	6.03
Right to property	151	5.42
Right to education	141	5.06
Rights of prisoners	127	4.56
Prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment	115	4.13
Right to social security	112	4.02
Right to respect for private and family life	90	3.23
Right to a enabling environment	81	2.91

Topic	2024 (n)	2024 (%)
Legal status of a person	73	2.62
Discrimination	71	2.55
Right to housing	69	2.48
Right to work	58	2.08
Rights of people with disabilities	56	2.01
Right to liberty and security	36	1.29
Freedom of expression	8	0.29
Right to effective protection	7	0.25
Right to freely leave and return to the country	3	0.11
Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion	2	0.07
Freedom of association	2	0.07
Right to life	1	0.04
Right to move freely within the country	1	0.04
Freedom of assembly	1	0.04
Right to vote and stand for election	1	0.04
Eligibility for public service	1	0.04
Request for information	178	6.39
Other issues	64	2.30
Not subject to the Ombudsman's jurisdiction	19	0.68
Submissions with unclear content	10	0.36
Total	2784	100

Responses to submissions

Division / Unit	2023	2024
Civil and Political Rights Division	583	679
Prevention Unit of the Civil and Political Rights Division	6	0
Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Division	546	559
Children's Rights Division	354	364
Discrimination Prevention Division	0*	47
Total	1498	1649

* Discrimination Prevention Division started work on 2 January 2024

Verification procedures

Division / Unit	Initiated verification procedures	Completed or closed verification procedures
Civil and Political Rights Division	22	22
Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Division	29	26
Children's Rights Division	19	16
Discrimination Prevention Division	7	6
Total	77	70
- Of which initiated by the Ombudsman	8	0

Correspondence received in the context of verification procedures

Division / Unit	2023	2024
Civil and Political Rights Division	32	49
Prevention Unit of the Civil and Political Rights Division	0	0

Social, Economic and Cultural Rights Division	151	158
Children's Rights Division	31	78
Discrimination Prevention Division	0*	5
Total	214	290

* Discrimination Prevention Division started work on 2 January 2024

Implementation of Ombudsman's recommendations

	2022	2023	2024
Recommendations on the implementation of which information has been received	108	221	315
Number of recommendations implemented fully or partially	78	171	194
Number of recommendations not implemented or pending	30	50	121
Percentage of recommendations implemented fully or partially*	72.22 %	77.38 %	61.59 %
Recommendations for which there is no information or no deadline	65	81	132
Total number of recommendations made	173	302	447

* Only recommendations regarding which replies have been received from the responsible institutions are counted. These data are constantly evolving, table contains information at the time of preparation of the 2024 annual report.

Consultations

Consultations	2022	2023	2024
Email	967	1044	1182
By phone	1407	1412	1786
On site	52	70	63
Total	2426	2526	3031

Topics of legal consultations

Topic	2024 (n)	2024 (%)
Right to education	364	10.86
Right to a fair trial	352	10.50
Children's rights	254	7.58
Principle of good governance	202	6.02
Right to respect for private and family life	170	5.07
Right to social security	165	4.92
Right to housing	157	4.68
Prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment	131	3.91
Rights of people with disabilities	116	3.46
Discrimination	82	2.45
Right to property	67	2.00
Right to health protection	67	2.00
Right to work	63	1.88
Right to a enabling environment	46	1.37
Right to liberty and security	30	0.89
Legal status of a person	23	0.69

Topic	2024 (n)	2024 (%)
Freedom of expression	12	0.36
Right to life	3	0.09
Eligibility for public service	3	0.09
Rights or prisoners	3	0.09
Right to freely leave and return to country	2	0.06
Right to vote and stand for election	1	0.03
Right to effective protection	1	0.03
Request for information	741	22.10
Not subject to the Ombudsman's jurisdiction	148	4.41
Other issues	130	3.88
Unclear content	20	0.60
Total	3353	100

Ombudsman's opinions and conclusions

	2023	2024
Opinions to the Constitutional Court	10	13
Conclusions to state institutions on draft legislation	47	45

Awareness raising and participation in events

	2023	2024
Publications	8707	8918
News and press releases	127	146
Social media posts (X, Facebook)	374	393
Events, seminars, discussions organised by the Ombudsman	88	160
Lectures and number of pupils in the "Ready for Life" programme	36/806	45/1022
Participation in events and discussions organised by other institutions, lectures	393	413
Participation in working groups and commissions	142	149
Surveys of foreigners to be returned	5	17

Discrimination

The principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in the second sentence of Article 91 of the Constitution (Constitution (Satversme)) and international legal instruments. Discrimination is a legally impermissible different treatment, harassment, exclusion or restriction, as well as an instruction to discriminate based on the person's individual characteristics, such as gender, social origin, disability, age or other circumstances.

Characteristics of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 174 submissions from residents and 48 submissions from state institutions and international organisations, covering a total of 222 cases of discrimination. This figure is significantly higher than the number of submissions received in 2023 for breaches of the prohibition of discrimination¹, representing a corresponding **increase of 1009%**. Demand for the Ombudsman's involvement in non-discrimination issues has increased rapidly, and one of the reasons for this increase could be the public's increased interest in their rights and the available redress mechanisms.

In 2024, similar to previous reporting period, there were more submissions alleging violations of the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of disability and sex, but by far the highest number of submissions were alleging discrimination on grounds of language. In previous years, the language criterion was not found at all or was not one of the most popular discrimination criteria. The number of complaints alleging discrimination on the grounds of language was higher in the first half of the year, most frequently in May. The increase in the number of complaints could be indirectly linked to the political campaigns of certain parties ahead of the European Parliament elections in June 2024.

Thereafter, the number of reports of alleged discrimination decreased.

In the reporting year, as in the previous period, submissions about alleged discrimination in employment, public sector activities and access to goods and services in the private sector were more frequent.

Analysis of the three most popular discrimination criteria mentioned in the submissions shows that language and gender predominate in employment contexts, while disability predominates in public sector activities and access to goods and services in the private sector.

Complaints of language discrimination related more to alleged violations of the use of language in job advertisements and work environment, the right of employees to speak state official language, and the

¹ Previously, the Ombudsman collected information on various violations related to different treatment, such as violations of the principle of legal equality and the prohibition of discrimination, mobbing and bossing. Accordingly, in 2023, the number of applications related to differential treatment was 58, of which 22 concerned alleged violations of the prohibition of discrimination.

treatment of Ukrainian refugees. Submissions on gender-based discrimination usually relate to issues concerning pregnancy. In previous years, submissions were about alleged violations against a pregnant employee (before going on parental leave).

In 2024, submissions were about the possibility of obtaining health insurance during parental leave and returning to work after parental leave. It should also be noted that complaints from men about alleged discrimination on grounds of sex are on the increase. Submissions from persons with disabilities, on the other hand, relate to various accessibility violations. In particular, the scope of complaints concerns not only accessibility of the physical environment, but also of information and digital environment.

During this reporting period, as in the past, the Ombudsman did not find violations of the prohibition of discrimination in all cases. It can be concluded that discrimination is mistakenly considered to be unwanted treatment or a legal regulation that a person does not agree with and which appears to be restrictive. It is also difficult to understand that different treatment of persons in identical and comparable situations may also be justified if it is based on an exception and has an identifiable legitimate aim, the means of achieving which are appropriate and necessary for the society in general. The same applies to the justification of an apparently discriminatory situation in which persons are in substantially different circumstances but are treated in the same way.

Analysis of 48 other documents received from various state and international institutions and organisations shows that institutions in Latvia have mainly asked for opinions on legislation on non-discrimination, while international organisations have mainly asked for information on non-discrimination and gender equality.

In addition to dealing with submissions, the Ombudsman's duties also include awareness raising, providing information to the media and educating the public. In 2024, the Ombudsman received 53 requests for information from various media representatives. The media paid particular attention to three equally topical issues: sexual harassment, gender and disability (10 requests each), but also asked about language issues (8 requests) and general aspects of non-discrimination (5 requests). In four cases, there was interest in age-related issues. Media representatives also asked about other topics, including racism, budget, citizenship, marital status and geographical location. It should be noted that in some interviews, the media covered several topics at the same time, making a total of 57 issues.

Awareness raising activities can also be divided into two parts - public education in Latvia and outside Latvia. In 2024, the Ombudsman in Latvia provided information on several discrimination criteria at the same time in various lectures, while outside Latvia he focused mainly on issues related to discrimination on the grounds of disability.

In particular, the number of activities related to artificial intelligence (AI) increased rapidly in 2024.

European Union (EU) adopted the [AI Act](#), the Ombudsman participated in the process of harmonisation

and implementation of the Regulation in Latvia, as well as in various seminars at the EU level related to AI and its impact on fundamental rights, with a particular focus on gender equality and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

During the reporting period, two Directives on equality standards for institutions were adopted in the EU - No [2024/1500](#) and No [2024/1499](#) - with the participation of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman also continues to play an active role in the development of indicators for these Directives.

In 2024, article "[What is and how to recognise systemic discrimination in employment](#)" was prepared. In addition, 14 sociological and legal studies have been developed. These studies focus on disability and accessibility, discrimination in different fields (including in the context of artificial intelligence) and gender equality. The results of these studies suggest that these topics are crucial for the legal and social sustainability of societies, while also helping to identify both visible and latent forms of discrimination. The insights and practical guidance provided provide a basis for more effective action to target inequalities and support rights protection mechanisms more broadly.

Gender-based discrimination

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On gender discrimination in conflict

[In the verification procedure No 2024-67-26AB](#), the Ombudsman assessed a conflict situation at a meeting of the Ministry of Health between the Minister and a participant of the meeting - the applicant, during which alleged gender-based discrimination had been committed. It was found that the conflict consisted of a few minutes of emotional verbal rhetoric by the Minister of Health in a raised, angry tone and gesticulating by tapping the table with a finger or hand, and that it was not directly directed at the applicant. Furthermore, it was found that the cause of the conflict was related to events outside the meeting and not to the gender of the meeting participant, thus no gender discrimination was established in the case. Emotional abuse was also not established, as the actions of the Minister of Health did not meet the elements of such abuse, and emotional abuse cannot be established in a single isolated case. The Minister of Health was found to have breached the principle of good administration, but given that he had already apologised, it was concluded that the meeting participant had already received a reasonable reparation. It was found during the verification procedure that the Cabinet members did not have a code of ethics and therefore concluded with a recommendation to the Cabinet of Ministers (the Cabinet) to develop and adopt a code of ethics.

On gender equality in job advertisements

The Ombudsman examined several complaints about alleged gender discrimination in job advertisements. In one case, a company had advertised for "online casino game presenter(s)" but contact with the applicant indicated that only women were currently being recruited. The company explained that it had indeed recruited both sexes and that the company had a similar gender ratio, whereas the applicant's refusal was due to a previous experience of negative contact and not due to gender. The Ombudsman did not find any gender discrimination, but urged the company to pay closer attention to its communication with job applicants to avoid future situations where certain phrases or sentences, out of context, could give rise to suspicion of possible discrimination in employment. In the second case, the applicant complained about an advertisement published by a credit institution seeking a "Senior Due Diligence Officer" in female gender (specifics of Latvian grammar). The credit institution explained to the Ombudsman that the gender of the employee was irrelevant to the vacancy and that the wording of the job advertisement in the feminine gender was a human error made during the preparation of the advertisement. In response to the Ombudsman's reprimand, the credit institution corrected the job advertisement.

Amendments to legislation in the context of sexual harassment

The Ombudsman submitted to the Parliament (Saeima) [proposals for a draft law "Amendments to the Law on Administrative Penalties for Violations in the Field of Administration, Public Order and Use of the State Language"](#) and called for a distinction between the different types of sexual harassment, a minimum sanction limit and administrative liability and criminal liability for such violations.

Right to parental leave for members of the regulated professions

In 2022, the Ombudsman identified and removed restrictions that prevented doctors, as members of a regulated profession, from achieving work-life balance, as the certification and recertification requirements imposed on them significantly limited their right to take pregnancy and parental leave. Given that there are 56 regulated professions in Latvia, almost all of which have their own distinct requirements, the Ombudsman also examined [other regulated professions](#) to see whether they have similar restrictions on combining professional activity and childcare. Occupations were identified which might have such restrictions and where a choice between a career and pregnancy/childcare might have to be made, and the Ombudsman recommended that the responsible authorities assess the proportionality of the criteria for these occupations in relation to the rights of parents of young children.

Survey on discrimination based on gender and ethnicity in access to goods and services

As the Ombudsman frequently receives complaints about alleged discrimination in access to goods and services in the private sector, [a public survey](#) was carried out to find out which services in the private sector where the public feel being most frequently discriminated. 18% of respondents indicated that they had experienced unjustified price differences based on their gender. Women were more likely to see price differences in the beauty sector, while men reported unjustified price differences in the entertainment and healthcare sectors. Given that the EU legislation allows for a different value added tax (VAT) on feminine hygiene products, 44% of respondents agreed that this group of products should not have VAT altogether, while 27% of respondents agreed that these products should be subject to a reduced VAT rate.

Carer's leave

From August 2022, a new type of leave – carer's leave – is available to employees. It can be used when an employee looks after a close family member who needs care or support due to a serious medical reason. This leave is granted for a maximum of five working days within a year.

[A survey](#) was carried out to check whether the public is aware of this possibility and to identify possible gaps, and it showed that the public is not sufficiently informed about carer's leave. Less than a third of respondents are aware of this leave and only seven per cent have used it. Although the need to care for loved ones is widespread, a lack of information hinders the take-up of leave. Young people (18-29 years) are more aware of this possibility. The survey also revealed that the current five-day leave period is not sufficient - most respondents need more time, which can exceed ten days.

Principle of non-discrimination in employment for parents of young children

Repeated [surveys](#) in 2024 show that some employers still ask discriminatory questions about family plans in job interviews, although this has decreased compared to 2016. Women are almost twice as likely as men to face prejudice about possible family growth. 47% of employers consider it unethical for women not to disclose the fact of pregnancy in a job interview, while similar response from men is viewed more leniently. Although legislation provides for various support mechanisms, about one fifth of pregnant women are not provided with these in the workplace. Paternity leave is used more than in the past, but many parents still avoid parental leave because of career risks. 19% of mothers did not return to work due to the lack of pre-school (nursery) for their young child or the inability to combine work and private life, 11% were forced to sign a severance agreement after parental leave and in some cases new mothers were demoted. Micro and small enterprises are less likely than the public sector to have parent-friendly policies. Despite improvements, 19% of women and 17% of men postpone family planning

because they fear potential discrimination in the workplace. The main findings indicate that despite improvements in the labour market, new parents still face different challenges.

Disability-based discrimination

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Survey of trustees on access to banking services for persons with reduced legal capacity

Following the 2022 study "[Accessibility of Banking Services](#)", in 2023 and 2024 cooperation with the Finance Latvia Association was continued to improve accessibility of banking services for people with different types of disabilities. [A survey of guardians](#) was carried out to find out the profiles and preferences of persons with reduced legal capacity in terms of the way they receive financial resources. In general, it was found that the financial resources received by persons with reduced legal capacity are mostly handled by the trustees or the institution where the person lives. The person has his/her own pocket money (if possible). Trustees are positive about the fact that the person's financial resources are deposited in the trustee's account or that the financial resources can be received via the postal service. The Ombudsman pointed out the risks in such situations, i.e., if the trustee dies before the person under trusteeship and the person's financial resources are in the trustee's account, it may be difficult for the person to access their financial resources. In the survey, trustees criticised bank charges, the lack of branches and the need for the person with limited legal capacity to visit the bank himself. Trustees want to be given the possibility to handle the online banking, bank card and account of the person with reduced legal capacity.

Recommendations for banking services for persons with reduced legal capacity

Based on the above-mentioned survey, guidelines were issued on "[Recommendations for trustees, sworn advocates, courts, orphan courts and credit institutions on the provision of banking services to persons with reduced legal capacity](#)". The guidelines set out common principles to help organise effectively the financial management of persons with limited legal capacity and remove the practical uncertainties that have so far confronted the parties involved in the process of limiting legal capacity - both the various state institutions and the banks. The guidelines contain practical recommendations for the preparation of court decisions, for the conduct of orphanages and trustees, and for improving customer service for banks to remove obstacles caused by confusing terminology and divergent procedures.

Taxi accessibility for disabled persons and parents with young children

The Ombudsman notes [in his research](#) that access to taxi services in Latvia is still limited for several groups of society. There is a lack of vehicles adapted for people with reduced mobility, as well as a lack of specialised taxis for patients who are sick or people with severe disabilities. Parents of young children also face difficulties in finding taxis with adapted child seats. In addition, both parents of young children and disabled people may have to pay more for an adapted service.

There is a lack of information on booking, pricing and accessibility of adaptations, and mobile apps are not accessible to people with visual and hearing impairments. Additional safety risks include drivers' ignorance of the types of disabilities and the specific needs of people with disabilities, language barriers and aggressive driving styles. Sometimes people with disabilities are refused a service specifically because of their disability, which can be considered discriminatory.

People in regions need the most support, as there are hardly any opportunities to get around by taxi. To improve the situation, training for taxi drivers on the needs of disabled customers and parents with young children is recommended.

Surveys on the rights and situation of persons with disabilities in Latvia

For the third time since 2014, two parallel surveys were carried out to collect [public opinion](#) on the rights of persons with disabilities and the [views of persons with disabilities](#) on their rights.

Recent surveys show that public attitudes towards people with disabilities have improved significantly, but it is worrying that people with disabilities are less willing to stand for their rights. Discrimination in education and employment is generally on the decline, but this still points to an unacceptable gap between people with disabilities and the rest of society. In the area of infrastructure, the situation is contradictory: accessibility of public transport has improved, but road infrastructure and airport accessibility are often viewed negatively. While the public perception that everyone with a disability has the right to participate fully in society is gaining ground, public support for people with mental disabilities and their parenthood remains lower than for people with other types of disability.

Overall, awareness-raising activities have had a positive impact on public perception, but a decline in motivation of persons with disabilities may hinder progress if their self-initiative is not strengthened and support from public authorities is not secured. Further improvements in infrastructure, promoting inclusive access to employment and expanding educational opportunities are needed to enable people with disabilities to fully exercise their rights in all areas of life.

Web accessibility for people with disabilities

Websites of state and local authorities must be accessible to everyone. Some of these websites are hosted on the Unified Web Platform, which was designed for accessibility and funded by the EU Funds. In his study on website accessibility Ombudsman checked 15 websites (both on and off the platform) and found all of them to be inaccessible. Accessibility problems arise not only because the platform of the websites is not accessible (if there is a bug in the platform on one website, the same bug will be other websites), but also because the administrator of each website is not sufficiently familiar with the accessibility requirements and posts information on the website without complying with them.

Accessibility to a residence in Riga Old Town

[In the case No 2024-65-24D](#), the Ombudsman assessed the road traffic restrictions in Riga Old Town and concluded that they limit the accessibility and access to the place of residence for persons with disabilities who live in Riga Old Town and have been issued a disabled parking card. The Ombudsman found that there were no other alternative solutions in the road traffic legal framework that would be as effective as traffic restrictions in protecting Riga Old Town as a cultural heritage. As regards the regulatory framework, the Ombudsman concluded that the restrictions on car traffic provided for therein are not proportionate and are discriminatory towards persons with disabilities who have been issued with a disabled parking card and who live in the area covered by the regulatory framework. The Ombudsman also found that the Ministry of Transport had violated the principle of good governance by not actively engaging in this problem and by providing contradictory information to the Ombudsman and the Riga City Council. The Ombudsman recommended that the Ministry of Transport organise a discussion on the identified problems and amend the regulatory framework.

Accessibility of a hotel

The Ombudsman received a complaint that a disabled person was not provided with an accessible hotel room and found that the incident was caused by insufficient and incomplete communication between the hotel administration and the client. The Ombudsman concluded that the hotel representatives had not intentionally misled the client about the accessibility, but the existence of an adapted hotel room does not in itself ensure the overall accessibility, i.e. if hotel staff do not have sufficient understanding and information about the specific needs of persons with disabilities, it is not sufficient that the hotel offers a specially adapted room for persons with disabilities. In his recommendations, the Ombudsman asked the hotel to train its staff on the provision of services to clients with different types of disabilities, involving, where necessary, relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and to update and clarify the information on accessibility on the hotel's website.

On accessibility issues

The Ombudsman regularly receives complaints about various accessibility problems and calls for attention to aspects such as the door opening load, which should be less than two kilograms. This is essential in cases where opening such doors requires a great deal of physical effort and restricts independent access.

Problems were also identified during this reporting period regarding restrictions on service dogs entering public areas. The Ombudsman notes that such restrictions, for example, when they concern access to rehabilitation premises, violate the rights of persons with disabilities.

Accessibility of premises of the political party

The Ombudsman assessed the accessibility (to persons with reduced mobility) of the rented office premises of the political party "Stabilității!". Representatives of the political party did not deny that the premises were inaccessible and indicated that they had asked the owner of the premises to make the necessary adaptations. The Ombudsman asked the party to clarify the information provided on its website on the accessibility of the office premises for persons with disabilities (reduced mobility) and to assess the digital accessibility of their website.

Accessibility of the website for people with hearing disabilities

The Ombudsman assessed a submission regarding the inaccessibility of the methodological video seminars posted on the website of the State Revenue Service (SRS) to persons with hearing impairments, i.e. the training materials were neither subtitled nor provided with sign language interpretation. The representatives of the authority confirmed that they were interested in making the methodological video seminars accessible to as wide a range of people as possible and informed that subtitles were already provided for all the seminars published in 2024 and for part of the seminars published in 2023, and that subtitling of other video seminars published on the website was in progress.

Language-based discrimination

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Foreign language requirements in job advertisements

[In the verification procedure No 2024-13-26AD](#), the Ombudsman assessed whether the job advertisement of the limited liability company in question, which indicated the necessity to speak a foreign language, was a violation of Section 32(2)⁽¹⁾ of the Labour Law. The legislation prohibits indicating foreign language skills in a job advertisement, except where they are reasonably required for the performance of the duties. The company in question provided contradictory information and could not properly justify why the position required foreign language skills. Consequently, the Ombudsman found a violation of Section 32(2)¹ of the Labour Law. Considering legal literature that foreign languages (their skills) are not a prohibited criterion of discrimination, it was concluded that the verification procedure should not be examined in the context of the principle of non-discrimination. As the Labour Law prohibits unreasonable demands for foreign language skills of employees, the matter was examined in the context of the principle of legal equality. Since the company had not properly justified the need for foreign language skills for the vacancy referred to in the job advertisement, the Ombudsman found that there was no objective and reasonable justification for the difference in treatment and that the principle of legal equality had been violated.

On language in doctor's communication with a child

The Ombudsman gave his opinion on whether the doctor should speak to the child in child's language (foreign language to the doctor) or whether the medical institution is obliged to provide an interpreter if the child does not speak the state official language. The Ombudsman [replied](#) that the Law on the Rights of Patients requires a doctor to communicate with the patient, including child, in the state language. However, the law also does not prohibit the use of a foreign language for the purpose of treatment if this can ensure that the patient receives information in a way that he or she understands, but the doctor is not obliged to communicate with the patient in a foreign language if he or she does not know it or does not want to. For a patient to understand information on their health, not language proficiency is important, but whether medical terms are explained in a way that the patient can understand (taking into account patient's age, state of health, maturity and experience). Therefore, the doctor should communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and maturity. The doctor may, and is even obliged to, use all available means, such as modern technology, visual aids or plain language, to make it easier for the patient to understand the information.

On the draft law "Amendments to the Labour Law"

The Ombudsman provided [his opinion on the draft law "Amendments to the Labour Law"](#), suggesting to supplement Section 32(2)¹ of the Labour Law with an additional restriction on one specific foreign language. The Ombudsman drew attention to shortcomings in the draft law which could lead to unequal treatment and the risk of litigation. The Ombudsman pointed out that the regulation already in force at that time was appropriate and sufficient to achieve the legitimate aim and expressed the opinion that the problem was not the content of the provision, but its implementation in practice. The Ombudsman also explained that it is neither possible nor necessary to identify in a normative act all possible cases when something is allowed or prohibited, if the norm includes the need to make an assessment. Therefore, each case should be assessed individually.

Publication on language-based discrimination in employment

The Ombudsman issued a [publication](#) on language as a prohibited criterion of discrimination and also on certain issues of language-based discrimination in employment. The publication also stressed that each case must be assessed on its own merits.

On employer and employee surveys on the need for foreign language skills in the work environment

Taking into account the topicality of the topic, the Ombudsman addressed the issue of the need for foreign language skills and the use of foreign languages in the work environment and conducted a [research](#) - a survey of Latvian employers (the Employer Survey) and a survey of Latvian-speaking employees (the Employee Survey). It concluded that English and Russian language skills are the most in demand in the Latvian labour market. The English language requirement is most often justified by the need to serve foreign clients and communicate with foreign partners. The Russian language requirement is based on the need to communicate with Russian-speaking clients residing in Latvia. Employers recognise that it is sometimes worth considering hiring a candidate without adequate language skills if they have other useful skills or the opportunity to learn a foreign language in the workplace. The Employee Survey shows that most respondents do not experience significant problems with foreign language requirements in their companies. In general, the level of proficiency of the state language in companies is rated as high, while cases where employees feel pressured to use Russian, which creates discomfort and sometimes even an unfriendly atmosphere, are rarely observed. Overall, surveys show that foreign language skills are important in the labour market, but that the demand for them is not always justified. This can create a risk of differential treatment if a speaker of state language has no real need to use another language.

Nationality-based discrimination

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the procedure for extending the residence permit for Belarusian citizens

The Ombudsman gave his opinion on the procedure for extending the residence permits of Belarusian citizens, which required filling in a questionnaire of a certain kind. A person, referring to the Constitution, European Union law and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, considered that the requirement to fill in a questionnaire was discriminatory on grounds of nationality. Based on the scope of EU law and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Ombudsman concluded that the regulation laid down in those instruments was inapplicable, since each State had a wide margin of discretion to control the entry and residence of foreign nationals on its territory and was not obliged to respect the choice of foreign nationals to enter and reside in the State concerned. Regarding the prohibition of discrimination laid down in the Constitution, the Ombudsman noted that the imposition of restrictions based on nationality was not absolutely prohibited and could be justified in certain cases. In the current case, the questionnaire was carried out in compliance with the Immigration Act and its necessity was inextricably linked to the current domestic and foreign political situation and regional geopolitical challenges.

On the extension of restrictions on positions for Russian and Belarusian citizens

The [Ombudsman replied to a person's question](#) on the possible extension of the restrictions regarding certain positions for Russian and Belarusian citizens. The question was related to the amendments to the Law on Public Electronic Mass Media and Administration Thereof and the Education Law, which were rejected by the Parliament. As the Ombudsman pointed out, the constitutionality of restrictions on the holding of office must be considered within the scope of Article 106 and the second sentence of Article 91 of the Constitution (Constitution (Satversme)), where the proportionality of the restrictions plays an important role. The Ombudsman also stressed that the restrictions rejected by the legislator were so-called general prohibitions, the constitutionality of which must also be examined by ascertaining whether the legislator had justified the necessity of the general prohibition, assessed its nature and the consequences of its application, and ascertained whether the objective of the restriction could be achieved by other means of equivalent quality. In addition to these considerations, the Ombudsman was of the opinion that an individualised assessment, irrespective of the nationality or any other criteria, would enable the achievement of the objectives set by the legislator in the same quality as the establishment of a general prohibition; moreover, such an approach would also be in line with the recent case law of the Constitutional Court, which has assessed the proportionality of various restrictions in the context of threats to national security and geopolitical challenges.

Other discrimination criteria

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the right of Ukrainian refugees to study at state budget expense

When examining a submission concerning the refusal of a budget study place to a Ukrainian citizen with international protection status, the Ombudsman provided [clarification](#) on the right of Ukrainian civilians with international protection status to apply for state-funded studies. The Ombudsman pointed out that a special regulation - the Law on Support of Civilians of Ukraine, which provides for an exception from the general procedure established in the Law on Higher Education regarding citizens of Ukraine and their family members who have been granted international protection status in Latvia - is applicable.

On the right to education and religious belief

When examining an application whether face-covering clothing could be worn in general education establishments if required by religious beliefs, the Ombudsman explained that wearing of such clothing fell within the scope of the right to freedom of religion. However, the Ombudsman also pointed out that this right is not absolute and can be restricted under certain conditions. Not all religiously motivated conduct is protected, and in democratic societies where several religions coexist, it may be necessary to restrict religious expression in order to balance the interests of different groups. Similarly, wearing of religious clothing and head-cover in an educational establishment may be restricted on the grounds of the safety, hygiene and health of pupils during sports and other physical activities.

On the right to education of non-binary persons

When examining an application concerning the rights of a non-binary person in an educational institution, the Ombudsman explained how an educational institution should deal with a child who identifies with a different gender. The issue related to the use of toilets, changing rooms and dormitory rooms. The Ombudsman stressed that both the Law on Protection of Children's Rights and the Law on Education oblige the educational institution to provide safe environment, considering the best interests of the child, at the same time giving the institution wide discretion in determining its internal environment. Accordingly, the Ombudsman urged the educational institution to take the initiative to identify potential problematic situations and to adapt the internal regulations and environment, for example, by providing individual sanitary facilities and changing rooms. The Ombudsman stressed that in such situations it is important to establish constructive communication between all parties involved in order to identify and better understand the specific needs, as the educational institution itself will not always be able to identify them.

Data collection in the context of discrimination prevention

Artificial intelligence systems and aspects of discrimination

The study "[Artificial Intelligence Systems and Discrimination](#)" analyses how artificial intelligence (AI) systems have already violated fundamental rights in different countries in areas such as employment, education, biometric identification and access to basic services. These are four of the eight high-risk areas defined by the new EU AI Act. To ensure that AI systems do not pose additional threats, the study also identifies solutions that should be in place, such as data quality and data governance; information that the person is interacting with an AI system and not another human; human control and leadership; and accountability and oversight. The adaptation of AI systems to fundamental rights poses and will continue to pose new challenges. Therefore, in the Ombudsman's view, this study can provide AI system developers with explanatory and educational information on the risks of discrimination in AI systems.

Experience of higher education institutions with AI

A study on the use of AI in Latvian universities shows that students and lecturers lack essential digital skills and that there is a problem of economic inequality due to paid AI tools. AI tools are mostly used for literature selection, statistical data analysis, spell checking and presentation preparation, but there is a lack of awareness of the importance of human rights. The results of the study show that the focus is more on data processing and copyright issues than on the risks of AI tools in the wider social context. Promoting an inclusive AI ecosystem requires both professional development in the digital field, a solid legal framework and targeted human rights awareness-raising. Economic inequalities need to be reduced by ensuring equal access to AI tools regardless of resources. The introduction of a central knowledge base and compulsory courses of study would help to level the playing field and create human rights-savvy AI experts. There is a need to integrate AI solutions into higher education policies in order to create a technologically advanced, socially responsible academic environment. This would ensure equal opportunities and responsible use of technology.

Mapping equality data

The Ombudsman carried out a study "[Mapping of Equality Data](#)" to find out what legal framework determines the collection of equality data, which institutions collect these data and whether it is publicly available. The study covers seven areas: physical security, legal protection, employment, education and science, social benefits and services, investment of EU funds and healthcare.

The study reveals that the most frequently recorded equality data are age, biological sex and social status – job position, profession, workplace, education, dependants and income. These data are collected in the areas of a person's physical safety, education, employment and healthcare. However,

public access is often limited to data on age and gender and is not available for wider analysis. Some information systems record data on race, genetic characteristics, religious and political beliefs, employment status, etc. These data are not publicly available. Legislation in Latvia does not provide for the collection of the following four categories of equality data: biological sex differences, sexual orientation, world views and EU citizenship.

The concept of discrimination in Latvian media

[The study](#) confirms that the term "discrimination" is used in the Latvian media in different ways, but often in the wrong context, e.g. if someone is not satisfied with a certain situation, it is called discrimination. The study shows that the most frequently mentioned criterion of discrimination in the written media is "other topic", which includes various cases of discrimination that do not fit into other specific categories. The second most frequently mentioned theme is gender discrimination, and the third is nationality and ethnic origin. However, the public is most reached by media activities related to gender discrimination and the above-mentioned 'other topic'. This is followed by nationality and ethnic origin, sexual orientation and age. Media coverage of discrimination-related topics is largely neutral, but Russian media are more likely than Latvian and English media to cover discrimination topics in a negative tone. Neutral coverage is given to topics related to "gender", "age", "nationality", "disability", "sexual orientation" or "other topic", while topics related to language, citizenship/nationality and service position are more often covered in a negative tone.

Prevention of violence against women

Violence against women can take many forms (physical, sexual, emotional) and is directed at women solely because of their gender. Violence includes all forms of domestic violence, harassment, emotional and psychological abuse and coercive control. Cyber-violence, which uses the internet and technology to track, control, harass or intimidate women, is also on the rise. Women in Latvia also face these problems, which are linked to gender inequalities and social norms within which violence is considered acceptable behaviour.

Domestic violence is cyclical, most often perpetrated by a man (spouse, relative) against a woman to gain control and power over her. However, other family members, such as children and the elderly, can also be victims of domestic violence. In Latvia, domestic violence and violence against women remain a major social problem.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman continued receiving submissions from women victims of violence. A total of 5 submissions were received from women or other persons on their behalf, complaining of inaction or ineffective action by the courts and public officials in insufficiently protecting these women from violence. The same number of submissions was received in 2023. When responding to women victims of violence, the Ombudsman informs them about the available legal protection mechanisms, as well as about non-governmental organisations and possibilities to receive legal, psychological and other forms of assistance and support. Where necessary, the Ombudsman informs the competent authorities of the submissions received and requests information on the measures taken to ensure the rights of the women concerned.

Also in 2024, 5 submissions were received from persons granted temporary protection who considered that their rights had been unduly restricted. In such cases, the Ombudsman explained the rights of the persons concerned, the mechanisms for the protection of their rights, the nature of the court decisions and the possible legal consequences of non-compliance with the decisions.

In 2024, the Ombudsman's Office completed the [research on the effectiveness of the interim protection mechanism](#) in the courts, started in the previous period, by obtaining and compiling statistical data on 1630 interim protection cases for the years 2021 and 2022, covering at least 75% of all interim protection cases handled in those years. By spring 2024, the Ombudsman's staff visited courthouses across Latvia and accessed court case materials electronically.

On 10 December 2024, the results of the study were made public, and the Ombudsman held a discussion with representatives of the Court, the State Police, the Latvian Association of Local Governments, the Riga Orphan and Custody Court and the association "Centrs Marta" on the shortcomings and possibilities for improving the functioning of the temporary protection mechanism against violence. The results of the research, as well as the [presentation materials](#), are published on the website of the Ombudsman's Office.

The study concludes that the mechanism of temporary protection from violence is being used more each year, which shows that the public is aware of it. The mechanism works, but its use in practice needs to be improved and the legal framework also needs to be further developed. Close cooperation between the courts and the public authorities involved is essential, as is additional information to the public on the purpose and nature of the mechanism and the legal consequences of court decisions on interim protection against violence. At the same time, the courts are invited to pay more attention to the motivation of decisions and to obtaining evidence on their own initiative. Courts found it difficult to deal within one day with submissions for interim protection lodged on Fridays or days before holidays, when the risk of violence is highest. The study includes , and in 2025 the Ombudsman plans to continue cooperation with the authorities and courts to identify other issues of concern, discuss the recommendations and facilitate their implementation to improve the functioning of the temporary protection mechanism.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Possible violence against a relative

The Ombudsman was approached by a person whose close relative with serious health problems had allegedly suffered violence in her home and had been forcibly isolated from other relatives. The Ombudsman forwarded the application to the State Police for consideration, as well as to the Public Prosecutor's Office to assess the need to use the powers provided for in Section 16, Paragraph 1 and 2 of the Public Prosecutor's Office Law. During the examination, the State authorities did not confirm the existence of the circumstances indicated in the application.

Right to a fair trial

The right to a fair trial, guaranteed in Article 92 of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia and international human rights instruments, is one of the most important cornerstones of a democratic and law-governed state. The State is responsible for ensuring that every person can effectively defend his or her rights and legitimate interests before a fair trial if their rights have been violated. Ensuring the right to a fair trial is fundamental to the protection of other human rights.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received a total of 348 submissions on fair trial aspects (182 in 2023 and 172 in 2022), which means that these issues are becoming increasingly topical. This may be an indication of a growing awareness of rights and their protection in society, as well as a heightened focus on the rule of law. The number of submissions has increased significantly, particularly in relation to fair trial issues (20 in 2023 and 91 in 2024). These are cases in which the proceedings are ongoing or have concluded, but the litigant expresses dissatisfaction with the court's conduct or the overall outcome, including that the reasoning in the decision has been insufficient. There has also been a significant increase in the number of submissions concerning various aspects of the enforcement of judgments, and greater interest in the possibility of obtaining compensation in cases of irregularities in criminal and administrative proceedings, as well as in cases on damage caused by public authorities. An analysis of the content of the submissions does not reveal any systemic problems, as the submissions are highly individual in nature.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Right of access to justice

In the verification procedure No 2024-66-2A,3D,4AA the Ombudsman assessing the restriction of the right to liberty, also assessed aspects of the right to a fair trial. It was concluded that the divergent views on the need for a forensic psychiatric examination did not prevent a person from exercising his right of access to a court and that there was no violation of the right to be informed of the substance of the charges.

Hearing the case within a reasonable time

In the verification procedure No 2024-59-4D the Ombudsman examined whether the right to a reasonable time for the completion of criminal proceedings had been respected. It was found that the length of the proceedings was significantly influenced by the conduct of the accused himself, the

requests of the defence and the non-appearance of witnesses, rather than by the ineffective functioning of the court, and thus no violation was found.

On the submission of evidence in proceedings for proceeds of crime

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion the Constitutional Court in Case No 2023-40-01](#) to "On Compliance of the Words "District (City) Court" of Section 629(4) of the Criminal Procedure Law with Article 1 and the First Sentence of Article 92 of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia". The Ombudsman concluded that the application of the contested norm would be considered as a lenient transition and would comply with the principles of a fair trial if it would be allowed to submit significant evidence also to the regional court, if this was justified by the will or practice of the legislator.

Right to a defence in administrative offence proceedings

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion the Constitutional Court in Case No 2023-42-01](#) "On Compliance of Section 185 (4) of Law on Administrative Liability with the Article 92 (4) of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia". The Ombudsman concluded that the contested norm did not deny a person the right to the assistance of a lawyer, however, he noted that the provisions of the said norm, insofar as they prevented a person from filing a complaint in court with the assistance of another person (defence counsel, lawyer), were considered to be a disproportionate restriction of Article 92 of the Constitution (Satversme).

Victims' right to fair compensation

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion the Constitutional Court in Case No 2024-07-01](#) "On Compliance of Section 7(1) and Section 7¹(4) of the Law On State Compensation to Victims with of Article 92(3) of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia", concluding that Section 7(1) in conjunction with Section 7¹(4) of the Law on State Compensation to Victims does not comply with Article 92(3) of the Constitution (Satversme) as in the case of multiple victims, it may not ensure the payment of fair compensation to each victim that is proportionate to the harm caused, if the death of a person has occurred as a result of a criminal offence.

Ensuring respect for human rights in determination of medical coercive measures

In 2024, the Ombudsman [published a study on ensuring respect for human rights in the process of imposing medical coercive measures](#). The conclusions and recommendations of the study were discussed in a working group of the Ministry of Justice and an educational lecture was given to lawyers.

Right to a fair trial in pre-trial proceedings

Pre-trial criminal proceedings traditionally consist of two successive stages - investigation, usually carried out by the State Police, and the prosecution, which is carried out by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Ensuring the right to a fair trial in pre-trial proceedings is as important as in trial proceedings, as inadequate respect for person's rights in pre-trial criminal proceedings may lead to failure to ensure the right to a fair trial in trial proceedings as well, thus undermining the objective of criminal proceedings - fair settlement of criminal law relations without unjustified interference in person's life.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, 53 submissions were received on aspects of ensuring fair trial in pre-trial proceedings. The number of submissions received has increased significantly compared to the previous two years (32 in 2023 and 35 in 2022).

As in previous years, the majority – 19 submissions – received in 2024 concerned pre-trial investigations in general, 13 submissions were on actions/non-actions of the person directing the proceedings, and 7 submissions regarding substantiation or appeal decisions taken by the person directing the proceedings. Most submissions suggest misinterpretation of legal provisions leading the applicant to take a different view of the conduct and decisions of the officials, as well as of the proportionality of the penalty/sanction/safety measure imposed. Often, persons submit submissions to the Ombudsman without being aware of the possibilities of protection of rights provided for in the Criminal Procedure Law or not using them properly, at the same time sending complaints to various officials whose functions do not include examination of the merits of the application.

It should be noted that a large part of the requests within submissions do not fall within the scope of the Ombudsman's competence, as the Ombudsman has neither the power nor the criminal procedural methods and means to intervene in the conduct or supervision of criminal proceedings. In such situations, the Ombudsman shall, according to the circumstances of the particular submission, inform the person of the remedies available to him or her and the procedure for exercising them, and, if necessary, refer the application to the competent authority. In some cases, the Ombudsman has asked the officials supervising the proceedings to examine the circumstances of the application and has received reasoned replies on the assessment carried out.

Often, individuals also use available redress mechanisms but disagree with the answers given by the competent officials and complain to the Ombudsman. However, it is important to note that the Ombudsman is not entitled to review the decisions of the officials conducting criminal proceedings and to express his (different) opinion on the appropriateness of the procedural steps taken in criminal proceedings or on the evidence in the case. When examining such submissions, the Ombudsman assesses whether the person has had access to the remedies provided for in the Criminal Procedure Law and whether the exercise of such remedies has violated the fundamental rights of the person.

Overview of the most important case and the Ombudsman's opinion

On the effectiveness of pre-trial criminal investigations and the appeal mechanism against the decision to discontinue criminal proceedings

When examining [the verification procedure No 2024-15-4A,32](#) the Ombudsman concluded that the investigation of the criminal proceedings had been unreasonably delayed and the applicant's right to a hearing within reasonable time, enshrined in Article 92 of the Constitution (Satversme), had been violated. The Ombudsman also concluded that the supervising prosecutor could have reacted more regularly and in a timelier manner to unjustified delays of the criminal proceedings and, through his involvement, could have ensured that they were conducted more efficiently. However, the Ombudsman did not find any significant irregularities in the part concerning the effectiveness of the appeal mechanism against the decision to discontinue the criminal proceedings.

Enforcement of rulings

Article 92 of the Constitution and international human rights instruments provide for the right of every person to the effective enforcement of rulings. In the process of enforcement of rulings, as in many other categories of proceedings, two parties participate and interact with each other. In the enforcement of rulings, it is the enforcer and the debtor, while the bailiff plays a mediating role between the two parties to a certain extent. Effective enforcement requires both the active involvement of the enforcer and the active involvement of the bailiff as a public authority. At the same time, the important role of the debtor in the effective enforcement of rulings must not be forgotten, as must the need to balance the rights of the enforcer and the interests of the debtor.

Description of the reporting period

Enforcement issues remain topical, and in 2024 people were also active in contacting the Ombudsman, mainly to express their complaints about unjustified actions by bailiffs resulting in excessive deductions from debtors.

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 10 written submissions complaining about the enforcement of rulings in general, while 72 submissions complained about the actions or decisions of bailiffs. The number of submissions addressed as complaints about bailiffs' actions increased significantly compared to previous years (20 submissions in 2022, and 33 in 2023). Submissions concerning the enforcement of rulings have remained at a similar level, with 6 submissions received in 2022, and 6 in 2023. Overall, 82 submissions received in 2024 is the highest the number of submissions within the last five years at (39 in 2023, 26 in 2022, 40 in 2021, and 52 in 2020). This is a significant change in trend, as the number of submissions received in this area previously decreased year by year. Looking at developments in the society, the increase in the number of submissions in 2024 could be due to the entry into force of significant amendments to the Civil Procedure Law concerning deductions from debtor's wages.

However, many consultations are still being provided in person, by telephone and electronically: in 2024, 18 consultations were provided on the enforcement of rulings, while 107 consultations were provided on the activities of bailiffs (126 consultations in 2023, 160 in 2022, and 218 in 2021).

In 2024, the highest number of complaints was consistently about bailiffs' actions in enforcing rulings where the debtor was not left with the funds required by law. Applicants also showed increased interest in the amendments to Section 594 of the Civil Procedure Law, which substantially changed the procedure for deductions from debtor's wages.

Regarding the latter, the Ombudsman published an explanation on his website, pointing out that after the withholding, most debtors will have more money to support themselves and their dependants, as the amount of withholding will be reduced.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Procedure for deductions from debtors' wages and the amount of funds to be retained by debtors – performers of economic activity

In 2024, the Ombudsman actively followed the progress of the amendments to Sections 594 and 599 of the Civil Procedure Law in the Parliament (Saeima) and provided his opinion to the Ministry of Justice on which solution to the procedure of recovery of the debtor's wages should be supported, as well as participated in the meetings of the Legal Affairs Parliamentary Committee. Thus, on 20 June 2024, the Parliament adopted significant amendments to Section 594 of the Civil Procedure Law (entering into force on 1 October 2024), which substantially changed the procedure for recovery of a debtor's wages, as well as to Section 599 of the Civil Procedure Law, eliminating the problem raised by the Ombudsman earlier that debtors – performers of economic activity – are left without any funds.

Recovery directed against debtor's child maintenance

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman continued to actively monitor the question on recovery directed against debtor's child maintenance. On 13 March 2024, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office participated in a meeting convened by the Ministry of Justice where it was agreed to amend Section 596(5) of the Civil Procedure Law to provide that recovery may not be directed against child maintenance received by the debtor in an amount determined based on the court decision or a agreement on child maintenance payments concluded at the notary. The Ministry is committed to addressing this issue and will submit proposals for a draft law amending the Civil Procedure Act.

Right to liberty and security

The right to liberty and security may be restricted in the manner and to the extent provided by law. Restriction or deprivation of liberty is an exception. A person cannot be held in captivity without a court ruling, without due justification. A person has the right to know the reasons and grounds for their detention and for holding under arrest. As the length of deprivation of liberty increases, the grounds must become more significant. Changes in the legal framework which may lead to a narrowing of the rights to liberty already guaranteed must be assessed with particular care.

The right to security protects everyone, not only against threats to their physical integrity, but also against security threats online.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 36 submissions on issues concerning the right to liberty, including 8 submissions on the execution of sentences of deprivation of liberty. This is more than in previous years (20 submissions in 2023, and 15 in 2022). One submission concerned the forcible return of a person, 4 submissions concerned the detention of a person, 9 submissions concerned the detention of a person in pre-trial proceedings or following a decision of a court of first instance, 4 submissions concerned forcible placement in mental hospitals, 1 submission concerned the detention of a foreigner, 8 submissions concerned issues related to the execution of a custodial sentence and 9 submissions concerned various other issues. In 2024, the number of submissions on detention, compulsory placement in mental hospital and various other issues increased.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman submitted to the Parliament [proposals for amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law](#) to ensure the right to liberty, requesting that the word "full" be deleted from the wording of Section 277(3), which had already been approved in the first reading, as there was a risk that the planned amendments might adversely affect a person's right to liberty by allowing longer detention in a detention facility. Moreover, there would be no external control over detention and the court of first instance would have the right to draw up a full judgment within six months instead of three. This proposal was supported, but at the end of 2024 the Ministry of Justice reiterated the need to incorporate this proposal into the Criminal Procedure Law, so the Ombudsman will continue to follow up on this issue.

At the same time, the Ombudsman requested that Section 281(4) of the Criminal Procedure Law be supplemented with a third sentence providing for a review of the remand in custody if the drawing up of a judgment is postponed for more than two months. However, the Ministry of Justice and the Legal Bureau of the Parliament clarified this proposal stipulating that the continued necessity of detention will

be assessed only if the full judgment is postponed for more than two months and there are special health or family circumstances, as evidenced by documents.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Detention using physical force

Having examined the [case No 2024-36-4I,4AB,32](#) concerning detention of the person's vehicle, detention of the person and placing them in a temporary detention place (in a closed compartment of a police vehicle), as well as failure to draw up detention report, the Ombudsman concluded that the actions of the police officers constituted a procedural violation of the right guaranteed by Article 5(2) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), while the police officers' actions in the given situation could be considered as proportionate. The Ombudsman also concluded that the Internal Control Bureau's investigation of the events in question was carried out with due diligence and was effective.

Detention and custody of a disabled person

In the verification procedure No 2024-66-2A,3D,4AA, the Ombudsman assessed the compliance of the detention of a person with the guarantees of the right to liberty. During his detention, the person developed health problems and was taken to a medical institution. The person was diagnosed with a disability due to progressive neurological and psychiatric disorders, which prevented him from participating in the hearings on the assessment of his detention. The expert examinations concluded that the person was amenable, but that the seizures were simulated. The Ombudsman found that the rights guaranteed in Article 5(2) and (3) of the ECHR in criminal proceedings were respected during the person's detention: the person was informed of the reasons for detention and regular monitoring of the deprivation of liberty was carried out.

Informing the person about detention

In the case No 2024-04-27N, the Ombudsman assessed compliance of Ropazi Municipality Police actions when detaining a person with the obligation under Article 5(2) of the ECHR to immediately inform the person in a language he or she understands about the reasons for detention. Ombudsman's verification procedure was completed, concluding that the detention carried out by the Municipal Police officers was carried out in compliance with the above obligation and in accordance with Section 19(4) of the Law On Police.

Periodic control of detention

[In the verification procedure No 2024-09-3D](#) the Ombudsman assessed whether the mechanism of protection of rights through the imposition and periodic monitoring of the detention order by the court was effective during the pre-trial investigation procedure and during the trial. The Ombudsman found that the periodic control of detention during the pre-trial investigation was regular and sufficient, while during the trial it was regular but formal.

Right to freedom of expression

Article 100 of the Constitution (Satversme) and Article 10(1) of the Convention provide that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. Freedom of expression includes freedom of opinion, the right to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authorities. However, freedom of expression is not absolute, and just as everyone can rely on being able to exercise it in their private, civil or political life, so everyone must face the consequences of using freedom of expression for hostile purposes or to communicate false information that is offensive to the dignity and honour of others.

In 2024, the Ombudsman's focus was constantly on issues related to freedom of expression, and in addition to the issues related to the prevention of hate speech, the Ombudsman also addressed the issue of cyber-violence against well-known women in Latvia, as well as various issues related to the responsibility of journalists.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 8 submissions on issues related to freedom of expression, which was the lowest number of submissions in the last three years (11 in 2022, and 11 in 2023). Submissions ranged from requests to assess the accountability of websites, journalists and officials for the views they express, to complaints about local authorities' communication with its residents. The Ombudsman actively informed the submitters about the legal remedies for violations of professional ethics or moral principles by journalists, as well as the right to appeal to the Latvian Public Media Ombudsman and the media self-regulatory body - Media Ethics Council of Latvia. In one case, the Ombudsman addressed the above-mentioned institutions on the non-observance of the principle of presumption of innocence in media publications.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman issued 8 opinions to the State Security Service on alleged hate speech against Latvians and Ukrainians and justification or glorification of crimes against humanity and war crimes. Seven of them revealed hate speech, as well as glorification or justification of war crimes committed in Ukraine and denial of crimes committed against the Latvian people (deportations).

The Ombudsman also actively participated in inter-institutional working groups at the Ministry of Culture: the Working Group on Safety of Journalists, which started its work in May 2024, and the Working Group on Media Policy Guidelines for 2023-2027.

There has been an increase in journalists' interest in various legal aspects of freedom of expression, and the Ombudsman has repeatedly provided opinions and explanations to the media.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On cyber-violence against well-known women in Latvia

On 14 May 2024, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), which focuses on cyber-violence and its impact on freedom of expression. On 27 November 2024, the Ombudsman organised a [discussion](#) on aggressive behaviour on the internet against well-known women in Latvia. The discussion focused on the impact of aggressive behaviour on human rights on the internet through practical case studies, as well as the availability and adequacy of existing legal protection mechanisms to protect individuals' rights.

On the content of the municipal newsletters

Following a request from Ogre Civic Cooperation and Development Association, the Ombudsman issued an [opinion in](#) the verification procedure No 2024-10-10B,27L on good governance and exceeding the competences set out in Section 52 of the Local Government Law in the use of public funds. The Ombudsman concluded that the expressions on family values contained in the Ogre Municipality newsletter violated Section 52 of the Local Government Law and that they were a violation of political neutrality and misinformation. The Ombudsman called on the Ogre Municipality to include in the municipal newsletter only the information specified in Section 52 of the Local Government Law and to refrain from publishing divisive views and spreading misinformation in its communication with the residents.

On restrictions in using foreign languages in pre-election campaigning

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion to the Constitutional Court in Case No 2024-06-01](#) on compliance of Section 5¹ of the Pre-election Campaigning Law with Article 100 of the Constitution (Satversme) on the admissibility of using foreign languages in pre-election campaigning. The Ombudsman expressed the opinion that the benefit that the society would gain from strengthening the constitutional role of the state language was not sufficiently balanced by the legislator against the risk that such a restriction posed to the pluralism of a democratic society.

Respect for private and family life

Article 96 of the Constitution (Satversme) provides that everyone has the right to respect for private life, home and correspondence. The content of the right to privacy includes person's identity, physical and mental integrity, including honour and dignity, one's living space, sexual activities and social relations, relations with other persons, including information about these relations. It also includes the right to keep one's private life secret from others. The State has a duty not only not to interfere unreasonably in individuals' private lives, but also to protect them from harassment by fellow people and the media.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, there was a significant increase in the number of questions on the right to privacy with 90 submissions received (69 submissions in 2023, and 65 in 2022). The most frequent issues were data protection (26 submissions), exercise of access rights (17 submissions) and respect for private life (14 submissions). Topics such as video surveillance in real estate or the use of foreign names in personal documents have not lost their relevance in recent years. However, in 2024, attention was drawn on several issues that were less frequently mentioned in previous years, such as the protection of public employees in their communication with aggressive individuals or inviolability of employees' private life in relation to claims based on the protection of national security interests. Research on these issues is ongoing, but the Ombudsman has already expressed the view that public administrations should refrain from imposing requirements in their internal rules that require employees to report travel and contacts outside EU Member States during their time off from work, unless such reporting obligations are laid down in an external legal act.

In 2023, the Ombudsman had already issued [an opinion in the verification procedure No 2023-16-5D](#) on the information to be disclosed in the declaration of a public official on the maintenance received and the payer of maintenance, and in 2024 he repeatedly addressed the responsible institutions (the Ministry of Finance, the SRS, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau), as well as participated in an inter-institutional working group organised by the SRS to discuss issues related to the scope of information disclosed in the declarations of public officials. The views of the institutions on these issues remained divided. Additional funding is also needed to improve the technical solutions of the SRS information systems, as well as amendments to the laws and regulations that are preventing the final resolution of the problem identified in the Ombudsman's opinion.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the right of public to know the decision of the Latvian Medical Association Ethics Committee

The Ombudsman expressed the [opinion](#) that the public has the right to know what decision the Ethics Committee of the Latvian Medical Association has adopted after assessing the conduct of a particular doctor. The Committee should assess the importance and topicality of the issue under consideration, as well as the amount of information to be made public, for example, it should consider the possibility of anonymising personal data or providing information to the public only on the decision taken. This would avoid unwarranted disclosure of personal data.

On the need to improve the regulatory framework for medical rehabilitation of politically repressed persons

Based on the complaint of a politically repressed person and the request of the State Chancellery, the Ombudsman provided an [opinion on the existing regulatory framework](#), i.e. whether it sufficiently ensures the protection of the rights of politically repressed persons, in particular with regard to medical rehabilitation. Answering the question whether amendments should be made to the normative regulation, the Ombudsman pointed out that the problem could be solved in two ways - both by amending the Law on the Determination of the Status of a Politically Repressed Person for Victims of the Communist and Nazi Regime and by applying the method of analogy with the already existing regulation - the procedure provided for in the Law on Persons Placed without Justification in Psychiatric Medical Treatment Institutions of Latvia and USSR in the Period from 17 June 1940 to 21 August 1991.

On updating entries in the public registers after exclusion of a company from the commercial register

The Ombudsman examined the verification procedure No 2023-41-5D,5F on the procedure established by the regulatory enactment, which does not provide for updating the entries in the public registers after exclusion of a company from the Commercial Register, and issued an [opinion](#) concluding that the fact of exclusion of a company from the Commercial Register has an absolute character in not registering new (up-to-date) information. The Ombudsman also pointed out that a general prohibition to update information in the register only because the subject has been excluded from the commercial register is not only incompatible with the very principle of public reliability, as third parties have access to false and inaccurate information, but may cause unjustified infringement of the rights of the natural person whose data is thus disclosed. Consequently, the Ombudsman concluded that a proportionate balance between the need to make such information publicly available and the need to ensure the inviolability of the private life of the individual is not ensured.

Right to property

In Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme), the State guarantees everyone's right to property. However, these rights are not absolute. Property rights cannot be used contrary to the public good. The State may restrict a person's right to property only in accordance with the procedure laid down by law. If a person's right is restricted, the restriction must have a legitimate aim and be proportionate.

Description of the reporting period

Ombudsman received 151 submissions (133 in 2023), including 7 on expropriation of property, 36 on limitation of property rights, and 23 on protection of property rights when another person infringes on property rights. A total of 20 submissions were received on the obligation to pay taxes (24 in 2023), of these, 10 were on personal income tax and 9 on real estate tax, 11 submissions were received on other types of taxes, 4 submissions were received on the exercise of children's property rights and 51 on other property-related topics. Residents mostly turned to the Ombudsman in cases of individual violations, such as property boundaries, historical injustice in the recovery of property, ensuring access to property, division of joint property, actions of the building authority, the State Revenue Service, the State Land Service's workload in the performance of services, tax issues, land use fees in forced divided property relations, determination of cadastral value and functionally necessary land plot for the termination of forced divided property.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On payment of tax on income seized in criminal proceedings

In the verification procedure [No 2022-59-16DA,27J](#), the Ombudsman found that the State Revenue Service's compulsory recovery of tax arrears on income, the legality of which had been questioned by law enforcement authorities in criminal proceedings, was not proportionate. In particular, if the State has questioned the legitimacy of income in criminal proceedings, the simultaneous recovery of taxes may cause greater losses to the State in the future. If the funds, the legitimacy of which the State has doubts about, are found by the State to have been criminally obtained and confiscated, the State will have to return all tax payments to the taxpayer.

Opinion to the Constitutional Court on the difference in water consumption in a multi-apartment residential building

Providing [an opinion to the Constitutional Court in Case No 2023-46-03](#) on the difference in water consumption in multi-apartment residential buildings, the Ombudsman concluded that the contested norm infringed the right to property of a person protected by Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme).

Opinion to the Constitutional Court on the share to be paid by the owner of a residential house for services necessary for the maintenance of the residential house

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion the Constitutional Court in Case No 2024-17-03](#) on compliance of Sub-paragraph 11.2 of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 524 of 15 September 2015 "On the Procedure for Determining, Calculating and Enumerating the Share to be Paid by Each Owner of a Residential House for Services Required for Maintenance of a Residential House" with Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia" and concluded that the contested norm infringed the right to property of a person protected by Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme).

Opinion on placing on the market of electronic smoking liquids and tobacco substitutes containing flavourings, other than flavourings producing the odour or taste of tobacco

In submitting [an opinion to the Constitutional Court in Case No 2024-16-01](#) on compliance with Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia on the amendments to the "Law on Circulation of Tobacco Products, Tobacco Substitute Products, Plant Smoking Products, Electronic Smoking Devices and Their Liquids", by which the Parliament has provided for restrictions on placing on the market of electronic smoking device liquids and tobacco substitute products containing flavourings, except flavourings that produce the smell or taste of tobacco, the Ombudsman concluded that the amendments were introduced in order to protect the interests of public health by respecting the precautionary principle and to reduce the consumer's desire to ingest nicotine with an uncharacteristic taste or smell which may give the impression of a healthy product.

Opinion on smoking ban in gambling venues in Latvia

The Ombudsman issued an [opinion to the Constitutional Court in Case No 2024-23-01](#) on compliance of Section 12 of the Law of 11 January 2024 "Amendments to the Law on Circulation of Tobacco Products, Plant Smoking Products, Electronic Smoking Devices and their Liquids", insofar as Section 10(2) of the Law on Circulation of Tobacco Products, Tobacco Substitute Products, Plant Smoking Products, Electronic Smoking Devices and their Liquids is supplemented with Para 17, with Article 1 and the first three sentences of Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia".

The Ombudsman concluded that no infringement of subjective rights has been established in the case, which could therefore be grounds for the Constitutional Court to decide on the possible termination of the proceedings.

Opinion on the amount of the land use fee

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion the Constitutional Court in Case No 2024-21-01](#) to "On compliance of the words "Four Percent" in the second sentence of Section 38(2) and Section 42(7) of the Law "On the Time of Entry into Force and the Procedure of Application of the Introductory Part, Inheritance Rights and Property Rights of the Restored Latvian Civil Law of 1937" with Article 1 and the first and third sentences of Article 105 of the Constitution (Satversme) of the Republic of Latvia". The Opinion concludes that not all the means which would reduce the restriction of the applicant's fundamental rights have been properly assessed.

Right to work

Work is one of the basic human needs - it not only provides a living but also contributes to personal development and growth. Work gives people the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and talents, helping them fulfil their unique potential. It contributes to inclusion in society by encouraging active participation in its social and economic processes. The fundamental rights of the individual in the field of employment are enshrined in Articles 106, 107 and 108 of the Constitution (Satversme). They are also regulated by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Revised European Social Charter and other international instruments binding on Latvia.

Description of the reporting period

The submissions to the Ombudsman show that the urgency of employment-related issues in 2024 has remained broadly unchanged compared to 2023 and 2022, particularly in relation to complaints about alleged mobbing, bossing and unfair and unethical working environment. Individuals often turn to the Ombudsman with complaints about prolonged and unresolved conflicts at work, unethical and unequal treatment. Individuals often seek to resolve personal and emotional disputes and antipathies at work not primarily in the workplace, using internal resources and procedures, but outside the workplace via legal means, by referring them to law enforcement authorities.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Unethical and unprofessional communication and behaviour by municipal council chairpersons

In the verification procedures No 2024-23-26F,27A,27L and No 2023-08-27A, the Ombudsman found unethical, offensive, degrading and psychological terror-forming communication and actions of two chairpersons of municipal councils. In one case, violent communication and conduct, including unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the form of verbal abuse, was also found. In both cases, the Ombudsman found that the communication style, language and behaviour did not comply with the requirements of communication culture and interaction established for the position of the chairpersons of the municipal council, violated moral and ethical norms, and had the potential to violate human dignity and honour protected by the Constitution (Satversme). The Ombudsman called on the members of the municipal council to assess the conduct and actions of the official in question before the Ethics Committee in accordance with the ethical norms of the municipality. In the verification procedure No. 2023-08-27A, the Ombudsman urged the municipality to immediately approve the Code of Ethics

for the municipal councillors, as well as to educate the employees of the administration of the municipality and the councillors in ethics of professional communication and conflict resolution.

Right to another job in case of long-term dismissal

[In the verification procedure No 2022-32-15A,17AB](#), the Ombudsman examined the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Activities of Public Officials in relation to the right to subsistence of a public official employed on the basis of an employment contract during a prolonged suspension from work. The Ombudsman concluded that each group of public officials is subject to appropriate restrictions - the higher and more responsible the position, the stricter the restrictions. The Ombudsman pointed out that each case must be assessed individually, including the offence committed by the official and the official's own desire to take up another position under the conditions of the law for the period of suspension in order to maintain his or her sustenance, and that individual disputes concerning the restrictions imposed by law may be resolved by a court.

Right to work as an insolvency administrator and forensic expert

The Ombudsman provided an [opinion](#) to the Constitutional Court in Case No 2023-44-01 "On Compliance of Para 3 of Section 13(2) of the Insolvency Law, insofar as it establishes a prohibition for a person in respect of whom criminal proceedings for the commission of a deliberate criminal offence have been terminated on grounds not rehabilitating the person, to work as an insolvency administrator, with the first part of Article 101 and the first sentence of Article 106 of the Constitution (Satversme)".

The Ombudsman also provided an [opinion](#) to the Constitutional Court in Case No 2023-47-01 "On Compliance of Section 6(3)(5) of the Law on Court Experts with the First Part of Article 101 and the First Sentence of Article 106 of the Constitution (Satversme)". In both cases, the Ombudsman concluded that the restriction of fundamental rights established in the contested norms did not comply with the principle of proportionality. The objective of the restriction of fundamental rights can be achieved to an equivalent quality by an alternative means - individual assessment.

Right to social security

The right to social security is a very important and specific human right, as its realisation is closely linked to the financial capacity of each country. Moreover, the State has a duty to achieve the fullest possible realisation of social rights, within the maximum limits of available resources, at an increasing pace and with the help of adequate resources. The right to social security is guaranteed by Article 109 of the Constitution (Satversme), and the purpose of this right is to serve, as far as possible, to ensure a dignified existence.

Description of the reporting period

Ombudsman received 105 submissions on various aspects of the right to social security, which is not significantly different from the number of submissions received in 2023 and 2022 (106 and 108 submissions respectively). During the reporting period, the Ombudsman has mainly explained the procedure for granting and calculating pensions, social insurance benefits or social assistance.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Report on the unratified articles of the European Social Charter

The Ombudsman presented the [alternative report](#) on the Ad Hoc Report of the Republic of Latvia on the living-cost crisis to the European Economic and Social Committee. The purpose of the report was to identify the measures taken in response to the substantial increase in consumer prices experienced in 2021 and 2022 and to indicate the measures to be taken on a regular basis, as required by law. The alternative report complemented the national report.

Application to the Constitutional Court on the social scholarship

In 2023, the Ombudsman [called on](#) the Parliaments (Saeima) to amend the Law on Higher Education Institutions to provide that students from large families who study at a higher education institution outside Latvia are also entitled to receive the social scholarship "Studēt gods". As the legislator had not made any changes, the Ombudsman [has submitted an application to](#) the Constitutional Court.

On amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance

Pointing to the disproportionate reduction of the housing allowance coefficients, the Ombudsman [called on](#) the Parliament (Saeima), before adopting amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance, to carefully assess whether in the current economic situation it is socially responsible and proportionate to reduce social support for the poorest part of the Latvian population - receivers of the guaranteed minimum income benefit, as well as poor and low-income families.

On the rights of protected electricity users

The Ombudsman, examining [the verification procedure No 2024-20-17B](#) on the right of a protected user to receive state support for the reduction of the electricity bill fee, recognised that the differential treatment of protected users, although established with a legitimate aim, was not justified and proportionate, hence the contested regulation did not comply with Articles 91 and 109 of the Constitution (Satversme). The Ombudsman recommended the Cabinet of Ministers to ensure that all protected users have the right to actually receive the support, if they are not the direct parties to the electricity trading contract, but sub-users and the end-user (owner, manager, etc.) has not made a socially responsible decision by concluding a contract with an electricity trader who is obliged to provide the service or who provides it voluntarily.

Ensuring a minimum amount for old-age pension in case of aggregation of insurance periods

The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Welfare to assess the situation when persons who have acquired the right to an old-age pension [as a result of aggregation of insurance periods](#) accumulated in Latvia and another EU Member State are not guaranteed the right to receive social security at least in the minimum amount. The Ministry of Welfare has provided an explanation to the State Social Insurance Agency and called for a change in the current practice.

On using the accumulated funded pension if the person is not entitled to a pension

The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Welfare to assess the legal framework of [state funded pensions](#) and to consider amending it to ensure fair opportunities for members of the funded pension scheme to dispose of their property - accumulated pension capital - if they are not entitled to an old-age pension when they reach retirement age.

Early withdrawal of accumulated funded pension capital due to important reasons

The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Welfare to assess the legal framework of [state funded pensions and private pensions](#) and to consider amending it to establish a legal framework that would ensure fair opportunities for members of funded and private pension schemes to dispose of their property - accumulated pension capital - by taking the opportunity to withdraw it in advance due to important reasons.

Parental allowance when the child is born prematurely

The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Welfare to propose amendments to the law in order to eliminate the differential treatment of [parents of premature babies](#). The Ministry of Welfare has approached the Ministry of Health to discuss possible clarifications to the existing regulation.

Right to housing

The right to housing means the right to live in security, peace and dignity. International human rights instruments set a minimum standard for this right, which the State must ensure within the resources available to it. But the right to housing cannot be interpreted narrowly to mean only the right to a "roof over one's head". The State has a duty to firstly provide assistance to those who, for objective reasons, are unable to exercise their right to housing. The national legal framework identifies low-income status as one of the main criteria for receiving assistance. Thus, the level of income and the fact that a person cannot, for objective reasons, support himself or herself and acquire housing on the real estate market are grounds for a person to qualify for State-guaranteed assistance. However, the right to housing does not mean that the State is obliged to provide housing to everyone according to their needs and wishes, but that a minimum standard of this right must be ensured.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 69 submissions on housing rights, slightly more than in the previous reporting period, when 61 submissions were received. The submissions reveal a new trend, which is likely to continue in the coming periods, namely that there is confusion about certain provisions of the Residential Tenancy Law not only among the population, but also among municipalities. It had been 10 years since the last major monitoring of the quality of municipal housing, thus, during the reporting period, a new monitoring of municipal housing was carried out, covering a total of 18 municipalities and 65 dwellings on random sampling. The report will be published in the first quarter of 2025.

It should be noted that the 38 submissions on housing issues were mainly related to housing management. The submissions mostly concerned the validity of the bills issued by the housing manager, repairs, as well as manager's communication with residents about the scope of the parties' rights and obligations, but the Ombudsman is not empowered to intervene in such matters.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Report on municipal housing assistance according to length of residence declaration

[The report on municipal housing assistance depending on the duration of residence declaration](#) stated that the municipalities of Aizkraukle, Augšdaugava, Kekava and Olaine have violated the law by unreasonably requiring a certain duration of residence declaration for those residents who should be provided with housing assistance in the first place. The municipalities concerned were invited to amend their binding regulations. While it is permissible to require certain duration of residence declaration for persons to be registered in the general register, it should be noted that such assistance should not be

formal and practically unavailable. Those municipalities that had imposed a condition of five years or more were invited to reconsider and set a more reasonable time limit.

Problems with municipal housing tenants' debt

In 2024, the Ombudsman addressed the problem of municipal housing tenants' debts in Riga State Municipality. In particular, two municipal residential houses had accumulated debts which resulted in the interruption of hot water supply in one case and delay in the start of heating season in the other case.

The Law on Residential Properties and the Law on Administration of Residential Houses do not imply that the liability of the owner of the apartment ceases upon the transfer of the apartment to tenancy. The mandate agreement for the conclusion and administration of leases of residential and non-residential premises binds only its parties, the municipality and the manager, and does not affect the rights and obligations of other apartment owners. This means that, notwithstanding the agreement, the municipality remains liable for the expenses incurred in the apartment property it owns, i.e. the municipality is essentially liable for the debts incurred in respect of the dwellings it owns.

On permanent tenancy contracts for residential premises

The Ombudsman has received submissions regarding changing the unlimited tenancy contracts into fixed-term contracts under the new provisions of the Residential Tenancy Law. For example, Talsi municipality had planned to make unlimited rental contracts fixed term, but if the residents refused, the tenancy would be terminated. Each case should be assessed individually, however, in general, it is recognised that the municipality is not obliged to reassess the basis on which a person was initially rented a municipal apartment within the framework of an autonomous function. If the person and the municipality have not concluded an agreement on fixed term, the previously concluded tenancy agreement of unlimited duration remains in force, while a decision of the municipal council refusing to renew and extend the tenancy agreement does not terminate the tenancy agreement. As stated by the Senate of the Supreme Court in its judgment of 27 October 2017 in case No SKC - 252/2017, as long as the tenancy agreement has not been terminated by the conclusion of an agreement between the parties or by the entry into legal force of a court judgment, it is valid with all the legal consequences arising therefrom.

Right to health protection

The right to health protection is guaranteed by Article 111 of the Constitution (Satversme) and is also enshrined in Articles 25 and 28 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 12 of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Articles 11 and 13 of the European Social Charter.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 168 submissions on aspects of the right to health protection, a significant increase from 113 in the previous reporting period. The Ombudsman had previously been made aware of the problems raised in the submissions. People continue to point to systemic problems such as inaccessibility of medical services, high co-payments (especially for oncological and rare diseases), high prices of medicines, quality of medical services, and the process of handling complaints about the quality of medical services. Compared to the previous reporting period, there were more complaints about the availability and coverage of health services (long queues for publicly funded health services, including diagnostic and rehabilitation services).

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman followed up on the government's commitment to reduce the prices of medicines, bringing them in line with other Baltic countries. At the Ombudsman's request, the Government amended the legal framework to include atypical cases in the individual medicines' reimbursement mechanism. Given that conclusions on the impact of the new regulation can only be drawn after a certain period, the Ombudsman will continue to follow up on this issue when analysing the decisions taken based on the new norm.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the professional standard for psychotherapy specialists

Examining [the verification procedure No 2023-15-27L](#), the Ombudsman found that there were confusing similarities between the working methods used by psychotherapists providing health care and those used by psychotherapy specialists providing counselling services. The Ombudsman concluded that, despite the similarities between the working methods of a psychotherapist and a psychotherapy specialist, the profession of a psychotherapist is strictly regulated, whereas the profession of the psychotherapy specialist has no legal framework, standard, qualification requirements and monitoring mechanism, and no corresponding category is defined in the profession classification.

Given that the work of a psychotherapist is aimed at restoring and strengthening person's mental health and that public health is one of the areas to be particularly protected, a situation in which the profession

using psychotherapy methods does not have clear requirements and supervision is not in the public interest.

The Ombudsman called upon the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with professional organisations in psychotherapy to assess the regulation of the profession of psychotherapy specialist and to ensure the development of a regulation of the standard or professional qualification requirements for the profession of psychotherapy specialist and the mechanism of supervision of their professional activities.

On the compliance of the conduct of the Health Inspectorate with the principle of good governance

In the verification procedure No 2024-26-19A,19AA, the Ombudsman found that the Health Inspectorate, when examining complaints about the quality of health care services, has difficulties proving that the staff of a medical institution has acted negligently and failed to provide care appropriate to the patient's condition, failed to act proactively and to provide the most appropriate care for the patient's condition. If an appropriate method of care was used, for example at the insistence of the patient's relatives, the actions of the healthcare professionals in such a situation are assessed to determine whether they were appropriate. The evidence provided by the complainant about the events should be given the same weight as the evidence provided by the staff of the medical institution, otherwise, in Ombudsman's opinion, an effective and impartial investigation of violations of patients' rights and the effective protection of patients' rights may be hindered, since the assessment of the situation in cases of such conflicts may be one-sided and biased with regard to facts that may not be recorded in the medical records. The patient is a vulnerable party in the treatment process, often unable to fully defend his or her rights and to prove the wrongdoing of medical practitioners. If a patient is in a serious condition in a medical institution, he or she has virtually no possibility to defend himself or herself in the event of irregularities.

Respecting the rights of a person subjected to a compulsory measure of a medical nature

In the verification procedure No 2024-75-2AD,2CD,19B, the Ombudsman assessed respect for the rights of a person subjected to a medical coercive measure – treatment in psychiatric hospital. The case examined revealed breaches in the provision of access to derivative medical records and, in the case of patients subjected to medical restraint, breaches in their right to exercise in the open air for a period of time that complies with human rights standards. The psychiatric hospital has taken into account the recommendations made in the framework of the verification procedure and has remedied the infringements found.

Right to education

The right to education is guaranteed by Article 112 of the Constitution (Satversme). Education gives everyone the opportunity to develop, improve and live a life full of self-respect. Education is one of the important foundations of human life. Article 1(2) of the Convention against Discrimination in Education states that the term 'education' refers to all types and levels of education and includes access to education, the standards and quality of education and the conditions under which it is provided.²

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, two issues were to be urgently addressed in adult education, namely the right of young people wishing to study abroad to receive education documents in an accelerated procedure and the right of persons who have volunteered for national defence service to study in their chosen study programme at state budget expense after completing their service. For more on the right to education, see [Rights of children and youth](#). [Child's right to education](#).

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On young people's right to education abroad

The question of whether the right to education of young people wishing to study abroad is being restricted because the centralised examination certificates are issued later than the application deadlines set by foreign universities has become a public issue. In view of the urgency of the matter and the fact that no agreement was initially reached with the responsible authority and the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ombudsman sent a request to the Prime Minister to intervene immediately. Following the [Ombudsman's opinion](#), certificates of centralised examinations were exceptionally issued to 99 pupils who applied with a justified request for the documents to be issued earlier.

On the right to education of persons who have voluntarily completed national defence service

To motivate young people to volunteer for national defence service, the legislator has imposed an obligation on educational institutions to guarantee a state financed study place financed to a person who has volunteered for and completed national defence service, if he or she meets the admission requirements of the chosen study programme. Examining of two submissions from persons who had been refused admission to studies the Ombudsman concluded that the educational institutions had different views on the interpretation of the legal provision.

² Latvijas Republikas Satversmes komentāri. VIII nodaļa. Cilvēka pamattiesības. Autoru kolektīvs prof. R. Baloža zinātniskā vadībā. – Rīga: Latvijas Vēstnesis, pages 636-637.

When the Ombudsman became involved in the matter, the responsible ministries took action to ensure that the educational institutions adopted a decision in favour of the persons. Both young people were enrolled in their chosen study programme at the expense of the state budget.

Right to culture

An active cultural life is one of the key conditions for preserving ethnic identity. In other words, efforts to preserve and develop one's own culture show a commitment to developing and strengthening one's ethnic identity.³

Description of the reporting period

In the reporting year, the Ombudsman focused on the organisation of remuneration of the directors of artistic groups and whether the identified shortcomings could affect the preservation of the tradition of song and dance festivals as an element of national cultural heritage.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the remuneration of artistic directors for the preservation of the tradition of song and dance festivals as an element of national cultural heritage

The Ombudsman found that the current remuneration model for the heads of artistic groups does not provide adequate remuneration for the work invested in maintaining the tradition of the Song and Dance Festival. Insufficient funding hinders the fulfilment of Latvia's obligation under its international obligations to work actively to preserve, develop and strengthen the tradition of the Song and Dance Festival, which is included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Ombudsman [called on the Government](#) to decide on the possibility of introducing a new unified remuneration model for the directors of artistic groups as early as in 2024.

The state's responsibility to preserve and develop the tradition of song and dance festivals is not only a national but also international obligation. Since 25 November 2004, when Latvia acceded to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the tradition of the Song and Dance Festival, as an internationally recognised intangible cultural heritage asset, must be preserved in accordance with the international legal framework: safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage means carrying out activities aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including its

³ Dr. Elmārs Vēbers. Kultūras tiesības un sabiedrības integrācija. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstnesis, Laidiens 14.06.2000., No. 223/225.

identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, in particular through formal and non-formal education, and revitalising the various aspects of such heritage. The State must therefore take responsibility for the preservation and development of intangible cultural heritage in its territory by implementing the necessary support measures.

Right to enabling environment

The unusual weather patterns and natural disasters that have been experienced in many parts of the world over the past year, including Europe and Latvia, have led to an increasingly serious consideration of human rights in the context of climate change. International efforts to mitigate humanity's impact on the climate and to think in advance about the capacity to adapt to climate change are closely linked to the right to live in a favourable environment and the capacity of individual countries to take responsibility for this. A number of rulings in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) marked positive developments in the recognition of States' obligations to mitigate climate change (most notably in [Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz and Others v. Switzerland](#), case No. 53600/20).

Also in Latvia, the judgment of the Constitutional Court in Case [No 2023-01-03](#) brought by environmental organisations against the Cabinet of Ministers on the norm of cutting down trees of smaller diameter should be assessed as a significant achievement in the constitutional defence of environmental rights.

During the reporting period, the Latvian government continued to work on the draft Climate Law, as well as on subordinate amendments to several important environmental laws. [The Climate Law](#) was submitted to the Parliament (Saeima) in October 2024. The law is based on the commitments of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement. The draft law aims to implement at national level several provisions of the European Commission's "Ready for target 55" legislation which should have entered into force by 1 December 2023. Given the long delay in the Government's drafting of the law, the Ombudsman considers it necessary for the Parliament to prioritise the adoption of the law and related amendments, emphasising the need to ensure the public interest in a favourable and healthy environment.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 81 submissions related to the right to an enabling environment. This is a significant increase from the previous years (56 submissions in 2023, and 35 in 2022). Of the submissions received, 35 concerned noise, 12 concerned air pollution, 9 concerned spatial planning and the rest concerned various other environmental issues.

Most of the submissions were about noise nuisance from various sources - air traffic near the airport, motorways, industrial activity, other businesses such as restaurants, nightclubs and gambling halls and visitors to these entertainment venues. At the beginning of the year, the Ombudsman invited residents to take part in [a survey on the impact of entertainment noise on night-time sleep](#) and, based on the results of the survey, [discussed the topic at the festival Lampa](#).

Regarding the development of wind farms, the Ombudsman has noted that the residents understand and are aware of the importance of Latvia's energy independence, but the way in which the processes related to the advancement of these projects are being carried out is not acceptable to a large part of society. The Ombudsman is not convinced that opinions of residents have been heard and that due attention has been paid to ensuring public participation in the environmental impact assessment process and has therefore initiated a verification procedure.

Several complaints have been received about nuisance caused by animals kept on neighbouring properties. The Ombudsman has concluded, firstly, that due to changes in the regulatory framework, there is currently no legal mechanism that can effectively protect against animal noise, odours or nuisance, unless it is related to a breach of animal welfare rules.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the legal framework for entertainment noise

[In the verification procedure No 2022-56-22B](#) on compliance of the legal regulation on entertainment noise with the Constitution (Satversme), the Ombudsman concluded that although the State has provided for an administrative penalty for the producer of entertainment noise if it disturbs the peace of residents, it is not possible to effectively protect the rights of residents on this basis alone. The State has failed to provide for regulatory provisions that motivate respect for and non-violation of the human right to privacy (peace at home) and a healthy environment, thus failing to fulfil the positive obligation under the fundamental rights standard to protect people's homes (private life) from noise.

On the environmental noise problem in Vecmīlgrāvis

[In the case No 2022-11-22B](#), the Ombudsman found that no public consultations were held to allow residents to express their views on the planned polluting activities prior to the adoption of decisions on the issuance/review of Category B permits. In this case, neither the State Environmental Service nor Riga City Municipality had taken a decision to hear the residents' opinion. Moreover, no regulatory act sets out the criteria according to which the State Environmental Service and the municipalities should decide on the hearing of public opinion in relation to a planned category B polluting activity. In this respect, the Ombudsman sees a need for clarifications in the draft regulatory framework on pollution prevention.

Informing the public on the installation of solar parks

[In the verification procedure No 2024-27-22F,27G](#), the Ombudsman stated that public participation should be ensured in the case of solar parks whose potential capacity far exceeds the needs of a single household and whose footprint demonstrably alters the traditional rural landscape.

Rights of children and youth

Children's rights are a set of fundamental rights and freedoms that must be guaranteed to every child, without exception. A child has limited legal capacity and specific rights linked to age, family situation and other circumstances. As a physically and intellectually immature person, the child requires special protection and care from their parents or persons acting in their place and of the State, including appropriate legal protection. In all relations and institutional and legislative work affecting the child, his or her rights and legal interests shall take precedence.

Description of the reporting period

The Ombudsman also acts as an ombudsman for children and is a full member of the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children ([ENOC](#)).

The most topical issue was children's right to health in the context of helping children abusing addictive substances.

The initiative launched in 2023 to establish a [unified approach](#) to the consideration of ethical violations by Municipal Orphan and Custody Courts has been successful - in May 2024 the Parliament adopted [amendments to the Law on Orphan and Custody Courts](#), providing for the consideration of complaints about ethical violations of orphan and custody court employees by an ethics committee established by the respective municipality. This had also been the proposed solution.

The lack of a legal redress mechanism and its ineffectiveness in the case of breaches of teachers' ethics bordering on emotional abuse were highlighted. If no administrative offence proceedings for violence are initiated, the conduct remains unassessed. At present, it is the responsibility of the management of each educational institution to assess whether an educator has complied with principles of ethics. The Code of Ethics is also developed individually by each educational institution. The Latvian Union of Education and Science Workers started drafting a common code of ethics for teachers in 2024 and submitted it to the Ministry of Education and Science for approval in the summer of 2024. The Ombudsman followed the further development of the Code and made proposals for the development of a common procedure for dealing with misconduct.

In the area of rights of children's and young people, the number of submissions has increased. The Ombudsman received 420 written submissions, 1 of which was received from a child (in 2023 - 405 submissions, 3 from children; in 2022 - 238 submissions, 1 from a child), and provided 1189 consultations in person, by telephone and electronically (1088 in 2023 and 786 in 2022), a total of 1609 requests (1493 in 2023 and 1024 in 2022).

The largest number of requests (241) related to the continuing practice of issuing lists of teaching materials to be purchased by parents of school and pre-school children and demanding payments related to the acquisition of education, as well as other irregularities.

As in previous years, similar number of submissions (177) was regarding access rights (213 in 2023, and 131 in 2022), as there had been no improvement in this area. The Ombudsman's proposal to address the long-standing problem by creating a service for the restoration of relationships has so far failed to gain traction. The number of submissions for termination/renewal of custody has also remained at the same level, with 101 submissions received in 2024 (109 in 2023 and 69 in 2022). This could indicate a more proactive response to violations of children's rights in the family.

The number of submissions on violence in educational institutions - 59 (53 in 2023) - shows that the situation is not improving and that educational institutions are not violence-free environment.

From 9 to 10 April, the Ombudsman hosted [representatives of the Children's Ombudsmen of the Baltic States and Poland](#). During the meeting, the representatives of each country reported on the activities carried out during the year and discussed the following issues: providing assistance to children abusing addictive substances, preventing violence in educational institutions, providing children with sex education in line with the law, and monitoring child protection institutions. Participants visited the new Children and Youth Mental Health Centre at the Children's Clinical University Hospital to learn more about the field of child and youth mental health in Latvia and hear about the experiences of foreign colleagues.

System for the protection of children rights

The protection of the rights of the child is carried out through cooperation between the family, state and local authorities, public organisations and other natural and legal persons. It is everyone's responsibility to provide the child with the necessary assistance. The municipal Orphan and Custody Court protects the personal and property interests and rights of the child. The rights and interests of the child shall be a priority in all situations.

Description of the reporting period

Section 5.¹(1) of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights defines the range of persons who are required to acquire specialised knowledge in the field of child protection. The Ombudsman submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Welfare to extend the scope of persons specified in the Law to include assistant advocates, assistant bailiffs and assistant notaries, as well as to amend paragraph 27 of the Transitional Provisions by adding the words "represents the parents of the child in civil cases concerning custody and access rights; in administrative cases, appealing against administrative acts and factual actions of municipal Orphan and Custody Courts or other authorities, if it affects or may affect the rights and interests of the child" in relation to advocates. The Ministry organised discussions among experts in the field, the issue was examined by a sub-committee of the Children's Affairs Council, which drafted a proposal agreed by a majority, but the law was not amended accordingly. Similarly, no amendments have been made to the legal aid providers in cases which affect or may affect the rights and interests of the child, nor to the obligation for them to acquire the expertise already proposed for 2023.

The Latvian Council of Attorneys informed that in 2024 attorneys are not provided with training on child protection, therefore it is impossible for them to meet the deadlines set by the Cabinet of Ministers for the development of professional competence. The Child Protection Centre has pointed out the formalities which have prevented the School of Public Administration from providing training to specialists. Following a discussion with the institutions concerned, the School of Public Administration provided training to some of the lawyers by the end of the year.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On children's right to freedom of expression and to be protected from information harmful to their well-being

Restricting children's right to freedom of expression is not only permissible but also necessary if it aims to protect children from content harmful to their well-being and development. However, restrictions on freedom of expression must be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child and must be provided for by law. Latvia has not developed guidelines under Article 17(e) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to protect children from information harmful to their well-being. The law does not define what constitutes 'material of an erotic nature', nor does it provide for liability for violations of the prohibitions and restrictions on content harmful to children set out in Article 50 of the CRC, except in relation to pornography. This situation not only undermines the child's right to protection from information and materials harmful to their well-being, but also the ability of parents to ensure that the child does not have access to this information. The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Welfare [to remedy the shortcomings in the legislation](#) and to draw up appropriate guidelines. The Ministry informed that due to time constraints, it had not been able to remedy the shortcomings in the legal framework within the reporting year.

On methodological materials for assessing children's sexual behaviour

When assessing the methodological materials issued by non-governmental organisations for specialists to assess children's sexual behaviour, the Ombudsman [concluded](#) that the state authorities had not only failed to provide quality methodological materials themselves, but also failed to recognise the inadequacy of the child sexual behaviour assessment system developed by others and to prevent its implementation in child-care and educational institutions. The Ombudsman called on the responsible ministries and the Child Protection Centre not to use methodological materials that do not comply with Latvian legislation in their work with children under the age of 16. The Ministry of Education and Science informed the Parliament that the development of a child-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education curriculum was underway and a digital training course for educators on child sex education had already been created.

On State Police raids in educational institutions

On the issue of police raids and the procedure for conducting subsequent administrative offence proceedings, the State Police has still not complied with the Ombudsman's [recommendation to](#) develop internal regulations (guidelines) for conducting raids and to create uniform written information in child-friendly language on children's rights and obligations in administrative offence proceedings. The

implementation of the recommendation is also important in other cases of administrative offences committed by children: citizens' complaints show that children are not properly informed about their rights and obligations, officials delay in informing legal representatives, etc. Thus, persons are unable to fully exercise their rights. The Ombudsman will follow up on the recommendation.

Child's right to safety

Children need special protection and care, including adequate legal protection. The State has a duty to provide every child with the protection necessary for their well-being, considering the rights and obligations of their parents, guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, and to this end all appropriate legislative and administrative measures should be taken.

Description of the reporting period

[Examination on the provision of assistance to children abusing addictive substances](#) found that children who come to the attention of the police while under the influence are subject to administrative proceedings. Each case is reported to the municipal Orphan and Custody Court and the social services. Children who have been under the influence of alcohol are thus brought to the attention of the municipal authorities - the social services, the municipal Orphan and Custody Court and the municipal administrative commission - which is the basis for starting work with the child and his or her family. The Child Protection Centre recommends that the information received from the police, medical institutions or individuals, orphanages and childcare institutions should be followed up to ensure that the needs of the children are met.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the Prevention authority of the State Police

Prevention authority is a unit of the State Police where a child who has committed an offence against the law or a child with social behavioural deviations is placed in cases defined by the law. It is not the function of the State Police to care for and look after children, but it is their duty, in cooperation with other authorities, to do their utmost to bring the child to an appropriate and safe environment. The premises of the Prevention authority do not meet children's needs and are not suitable for accommodating children. First, the issue on the possibility to take children in Riga, including children with aggressive behaviour, to a crisis centre or care institution need to be resolved. The Ombudsman has recommended the Ministry of the Interior to close the Prevention authority.

On availability of institutions

The Ombudsman appreciates cooperation of Riga City Municipal Police with other municipalities in situations when a child is to be taken to a family in the territory of another municipality, if the legal representatives cannot come to collect the child or there are other circumstances when the competent authorities of the place of residence need to be involved. However, there are difficulties in contacting the authorities of other municipalities after work hours. The Ombudsman recommends to provide contact information – a telephone number for immediate assistance to a child – on municipality websites in the section on Orphan's and Custody Courts, for municipal cooperation groups to develop a procedure on cooperation and the procedure for the protection of children's rights in the municipality outside the working hours of the institutions, while providing a place where children (also under the influence of intoxicating substances) are placed if they do not need to stay in a medical institution, but there are obstacles to handing over the children to their legal representatives.

Child's right to identity

Identity consists of many elements, such as origin, race, culture, religion, language, nationality, name, family ties. The right of a child to know their parents implies the obligation of the parents to establish paternity. In Latvia, approximately 3% of children born each year are without paternity. The Guidelines for the Development of Children, Youth and the Family 2022-2027 include strengthening equal opportunities for children without established paternity as one of the lines of action. The State should make every effort to establish child's paternity by resolving situations where the father of the child is unidentifiable.

Description of the reporting period

Child Protection Centre highlighted that the number of families who want to live outside the society is growing and that state and local authorities are unable to protect children's rights and interests. Parents choose not to register the birth of their child, thus failing to fulfil their obligation to notify on the birth. Sometimes children are not born in the presence of a medical person, so that the parentage of the child cannot be established. No meaningful solution was found during the inter-institutional cooperation meetings. The legislation does not provide for liability for deliberate choice not to notify the birth of a child within one month, so there is no legal basis for initiating administrative or criminal proceedings. In such cases, the State has not developed a mechanism to protect the rights of the child to registry of their birth, as the authorities do not have the appropriate tools (processes) to obtain the necessary

information. The Ombudsman called upon the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with other institutions, to develop a mechanism for registering the birth of a child in cases where a parent fails to fulfil their obligation and to consider imposing parental responsibility. The Ministry does not see any grounds for reintroducing such a regulation or, even more so, for introducing criminal liability, but a parent's deliberate choice not to report the birth of a child or to delay the registration of the birth fact (for example, by refusing to cooperate with the municipal Orphan and Custody Court) could be regarded as an exercise of parental rights contrary to the best interests of the child, and the municipal Orphan and Custody Court would therefore have grounds to decide to restrict parental rights. Given that the Ministry does not see the need to improve the legal framework, but that in practice it has proven to be insufficiently effective, the Ombudsman has prepared report on the identified problem.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On nationality in adoption process

The legal framework does not provide for the inclusion of information on the language of communication of the adoptive family and the nationality of the adoptive parents, nor on the language of communication and the nationality of the child to be adopted in the Adoption Register. This shows that these identity elements, including the ethnic origin of the child, are not sufficiently considered when determining the compatibility of the child with the potential adoptive parents. Thus, the Ministry of Welfare, when initiating the adoption process and informing potential adoptive parents about the child to be adopted, is not in the best position to ensure that the child's right to identity is preserved. The Ombudsman recommended that the Ministry [improve the legal framework for adoption](#).

On the right to an identity of the child in out-family care

The municipal Orphan and Custody Court must take special care to ensure that the rights of the child in out-family care are respected, including regarding paternity. In the case under examination, it was found that, when the child was placed in out-family care, the recognition of paternity was not promoted, although the Municipal Orphan and Custody Court was aware of the child's parentage, as the child's mother had informed it and the alleged father of the child did not deny it either. The Municipal Orphan and Custody Court considered that the establishment of paternity was not in the best interests of the child, as the alleged father of the child was mentally ill and could not take care of the child. Such a view is contrary to the rights of the child. The Ombudsman recommended the Orphan and Custody Court to [facilitate the establishment of paternity in](#) the future when the alleged father of the child becomes known, regardless of his state of health.

On the right to the identity of the child when the mother's custody is terminated

General Registry Office refused to accept the parents' joint application for voluntary recognition of paternity because the mother's custody had been terminated and recommended that they go to court. [The Ombudsman was found](#) that this action did not comply with the legal provisions and the rights of the child. Moreover, this practice had existed for a long time in General Registry Offices. The Ministry of Justice also acknowledged that the mother of a child deprived of custody or whose custody has been terminated retains the right to file an application for recognition of paternity together with the child's father. The registry offices have been informed of the change in the practice of application of the legal framework.

On the use of native language during recess

The school's internal rules stipulate that pupils may only speak Latvian during recess. The Ombudsman [explained](#) that Section 2(3) of the State Language Law does not apply to the use of languages in informal communication. During recess, informal communication takes place between pupils, so they are allowed to speak their native language. However, pupils' communication in Latvian should also be encouraged during recess. If Latvian is only used during lessons, the opportunity for pupils to practise Latvian as the State language is significantly reduced. The use of native language during recess should not exclude pupils who do not know the particular language or do not wish to speak it.

Child's access rights

The child has access rights, i.e. the right to have personal relations and direct contact with any parent, sibling, grandparent or other person with whom the child has lived for a long period of time in one household. Parents, on the other hand, have not only the right but also the duty to have contact with the child. Access does not fall within the scope of custody.

Description of the reporting period

Ensuring children's access rights has not improved in cases when parents settle disputes in court. There are still difficulties in enforcing court decisions in cases concerning custody and access rights. Difficulties in enforcing court decisions have also been found to be [due to the reluctance of the child](#).

The Ombudsman found that social services practice informing the municipal Orphan and Custody Courts that it is not necessary to carry out social work with the parents due to non-fulfilment of access rights. The grounds for this are, for example, that no social problems have been identified and the child's basic needs are being met in the family. Social work is carried out with families where the social situation is

difficult, there are high and medium risks to child's safety, the parents have mental disabilities, unemployment, lack of material resources, etc. The Ombudsman has asked the Ministry of Welfare for its opinion on the duties and tasks of social services in carrying out social work when the municipal Orphan and Custody Court has ordered a parent involved in a case concerning the termination of custody rights due to non-compliance with the court order, in cooperation with social services, to eliminate the conditions unfavourable to the child's development. Social services do not have access to methodological materials for such cases. The Ministry did not consider it necessary to improve the protection of the rights of children who are subject to dispute resolution within the framework of the national mechanism for the protection of rights, or to establish an appropriate service, to develop methodological material for social workers to work with children and parents who cannot agree on important issues regarding the child.

Even though every year the Ombudsman draws the attention of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Welfare to the problems of implementation of access rights, no improvements have been achieved so far. The Ombudsman will therefore continue his efforts to persuade these two ministries.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the service to restore and improve child and parent relationship

There is still no service in place to restore and improve the relationship between children and their parents. To ensure effective protection of the rights of the child in parental disputes, [already at the beginning of 2021](#) the Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Welfare to assess the need to establish a state-funded social service aimed at restoring and improving the relationship between a child and a separated parent or to propose another effective solution to achieve this goal .

On the rights' protection mechanism in access cases

ECtHR Judgment of 2023 in the case "[E. K. v. Latvia](#)" clearly demonstrated systemic deficiencies in the national mechanism for the protection of access rights, and the State is obliged to act responsibly to establish a mechanism that would ensure the right to family life of both the child and the separated parent in the event of a dispute. The Ombudsman has not established any improvements after the judgment to prevent similar situations and to ensure that parents have access to services that improve their relationship with children and help them be better parents.

On access in out-family care

There is still a trend of limiting access between children in out-family care and their relatives. The Ombudsman examined two such cases in 2024. [In one of them](#), it was found that the grandparent's and grandchild's access right had been unjustifiably restricted, i.e. without a decision of the municipal Orphans' and Custody Court, when the child was in foster care. [In the second case](#), it was found that for a long time the Orphans' and Custody Court had failed to consider the application of the guardian and to take a decision on the child's access to the incarcerated mother, allowing the child to stay with the mother in prison for several days and visit the mother's husband abroad without a decision of the Orphan and Custody Court. The Ombudsman issued recommendations to municipal Orphan and Custody Courts and the Child Protection Centre.

Compulsory enforcement of access decisions

A low-income person does not have enough money to go to a bailiff to enforce a court judgment to protect her child and her rights. The court has laid down the procedure for exercising child's access rights, but they are impossible to be enforced due to actions of the other parent. If the person was not exempt from court costs at the time of the civil proceedings, but his/her financial situation has deteriorated after the judgment has entered into force, he/she cannot apply to the bailiff because it is not possible to obtain relief from the costs of enforcement. According to the Ministry of Justice, such situations should be assessed in a broader context. The Ministry confirmed its readiness to organise a discussion, but no solutions have been found.

Child's right not to be subject to violence

Abuse is any physical or emotional cruelty, sexual abuse, neglect or treatment that threatens or is likely to threaten child's life, health, development or dignity. Emotional abuse is the violation of child's self-esteem or psychological abuse in the presence of the child (threatening, swearing, humiliating, abusing or otherwise harming child's emotional development).

Description of the reporting period

Already in 2023, the Ombudsman drew attention to the situation in apartment houses where neighbours smoking by open windows exposed to tobacco smoke children living in another apartment. The national rights' protection mechanism has not been effective; the understanding and actions of authorities have not been geared towards protecting the child from exposure to tobacco smoke. The Ombudsman recommended that the Riga City Municipality find appropriate solutions and engage to

improve the work of the municipal police and ensure appropriate responses to such violations. The Riga City Municipality instructed the municipal police to address the problem, also following the Ombudsman's recommendations. The police admitted their mistakes and informed about solutions to protect every child from tobacco smoke.

Violence between children in educational establishments continues unabated. Reports show that children lack non-violent conflict-solution skills, while schools fail to spot children's behavioural problems early and respond appropriately. Schools substantiate incidents of violence to chance or the behaviour of the child-victim. This also seriously disrupts the educational process. Several new tools are available to address the problem, such as the Cabinet of Ministers' procedure for dealing with cases where a pupil endangers his/her own safety or that of others, the Child Protection Centre's algorithm for educational institutions in cases of violence, but schools are slow to address problems outside the educational institution and to involve other institutions.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On forwarding a decision on temporary protection against violence to social services

Already in 2022, the Ombudsman drew the attention of the courts to the obligation to send the decision on temporary protection against violence to social services and the municipal Orphan and Custody Court. It was found that the decision of the Riga Regional Court did not include an indication to send the decision to the social service according to the child's place of residence. The Ombudsman invited the Chairperson of the Riga Regional Court to discuss with the judges the issue of sending the decision on temporary protection against violence to the social service in accordance with Section 250.⁶²(5) of the Civil Procedure Law.

Child's right to health protection

The State recognises the right of every child to the highest attainable standard of health according to Article 24(1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The right to health includes not only timely and appropriate preventive and health-promoting measures, but also the right to grow and develop to the maximum of their capacities. Children have the right to be heard and to receive information, in a manner appropriate to their age and maturity, that they understand, and to participate in decisions relating to their medical treatment.

Description of the reporting period

[Ombudsman's report](#) reveals the powerlessness of legal representatives and the bureaucratic and regulatory obstacles in cases when children who has used intoxicating substances (especially unmotivated ones) need help. It is important to prevent adolescents' access to addictive substances, but it is preventing access that poses the greatest challenge. There is no service where the child can be isolated against his/her will and receive therapy, medical and social rehabilitation. Abstinence time is very important. Opinions differ among professionals about addiction in children and the need to help them. Doctors believe that social problems are to blame: inadequate living conditions, lack of meaningful leisure activities, etc. Social professionals, on the other hand, believe that doctors do not treat children for addiction. The term 'compulsory treatment' is not explained in the legislation. Both the lack of legislation and the differing opinions make it impossible to reach a common solution. The Ministry of Health has a long history of failing to ensure adequate access to narcological services for children, thereby seriously violating children's right to life, health and development. The Ombudsman has issued 20 recommendations to the Ministry of Health to improve the situation.

The concept of palliative care is defined in the Medical Treatment Law. The Cabinet of Ministers did not clearly regulate palliative care for children when drafting the regulation on palliative care. Thus, the content of the service for children, as well as the procedure for organising, financing and receiving the service, created uncertainties for the beneficiaries: the regulation is fragmented and laid down in several normative acts. The Ombudsman called on the Cabinet of Ministers to improve the regulations, including the [state-provided palliative care services for children and the procedure for receiving them](#).

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On observance of children's rights in Children's Mental Hospital "Ainaži"

The Ombudsman carried out an unannounced inspection visit to the children mental hospital "Ainaži". The purpose of the visit was to verify the implementation of Ombudsman's recommendations from 2018. The number of beds had been reduced by 35 compared to 2018. 80 employees work in the hospital with 45 beds (28 children at the time of the visit). The type of hospital is still unclear, if it is a specialised hospital or care hospital. Its operation does not correspond to either of types. No child abuse or violence between children was identified. [The Ombudsman issued recommendations to the hospital](#) and invited to implement the recommendations from 2018. The report on the visit and recommendations was also sent to the Ministry of Health.

On vaccination of the child

Tragic news in the media on the death of an unvaccinated child with diphtheria raised the issue of vaccination. The Ombudsman [explained the](#) rights and obligations of children, parents and doctors. The Ombudsman continues with the examination in the verification procedure to ascertain how the legal framework is applied in practice.

On setting the earliest time to start classes at school

Starting classes too early can affect children's right to health and development, especially adolescents. In order to ensure that children get enough sleep, the Ombudsman called on the State to set [the permissible start time of classes as no earlier than 8.00](#). At the same time, educational institutions were urged to set more child-friendly start times, which could be no earlier than 8.30 in primary schools and 9.00 in secondary schools. The responsible ministries were in no hurry to act, so the Ombudsman also addressed the Parliament. The Parliament called on the responsible ministries to address the issue of the start time of classes at school.

On the organisation of rest in pre-schools

When assessing the way how [rest after lunch is organised](#) in pre-schools (kindergartens), the Ombudsman acknowledged the need to improve the awareness of kindergarten staff about rest after lunch, as nap should not be compulsory for children who do not need it. The Ombudsman invited local authorities and pre-schools to consult the good practices in the organisation of rest after lunch and to consider the possibility of providing children from five years and above with more appropriate rest for their needs (rather than compulsory nap).

On children's access to state-funded dental services

A child was in urgent need of a tooth extraction, but the Institute of Dentistry refused free surgery because the national quota had run out by the end of the year. The state-funded service was provided only after the Ombudsman intervened. The Institute of Dentistry explained that the information on the paid service was incorrect, as there was no indication of acute need in the appointment system, which would allow the service to be provided free of charge. The National Health Service (NHS) informed that medical institutions are obliged to establish waiting lists for patients to receive state-funded services throughout the year. The number of patients and the waiting time are considered when deciding on the allocation of public funding to a particular health-care institution.

Child's right to education

Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education. The Constitution (Satversme) guarantees state-funded primary and secondary education. Every local authority must ensure that children have access to pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, and interest education. A child is obliged to complete a pre-school preparatory programme, primary education and learn according to their physical and mental development.

Description of the reporting period

The new system for assessing learning achievements developed by the Ministry of Education and Science resonated with the society. The Minister of Education rejected the public's request to allow pupils to improve more than one mark, arguing that a change in assessment concept was needed. The Ombudsman asked the Ministry to justify the relevance of the assessment system with the best interests of children. Almost eight months later, the Ministry replied that only pupils with special needs would be allowed to improve their grades.

School network reforms have exacerbated the problem of [getting to school](#). To promote children's best interests, local authorities have been informed of [the Ombudsman's observations](#), which should be taken into account when providing transport for pupils and when dealing with individual cases.

[Ombudsman's survey on school start times and getting to school](#) carried out in June 2024 was very well received, with 3 684 responses. It can be stated that the well-being of children living in the districts is considerably impaired by the organisation of transport services. Children are forced to leave for school even before 7.00, spend more than an hour on the road and return home late in the evening, thus spending what amounts to a full adult working day at school. Children in special education programmes

have a particularly difficult daily routine, sometimes having to travel disproportionately long distances to schools in other municipalities or even live in boarding schools. Local authorities drew attention to the poor condition of roads, which makes transporting children longer and more unsafe.

To promote understanding of the concept of free education, the Ombudsman continues explaining to parents, educational institutions and local authorities on the provision school supplies and to deal with individual cases. There is still confusion about the use of private smart devices for learning purposes, about school supplies for homework, about the purchase of clothing, etc. The Ombudsman provided [clarification](#) on the limits of parental initiative: donations to schools are voluntary basis, and specific contributions cannot be requested.

There is a tendency to disregard the laws and regulations on inclusive education. If a child with special needs is enrolled in a general education programme, the educational institution is obliged to provide support measures and develop an individual plan. It is unacceptable that an educational establishment, aware of a child's special needs or even having received specialist recommendations from parents, avoids drawing up a plan for months and does not involve support specialists. Although there is no time limit set in the legislation for drawing up an individual plan, the institution must act without delay and in the best interests of the child.

The Ombudsman has detected [actions of educational institutions](#) that do not comply with the regulatory enactments - most often for failure to respond to submissions, less often for withholding educational documents. Schools or kindergartens established by local governments are institutions subject to the principles of public administration, including the principle of good governance.

The Ombudsman [applied to Constitutional Court](#) which in its decision recognised that children who, according to their state of health and psychological preparation, start primary education one year earlier (at the age of 6) are in comparable conditions with children who receive education in the general order, however, different unfavourable treatment is permissible. Children who start school a year earlier are denied the opportunity to receive education in the nearest school to their place of residence and can only attend schools where there are places available. Priority admission for seven-year-olds also applies to children who apply for admission to a school other than the one nearest to their place of residence or who are not registered in the municipality.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Compulsory preparation of children for primary education

The case in Mārupe municipality highlighted the different perceptions of municipalities on the start of compulsory preparation for primary education. In many municipalities, compulsory preparation starts

on 1 September of the year when the child turns five, providing two years of preparation before school. In Mārupe, however, children are enrolled in pre-primary school only after the age of five, so it is unclear to what extent compulsory preparation will be implemented if a child is born after 1 September. The problem stems from the grammatical interpretation of Section 20.¹(1) of the General Education Law. The Ministry of Education and Science acknowledges that it is unacceptable that a child is enrolled after the age of five, but is unwilling to clarify the disputed provision, relying on child-friendly practices in some municipalities. The Ombudsman will continue to promote the clarification of the regulation.

Enrolment in secondary schools

The 2023 amendments to the General Education Law have eliminated the situation where pupils who were exempted from state exams were not entitled to a primary education certificate. These students have the right to participate in an equal competition for enrolment in secondary schools of their choice. However, another problem emerged: a child exempted from exams loses the opportunity to be admitted to secondary school because he/she has not obtained a grade in the examination and consequently does not reach the required score. This problem can be addressed by adopting the Cabinet Regulation on the admission of pupils to secondary school. Already in 2023, [the Ombudsman stressed the need for an appropriate regulation](#), but the regulation has not yet been drafted.

Priority admission of siblings to pre-schools

In Ādaži municipality, there was no priority enrolment of siblings in pre-schools, and parents were forced to take children of the same family to different pre-schools. The Ombudsman asked the municipality to provide in their binding regulations that, if possible, children from the same family are admitted to the same pre-school. The municipality implemented Ombudsman's recommendation.

Support of local government for vocational education

Some children with place of residence declared in Jelgava district municipality study in vocational programmes in Jelgava City municipal schools, as there are no alternatives available in their municipality. Jelgava City was entitled to double the co-financing fee for students not declared in their municipality as of 1 September 2024. Jelgava district municipality is primary responsibility for the vocational education of these children, thus, the Ombudsman [asked to establish the procedure for](#) co-financing vocational education for Jelgava district students studying in other municipalities.

On support measures

A child with selective mutism has difficulty speaking in public situations, including at school, and needs to be provided with relatively simple support measures. The parents provided the class teacher with medical recommendations, but within a year and a half the teacher did not follow them and did not

inform the school management on the need for an individual learning plan. The teacher's negligence and failure to take the diagnosis seriously led to the child's hysteria, after which he was unable to attend school. The Ombudsman found that for several months the school had violated the rights of the child and the law by failing to provide a full education process in accordance with the recommendations of specialists. The municipality provided important assistance in this case.

Minimum indoor air temperature in educational establishments

The Ombudsman concluded that the minimum air temperature in the school was only reached at the end of the day and called on the Jelgava district municipality, as the founder, to [immediately remedy the deficiencies related to heating or insulation of the building](#) to prevent the air temperature in the classrooms from falling below 18 °C. The municipality replied that an energy efficiency improvement project had been launched, and the construction work was expected to be completed in 2026.

Child's right to family and social security

Each child has the right to a family, a full-fledged living conditions and supportive social environment that ensures his or her full physical and intellectual development. To develop fully and harmoniously as individuals, children must grow up in happiness, love and understanding. Each child must receive adequate nutrition, clothing and housing. Families with children receive various benefits and support from the municipality and the state to raise and educate their children.

Description of the reporting period

The Ombudsman asked the Ministry of Education and Science to inform about the progress in the regulation of boarding schools. For a long time, there had been no unified regulatory framework on the procedure for receiving and supervising boarding school services, the content and the staff required for boarding schools. The legislation provides only for minimum hygiene requirements. Due to the lack of regulation, boarding schools exist which do not provide safe and suitable living conditions and contribute to the unjustified separation of children from their families. In 2023, the Ministry of Education and Science drafted amendments to the General Education Law, but their further progress in the Parliament was not supported. Following Ombudsman's letter, the Ministry organised a meeting, where participants agreed to set up a working group to develop a legal framework for the operation of boarding schools. It should be stressed that the Ombudsman categorically does not support the placement of pre-school and primary school children in boarding schools. Placing children in boarding schools contradicts the child's right to live in a family, which is important for the child's full development

and preparation for independent life. Often the boarding services are mere inaction of the authorities, who do not address the issues of the child's access to an educational institution or social problems within the family. Boarding schools for pre-school children also still exist. The Ombudsman will continue to follow up on the development of the regulation.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Reduction of catering fees for students staying in school dormitories

Gulbene municipality had granted a 100% discount on catering fees for students staying in school dormitories, substantiating such decision with the need to support families affected by the reorganisation of school network. In reality, however, it is the support for catering fees that encourages children to be left in school or pre-school dormitories. This undermines children's right to family life. The Ombudsman asked the municipality [to remedy the unequal treatment of children](#) and to encourage children to stay with their families rather than in school dormitories. The municipality complied with the recommendation: it eliminated the more favourable treatment of children staying overnight and no longer provides them with higher reduction of catering fees. The Ombudsman called on the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development to encourage municipalities to respect children's rights in their binding regulations, but the Ministry does not acknowledge its responsibility in this respect.

Taxation of municipal co-financing of children's education

The municipality deducted personal income tax from co-financing their residents for vocational education received in another municipality. This practice is not in the best interests of children. In essence, the compensation (co-financing) cannot be considered income, since the parents have allocated the money for the child's education. The Ombudsman called on the Parliament [to amend Section 9\(1\) of the Law on Personal Income Tax](#) to provide that co-financing (compensation) for children's pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, vocational education or interest education is not included in annual taxable income and is not taxable. The Parliament has not responded on the implementation of this recommendation.

On social security for children born without paternity as a result of a crime

If a child is conceived as a result of a crime, the father is most often not entered in the child's birth record. This is the case both when the biological father of the child is established in criminal proceedings and when he is not. If the parentage of the child is established but there is no entry in the birth register, the father of the child is effectively exempted from the obligation to provide maintenance. The mother,

on the other hand, cannot receive maintenance for the child either from the person from whom the child originated or from the Maintenance Guarantee Fund (hereinafter also referred to as the 'UGF'). The Ministry of Justice responded to the Ombudsman's [suggestion](#) and concluded that the problem could be solved by a new form of support for children for whom paternity has not been established. This would not only support children born as a result of a criminal offence, but also other children without paternity. This type of support has not been introduced so far and will therefore continue to be raised in the future.

Child's property rights and maintenance

A child, like an adult, can be the owner of movable or immovable property. Depending on their age, children have the right to carry out transactions and exercise other rights of ownership themselves or through their legal representatives. Maintenance is the monthly cost of supporting a child, which each parent is obliged to provide, regardless of his or her financial situation and ability to support the child. The minimum amount of maintenance is set by the Cabinet of Ministers on the basis of Section 179(5) of the Civil Law.

Description of the reporting period

Already in 2023, the [Ombudsman pointed out to the Ministry of Justice](#) has been made aware of cases where Section 179(4) of the Civil Law, which states: "If the parents are absent or unable to support the child, this obligation shall lie in equal shares upon the grandparents. If the financial state of the grandparents is unequal, a court may specify for them the maintenance obligation commensurate with the financial the situation of each". At the suggestion of the Ministry, several discussions took place, but no common understanding was reached. Although the application of this provision would not ensure the right to a full standard of living for all children who do not receive the minimum maintenance from their parents, it is important that it should ensure the right of at least a minority of children. Moreover, launching such provision could have an impact on those parents who do not act in good faith, deliberately reduce their income or skilfully conceal it to avoid the obligation to provide maintenance. Ombudsman will follow up on this issue.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On minimum maintenance

If a parent has applied to the court for minimum (or higher) maintenance and has turned to a bailiff for compulsory enforcement of the court judgment, but enforcement is not possible, the parent will receive

maintenance from the Maintenance Guarantee Fund, but the difference between the amount of maintenance ordered by the court and the amount of maintenance paid by the fund will accumulate as a debt until compulsory enforcement is possible. This is not an effective mechanism for exercising the rights of the child. The child must receive at least the minimum monthly maintenance from his/her parents to have full-fledged living conditions and therefore additional solutions are needed. The Ombudsman has raised this issue with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Welfare. In the discussions, cooperation between the Fund and the social services was proposed as one of the solutions, which has proved successful in the pilot project. The cooperation needs to be consolidated in legislation; the work is ongoing.

Simplified procedure for the hearing of maintenance recovery claims

The simplified procedure is available for claims on maintenance recovery if the total amount of yearly payment does not exceed €2,500. Since 1 January 2024, the total amount exceeded €2,520 (€210 X 12 months), which prevented claims for minimum maintenance from being dealt with by the simplified procedure in a written procedure. The Ministry of Justice responded to the Ombudsman's call to increase the total amount of payments for maintenance claims to the state guaranteed minimum maintenance annual amount and proposed amendments, which have been adopted. The Ombudsman recommended the Ministry of Justice to clarify the amount of the claim under Section 250.¹⁹(2) of the Civil Procedure Law, by linking it to the state minimum maintenance amount and not to the amount of maintenance paid by the Fund. The Ministry indicated that it would work on improving the regulation discussing and submitting relevant proposal to the legislator, however, the recommendation has not been implemented in 2024.

Restrictions to maintenance payment from the Fund to young people studying abroad

A young person is receiving secondary education at an international grammar school in an EU country. Until the girl reached the age of majority, her mother received maintenance from the Fund, but after that, the maintenance payment was terminated in accordance with Section 10(1) Para 3 of the Maintenance Guarantee Fund Law, which provided that maintenance may be received by an adult who continues to receive primary education, secondary education, vocational education or special education in the Republic of Latvia, but not longer than until the age of 21. The Ombudsman called upon the Parliament [to eliminate the unequal treatment of young people who continue their education abroad](#). The recommendation was implemented by amending the above-mentioned provision.

Civil liability insurance for a vehicle belonging to a child

Compulsory Civil Liability Insurance for Owners of Motor Vehicles Law stipulated that children who become the sole owners of vehicles by inheritance are subject to the same liability and obligations as adult vehicle owners. In addition, this also applies to compulsory civil liability insurance (OCTA). Such liability is not commensurate with the capabilities of children. [The Ombudsman called upon the Ministry of Finance to remedy the violation of children's rights](#) by proposing amendments to the law to provide that, when concluding an insurance contract, for the purpose of determining the amount of the insurance premium in cases where a child has become the owner of a vehicle by inheritance, the holder of the vehicle indicated in the vehicle registration certificate is treated as the owner of the vehicle. The Ministry of Finance has taken note of the recommendation, and the infringement of children's rights has been remedied.

Rights of orphans and children without parental care

The State has a special duty to care for orphans and children without parental care as a socially vulnerable group of children. These children are more at risk than children living in families in terms of the stability and quality of their living environment and are more exposed to the shortcomings of the child protection system. The State and local authorities are obliged to provide orphans and children without parental care with social guarantees.

Description of the reporting period

A critical situation has developed in the provision of out-family care for children - not only difficulties in providing a family environment for children in foster families or with a guardian, but also difficulties in providing out-family care in childcare institutions due to lack of such places. This may cause risks of leaving children in families where their development is endangered. Children spend long periods of time in crisis centres. Latvian Association of Municipal Orphan and Custody Court Employees has also drawn attention to this problem. The Ombudsman recommended that orphanages should update the obligation of local councils to provide individualised services to meet children's needs, to encourage an increase in the number of foster families and guardians, so that children in out-family care may be placed in families rather than institutions.

[Investigation on the provision of assistance to children abusing addictive substances](#) found that not only children under the influence of intoxicating substances who are placed in an institution and have a home there, but also children who must be admitted to an institution based on a police decision, are not admitted to a childcare institution. The Ombudsman recommended that municipalities eliminate this practice and develop safety measures to ensure the safety of every child in an out-family care institution in situations where a child's aggressiveness needs to be addressed. Possible solutions could include, for example, the use of municipal police or a security company. It is recommended that the Riga City Council find a solution for recruiting staff for the Riga Children and Youth Family Support Centre, including ensuring adequate remuneration and social guarantees for staff.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On legal representative

The Law on Orphan's and Custody Courts has still not been amended to provide that the Orphan and Custody Court represents the child's personal and property interests and rights if the child is left without legal representation. The Orphan and Custody Court represents the child only during the period of the sole decision. In 2022, the Ombudsman submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Welfare on the necessary amendments to prevent children from being left without legal representatives. This happens when a child is left without the care of parents or other legal representatives but has not yet been matched with a suitable form of care - guardianship, placement in a foster family or in a child-care institution - and is placed, for example, in a crisis centre or other short-stay institution while relatives settle the guardian status. This situation, where the child is left without a legal representative, is not in the child's best interests and cannot be tolerated.

On improving guardianship

The Ministry of Welfare has repeatedly highlighted the need to [improve the institution of the guardian](#). Although a child under guardianship is in fact brought up and cared for by both spouses in the family, the spouse who has not been appointed guardian has no rights and no obligations regarding the child under the guardianship of the other spouse. A power of attorney must be obtained to represent the child. The restriction in Section 316 of the Civil Law that both spouses cannot become guardians of the child is not in the best interests of the child and is a formal obstacle to the child having two guardians - both spouses - who, in taking the place of the parents, would fully perform the duties of mother and father. The Ministry proposes to examine the possibility of improving Section 316 of the Civil Law to allow the Orphan and Custody Court to decide on the appointment of a co-guardian to represent the

child to a certain extent for the duration of the guardianship or for a certain period as necessary. However, the proposal has been left pending.

Reduction of catering fees for children in out-family care

Already in 2023, the Ombudsman established that some municipalities, in cases where children who are provided with out-family care in the administrative territory of another municipality by decision of the municipal Orphan and Custody Court, did not cover the expenses related to their education and stay in an educational institution including catering expenses. In the autumn, the Ombudsman surveyed all municipalities and studied binding regulations on the application of reductions in fees for children in out-family care – municipalities have different practices, so the Ombudsman was preparing a report with recommendations.

On the allowance for a child placed in a foster family

Already in 2021, the Ombudsman recommended improving the procedure of allowance for the purchase of clothing and so-called soft equipment for children in foster care. Since 2021, the Ministry of Welfare has been promising to assess the possibility of improving the regulation, and in 2024 replied that the payment of the allowance to foster families is the responsibility of the municipality. The Ministry informed that it plans to evaluate the content and the name of the allowance, but the issue is not under consideration. Both NGOs and Child Protection Centre point to an acute shortage of foster families. One of the most important reasons hindering the placement of new children in foster families is the inadequate remuneration to foster families, as well as the insufficient amount of maintenance and allowances. The Ombudsman has previously recommended that the issue of funding for children's needs should be addressed.

Rights of children with special needs

A child with special needs is a child who, because of illness, injury or congenital disorder, needs additional medical, educational and social support, regardless of whether a disability has been established. A child with special needs has the same right to an active life, to develop and receive education in accordance with his or her physical and mental abilities and preferences, and to participate in society as any other child. The state and local authorities must be particularly supportive in helping children with special needs to integrate into society.

Description of the reporting period

The submissions show that children's health conditions are preventing them from fully attending education. A situation where a child with diabetes is not provided with appropriate care in an educational establishment because there is no doctor or first aid trained staff member is unacceptable and not in line with the legislation. Children with chronic diseases have the right to be in the community, to study in an educational institution like any other child who does not have a medical condition. Both educational institutions and local authorities, as child protection actors, have a duty to address this issue and ensure that children are not subjected to discriminatory treatment based on their health condition. To raise awareness about the rights of chronically ill children and appropriate medical care in educational institutions, the Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Latvian Children and Youth Diabetes Association, prepared an informative [video for](#) parents and educational institutions.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On home care service

Home care services for children were discontinued, when Liepaja City binding regulations on care services for children expired because of amendments to the Disability Law. No other act was adopted. The Ombudsman urged the municipality to respect the prohibition of legal obstruction and, until the old binding regulations were amended or new ones adopted, to [provide the relevant service for children with disabilities](#) to the same extent and under the same conditions as had existed before the amendments to the Disability Law came into force. The municipality implemented the recommendation.

On the legal framework for obtaining identity documents

The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs requires children who due to their disability are unable to sign a document to make signature on a special device with a sensor. Children who, due to their health condition, are unable to move and to be present when submitting application and receiving the document also face problems. The Ombudsman called on the Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs to raise awareness among its staff of the procedures that should be followed to serve children with disabilities, including ensuring that children with reduced mobility can apply for and receive identity documents at their place of residence. The Ombudsman also called for the provision that identity documents for parents with young children (up to seven years of age) and for children and adults with disabilities are processed and issued on a priority basis.

Rights of people with disabilities

The protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is enshrined in Article 91 of the Constitution (Satvermse) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the implementation of which is monitored by the Ombudsman. The protection of the rights of persons with disabilities includes areas such as non-discrimination, accessibility, the right to life, education, employment, health, adaptation and rehabilitation, adequate standard of living and social protection, participation in political, public life, and cultural life, sports, etc. For more on the rights of people with disabilities, see [Discrimination](#) and [Rights of children with special needs](#).

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 56 submissions on the rights of persons with disabilities. The number of submissions has increased (35 in 2023 and 47 in 2022). Most submitters pointed to problematic aspects in the granting of disability status, inaccessible environments, and shortcomings in the provision of community-based services.

During the reporting year, as previously, the Ombudsman dealt with issues relating to the rights of persons in the process of establishing or reviewing restrictions on their legal capacity. The Ombudsman has provided [an opinion to the Prosecutor General's Office](#) on the uniform practice on determination of the extent of the restriction of legal capacity.

During the reporting year, the Ombudsman, in response to information provided by vulnerable persons or other peers, highlighted and promoted various aspects for respect for their rights, e.g. the right to live in society, the right to self-determination, the right to privacy by addressing the responsible state and municipal social care institutions and issuing recommendations to ensure that the guarantees set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are being implemented. In specific situations, measures were also taken to ascertain whether the placement of persons with mental disabilities in a psycho-neurological (mental) hospitals was lawful.

During monitoring visits, the Ombudsman continued paying special attention to the provision of community-based social care services in municipalities (day care centres, group homes, specialised workshops).

The Ombudsman has carried out various studies on the rights of persons with disabilities⁴, organised conferences to discuss the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as various public awareness-raising activities both in Latvia and abroad.⁵

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On specialised workshops in Dobeles municipality

[In the verification procedure No 2024-12-24M](#) on the provision of the specialised workshop service in Dobeles Municipality, the Ombudsman found that while the municipality did not have its own service provider, the social service was obliged to conclude a contract with another social service provider or another municipality for the provision of the specialised workshop service. If a municipality has established a social service by investing public funds, the right to receive the service established by the municipality must be ensured in the first place.

On payment of social benefits when a severely disabled person reaches the age of majority

Examining a submission from a representative of a disabled person, the Ombudsman established that the State Social Insurance Agency restricted the payment of state social benefits for the previous year to people with a disability since childhood who have reached the age of majority, if the paperwork for restricting legal capacity and appointing a trustee took more than six months. At the Ombudsman's [request](#), the State Social Insurance Agency reviewed both the decision in question and decisions in 17 similar cases.

On repair of a wheelchair lift

The Ombudsman received a submission stating that the municipality had refused to pay an invoice for the repair of a wheelchair lift because the assistive device in question was not in the municipality's inventory. Following the Ombudsman's involvement, a solution was found.

⁴ See more information on [Research](#).

⁵ See more in [Information and involvement of the public](#).

Rights of prisoners

Imprisonment restricts person's human rights, but the state has a duty to ensure that these restrictions are proportionate and do not cause additional suffering. The fact that a person has lost his or her liberty does not give rise to a presumption that he or she has lost other rights. For example, like any other person, a prisoner retains the right to humane treatment, respect for human dignity, free from moral and physical violence.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the Ombudsman received 313 submissions from prisons. The volume of submissions has increased (248 in 2023). The largest number of submissions was received from Riga Central Prison (97 submissions) and Daugavgrīva Prison (91 submissions), while the number of submissions received from Jēkabpils Prison increased in the last quarter of the year (20 submissions). The submissions mainly raised issues related to serving a sentence in an open prison. 17 submissions were on dishonest conduct or abuse by prison staff (10 in 2023 and 25 in 2022), of which 9 related to one incident involving the use of physical force in Daugavgrīva prison and 1 in Olaine prison. The Ombudsman received 17 submissions (12 in 2023 and 22 in 2022) concerning prison conditions, mainly concerning the high-capacity cells of Riga Central Prison (building No 5), and Jēkabpils Prison, as well as the cells for life sentences and punitive isolation cells in Daugavgrīva Prison. During the reporting period, the number of submissions related to medical care increased, with 53 submissions received (28 in 2023 and 22 in 2022), including complaints about the impossibility to see the prison doctor, to make timely appointments with specialists and to receive more effective medical treatment. During the reporting year, the Ombudsman also received complaints about the change in the system of serving sentences, on informal hierarchy of prisoners and its negative impact, and restrictions on the right to privacy in open prisons.

Overall, the reporting year was notable for the transition towards a new prison system (closed and open prisons), which will allow for smoother executions, as well as for significant changes in the execution of life sentences. Although the dynamics of the prison system has been positive, the period under review has been marked by a serious challenge: the shortage of prison staff, particularly in supervision, which poses an additional risk to the respect of prisoners' rights. In the reporting year, work on the new Sentence Execution Law continued, where representative of the Ombudsman's Office also participated. In the penitentiary system, 2024 was significant due the state's planned further action to reduce the informal hierarchy of prisoners, which was highlighted by the ECtHR judgment in the case "D vs Latvia".

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On the presence of an assistance dog during a custodial sentence

The Ombudsman issued an [opinion the Latvian Society for the Blind](#) on the possibility for a person with a visual impairment to serve a sentence - short-term deprivation of liberty - together with a guide dog. Being in prison entails strict security and supervision rules, which should be considered when assessing the possibility of ensuring conditions for keeping a dog that meet animal protection and welfare requirements. If it is not possible to provide the necessary conditions, the provision of a personal assistant should be considered. The State has a duty to consider and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities during the execution of a custodial sentence.

Receiving health care services outside prison

During the reporting year, the issue of restrictions preventing prisoners from consulting specialists or undergoing examinations on their own or via relatives, advocates or general practitioner without prior agreement with the prison doctors came up. It was found that arbitrary, uncoordinated appointment of a prisoner to specialists or examinations is not in accordance with the legal framework. Similarly, during imprisonment, the registration of a person with a general practitioner is blocked and during this period the health care of the patient is the responsibility of the prison doctor, who can independently assess the health condition of the patient and the urgency of starting treatment. Thus, the general practitioner should not take decisions related to the medical care of the prisoner. Although the legislation provides for the right of prisoners to receive health care services outside the prison at their own personal expense, the prison doctor organises this service, as it is necessary to organise the convoy in time and to ensure security measures.

On medical rehabilitation of prisoners

Addressing the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, the Ombudsman clarified the issue of possible legal obstacles to access medical rehabilitation. From the answers it can be concluded that there are no obstacles to access medical rehabilitation services as part of secondary health care. Rehabilitation services are not covered by the State budget but can be obtained outside the prison in medical institutions at personal expense. Prisoners also have the right to receive advice from specialists in the field of rehabilitation, to use technical aids prescribed by them, paid for by the State, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 878 of 21 December 2021 "Regulations on technical aids". The Ministry of Justice informed that there are plans to establish a rehabilitation unit in the Latvian Prison Hospital, if necessary, by drafting amendments to the regulatory framework.

Rights of foreigners and the stateless, legal status of persons

The international treaties binding on Latvia state that everyone, regardless of their location, have the right to be recognised as a legal subject – to receive a certain status in the country, a set of rights and obligations corresponding to that status, as well as an appropriate identity document. There are certain human rights guarantees that must be guaranteed to everyone regardless of status, such as the right to life, but the rest of a person's rights and obligations will depend on whether they are a national, a permanent resident, a foreigner, an asylum seeker or a beneficiary of international protection.

Description of the reporting period

The geopolitical situation in recent years, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the decisions of the Latvian authorities related to this situation also influenced the content of submissions addressed to the Ombudsman. In 2024, the Ombudsman received a total of 73 submissions on the rights of foreigners and stateless persons and issues related to the legal status of persons, including granting and deprivation of citizenship, which is only slightly fewer than in the previous year, when 81 submissions were received on these topics. As in previous years, the main complaints to the Ombudsman were related to forced returns, asylum procedures, the right to enter Latvia or to obtain a residence permit, as well as issues related to deprivation or revocation of citizenship. The Ombudsman also continued working on the topics raised earlier. For example, in January 2024, the Ombudsman participated in the Constitutional Court hearings and orally expressed the [opinion already provided in writing in 2023](#) and other information in cases No 2023-04-01 and No 2023-07-01 on the constitutionality of Para 58 of the Transitional Provisions of the Immigration Law and other amendments to the Immigration Law. The Ombudsman was also involved in the implementation of the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration, including by participating in the elaboration of the national implementation plan.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On situations where persons were refused entry

In 2024, the Ombudsman received several submissions concerning situations when persons or their relatives were refused entry into Latvia at the state border for various reasons. One of these complaints concerning refusal of entry to Latvia and detention also raised objections to the conditions in the detention facilities for foreigners at Riga Airport. To verify the factual situation and assess the conditions of detention, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office visited the relevant premises of Riga Airport. The information described in the complaint was not confirmed, however, the information obtained during the visit could be used to prepare responses in similar situations.

On the rights of Ukrainian civilians

In 2024, the Ombudsman regularly participated in the meetings of the Parliamentary Committees, providing opinion on amendments to the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians, which concerned both the extension of the support period and other issues, including education of minors. The Ombudsman also continued to advise Ukrainian civilians on various issues. For example, in response to public information about Ukraine's decision to no longer issue passports to men of draft age abroad, the Ombudsman was also contacted by several Ukrainian civilians in Latvia to find out whether this would affect their right to reside in Latvia. The Ombudsman, referring to the legislation, indicated that the situation in Latvia would not be affected by such a decision. However, to ensure uniform practice among institutions, the Ombudsman also contacted the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs to ask for an assessment of the current situation. The Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs agreed with the Ombudsman.

On monitoring forced returns

In 2024, 120 decisions on forced return of foreigners were taken and 108 persons were expelled. During the reporting period, exercising the task set out in Section 50.⁷ of the Immigration Law, the observers of the Ombudsman's Office have interviewed 19 foreigners subject to forced return and participated in 4 return operations, observing return operations of 5 persons. The Ombudsman prioritised vulnerable persons in the monitoring of returns. The observers did not see use of force or violation of returnee rights during return operations. However, following the interviews with the persons, the Ombudsman issued several recommendations to the State Border Guard, including the need to ensure privacy during medical examinations, to provide persons with weather-appropriate clothing, and to ensure proper notification of the decision.

In one case, the Ombudsman invited the State Border Guard, to consider the merits of the objections of the returnee, a Ukrainian citizen, to deportation to Ukraine considering the ongoing warfare.

Prevention of trafficking in human beings

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery when people are used for labour, sexual exploitation and other criminal purposes by force, threat, deception, coercion or fraud. Its main purpose is the exploitation of a person, usually for profit. Exploitation of a person means using him or her for various purposes. Trafficking in human beings can take many forms: sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced begging, coercion to commit a crime, sham marriages, etc.

Trafficking in human beings is a global problem, with recent data showing that the number of detected victims of trafficking increased by 25% in 2022 compared to 2019, 38% of whom are children. In total, between 2020 and 2023, the number of officially recognised victims of trafficking worldwide will exceed 200 000, while some international organisations estimate that as many as 50 million people are living in modern slavery.

The European Union is not protected from human trafficking. According to Eurostat data published in early 2024, 10 093 victims of human trafficking were recorded in the EU in 2022, an increase of 41% compared to 2021. Global trends show, and for the first time at European Union level, that labour exploitation is reaching or even surpassing the level of sexual exploitation.

Human trafficking is also a reality in Latvia. From 2021 to 2023, a total of 111 victims of trafficking in human beings were identified, two of whom were minors and 16 were third-country nationals. In 2023, 24 victims of trafficking were identified in Latvia, 15 of whom were subjected to labour exploitation, 4 to sexual exploitation, one to sham marriages and another 4 to other forms of trafficking. Most of the identified victims were adults and one was a minor. The most frequently identified forms of trafficking in human beings in Latvia are labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and forced sham marriages. In recent years, other forms of trafficking in human beings have also emerged, such as being forced to commit a crime and forced begging abroad.

Description of the reporting period

The Ombudsman does not receive submissions related to human trafficking, and there were none in 2024, as the investigation of this serious crime falls within the competence of the State Police and assistance to victims is provided by social service providers (association "Centrs MARTA" and the association "Shelter "Drošā māja"").

The Ombudsman, in accordance with his functions, continued educating the public - activities that had already been launched in previous years.

The Ombudsman participated in the school programme "Ready for Life", which included lectures on human trafficking. A total of 12 lectures were given to students, of which 6 lectures were given to secondary and vocational school students in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These activities will be continued in 2025.

In 2024, during four separate seminars the Ombudsman in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the association "Centrs MARTA" and the association "Shelter "Safe House"", which provide social services to victims of human trafficking, and with the financial support of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), trained staff of municipal social services in identifying the risks of human trafficking. A total of 93 social workers were trained during these workshops.

For the fourth year, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office trained legal professionals (police officers, prosecutors, judges and attorneys) and psychologists on the topic "Children - victims of trafficking in human beings". The training was organised by the Latvian Local Government Training Centre and a total of three sessions were delivered in 2024, significantly improving the ability of officials to spot cases of trafficking in human beings early.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

Guidelines to prevent risks of trafficking in human beings and labour exploitation in public procurement

In 2024, the Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Procurement Monitoring Bureau, developed guidelines for preventing the risks of human trafficking and labour exploitation in public procurement. On 24 October 2024, the Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Procurement Supervision Office, organised a [think-tank](#) "Risks of human trafficking and labour exploitation in public procurement", which brought together representatives of both the authorities that announce tenders, i.e. contracting authorities, and the procuring entities, i.e. suppliers representing the private sector. Participants of the discussion explained the risks that can arise in the performance of procurement contracts, in the different supply chains and how they can be prevented, as well as practical examples of how to apply the guidelines. The guidelines will be updated in 2025 with the findings of the think-tank and then disseminated and presented to a wider audience.

Business and human rights

As a relatively new area of human rights, business and human rights has gained international recognition via the adoption of the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) in 2011. They offer an authoritative perspective on the challenges that inevitably arise at the intersection of business interests and human rights. States must provide effective guidance to businesses on how to respect human rights in all their activities. In turn, businesses must respect all internationally recognised human rights. This means that they must avoid human rights abuses and address any negative impacts that may arise in relation to human rights.

In Latvia, from 2025 some companies will be required to describe their due diligence processes in their sustainability reports. This is required by [the Law on Sustainability Disclosure](#). To implement the due diligence requirement, the following international standards must be met:

- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct
- OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business.

Both the UN Guiding Principles and the OECD instruments explain the due diligence as a continuous process, which is why it is very often illustrated as a circular cycle consisting of defined steps. These steps are commitment, identification, resolution, evaluation, reporting and redress.

On 25 July 2024, [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1760 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on corporate sustainability due diligence and amending Directive \(EU\) 2019/1937 and Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2859](#), the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), entered into force. This Directive also makes it mandatory for major companies to implement the due diligence in relation to human rights and the environment. In simple words, companies will now be obliged to act in a way that does not harm people or the environment. Companies must identify, avoid and mitigate the potential negative consequences of their actions.

Description of the reporting period

In March 2024, the Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Riga Graduate School of Law and the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia, organised the [conference "Human Rights as the New Fuel for Business"](#). Local and internationally renowned academic experts, as well as representatives of companies shared their knowledge and experience on how due diligence is implemented in practice.

In the first half of the year, the Ombudsman developed a [study "Business and Human Rights. Preparing for the implementation of the European Union Directive on corporate due diligence in relation to sustainability"](#). The study explains some of the key concepts and notions of business and human rights, outlines the implications of the Due Diligence Directive, and describes stakeholder engagement in due diligence processes. The study is intended as a tool for explaining the Directive to the various stakeholders involved in the transposition process.

As a result of the study, the Ombudsman issued recommendations on what the State should do regarding business and human rights, inviting the responsible institutions and entrepreneurs to familiarize themselves with the publication of the study and to follow Ombudsman's recommendations.

Ombudsman's recommendations for companies

- Implement due diligence and follow the recommendations of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and OECD instruments by defining human rights and environmental risk management policy and carrying out the necessary processes to put the policy into practice.
- Engage with various stakeholders, in particular affected persons, human rights defenders and other representatives of affected persons, to understand, identify the potential and actual negative human rights impacts of business enterprises and find appropriate solutions to the situation.
- Look at the company's impact along the entire value chain and work not only on the negative impacts caused by the company, but also on the potential negative impacts that the company may contribute to directly or through its goods and services, as well as through business relationships with other Latvian and foreign companies.
- Involve affected people and their representatives in discussions on sustainability.

More information on business and human rights, the Ombudsman's [study](#) and a [summary of the Due Diligence Directive](#) are available in the [Business and Human Rights](#) section of the Ombudsman's website.

Good governance

The principle of good governance requires an institution to do more than the law requires. Doing so not only gives confidence that the State is genuinely trying to ensure that the rights and legitimate interests of individuals are respected but also promotes trust in public administration. In this way, the public administration demonstrates that it cares about the individual.

Description of the reporting period

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman received 370 submissions on good governance. The number of submissions received in previous years was slightly lower, 326 in 2023 and 332 in 2022.

There have been no widespread systemic irregularities in 2024. In most cases, they have been of an individual nature. The infringements occurred in different institutions, in different areas and with different degrees of seriousness. Most of the infringements were reported by residents. In general, the authorities are willing to correct mistakes and tend to be customer oriented.

Several sub-themes related to deficiencies in good governance emerged during the reporting period.

Disrespect for the law and rights

Under this sub-theme, infringements were found mainly in the actions of municipalities. For example, the Ombudsman found that some municipalities publish the minutes of the council committee meetings late, not observing the deadline for publication set by the law. In some cases, audio or audiovisual recordings of council committee meetings are not publicly available, and there are no indications on how the recordings can be obtained. It should be noted that, following the Ombudsman's call to remedy the situation, the municipalities were responsive and remedied the deficiencies.

Saldus municipality has set the price for the alienation of immovable property it owns [contrary to the legal framework](#). In Madona municipality, an illegal act was detected when a culvert was built under a municipal road without construction documentation. The municipality's apology to a private party for discharging sewage into private property is commendable. Gulbene Municipality rightfully refused to pay a bonus to its employees, even though the wording of the internal regulations seemed to create a legal expectation of an annual bonus for the employees. The Ombudsman found that the Latvian Medical Association's Trade Court proceedings did not ensure a balance between the rights of the Trade Court and the rights of the persons subject to review.

Failure to reply within the time limit laid down by law

The Ombudsman has repeatedly found that the State Education Quality Service and the National Centre for Education do not provide people with answers within the time limits set by law. The Ministry of Education and Science has also failed to remedy this problem. Similar problems have also been identified in Ropaži municipality. The State Revenue Service, in turn, has delayed the examination of decisions for several months, not only [violating](#) the law, but also disregarding their own value - building respectful cooperation with taxpayers and the society.

Failure to provide information

In one case, the Ombudsman found that Cēsis municipality had failed to properly inform a person about the continuation of the tenancy. In another case, the Ombudsman found that the Jelgava City municipality did not send the landowner decisions on the determination of the functionally necessary land plot for the involuntary termination of the divided property. It has been established that there are different practices in the municipalities regarding the provision of information. The involvement of the Ministry of Justice in unifying the practice is commendable.

Formal approach to the handling of cases

[In a case when a family grave](#) had been destructed, the Ombudsman established that the negligent actions of the Riga City Cemetery Administration had led to an illegal reburial. The State Police also initially failed to react properly to this fact. Following the Ombudsman's intervention, a reburial was carried out. In another case, it was found that the municipal departments of Riga City Municipality, instead of forwarding the submissions received to another responsible municipal department according to its jurisdiction, informed the applicant that he/she should apply to another municipal authority. The Ombudsman also established negligence of the State Social Insurance Agency in providing a person with information that he is entitled to an old-age pension, when objectively it is impossible to grant a pension. Such negligence may undermine people's legitimate expectations of the State. The Road Traffic and Safety Directorate, on the other hand, continued the initially friendly communication with the customer on the roadworthiness test service by changing the conditions of the service in writing.

Not involving and listening to citizens

[The Ombudsman found](#) that the Riga City Municipality, Riga Freeport Authority and the State Environmental Service supported the increase in the intensity of activities of certain companies in the port area without listening to the public opinion. Moreover, the Ombudsman had reasonable doubts about the willingness and ability of the State Environmental Service to effectively address the environmental noise issues raised by the residents.

Lack of clarity and uniformity in the application of legal rules

[In his verification procedure](#), the Ombudsman found that the wording of the Law on Immovable Property Tax was unclear resulting in different practices of municipalities in applying an increased real estate tax to buildings for which the maximum period for construction works had expired. The Ombudsman observed both change in practice and ignorance of Ombudsman's recommendations.

Reducing bureaucracy

The Ombudsman [criticised](#) the government's intention to reduce the time limit for examination of submissions to 10 working days, as this could be achieved without amending the Law on Submissions.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman had also encountered positive and commendable actions in municipalities.

Being proactive and acting in the interests of residents

When communicating with municipalities about the non-compliance with the regulatory enactments on catering expenses for children in out-family care, several municipalities, such as Liepāja, Bauska, Smiltene, Ogre, Madona, Krāslava, Rezekne and Ventspils, proactively eliminated the identified shortcomings without waiting for the Ombudsman's recommendations. At the Ombudsman's request, Riga City Municipality published a summary of the most important issues in the process of construction of private houses regarding the permitted height, thus improving the public awareness. When assessing [aspects of privacy and religious freedom](#), the Ombudsman found that there was a lack of publicly available official information on which cemeteries in the territory of Riga have special conditions for burial arrangements, Riga City Council started preparing such information.

Listening and going into detail

The Ombudsman found that Smiltene Municipality had managed to resolve the internal conflict in accordance with the principle of good governance.

Overview of the most important cases and Ombudsman's opinions

On ineffectiveness of authorities

The Ombudsman found that the Zemgale Planning Region and Dobeles Municipality had not implemented deinstitutionalisation project in the most effective way, thus persons of the target group were untimely terminated social rehabilitation services and community-based social services granted by the decisions of Dobeles Municipality. The rights and interests of these people had not been duly respected, contrary to the principle of good governance. The Ombudsman stressed that project

management had to be planned more carefully to avoid disappointing the expectations of the persons concerned to receive the service to the extent specified.

On inappropriate application of the principle "Consult first"

[When assessing a taxpayer's complaint](#), the Ombudsman found that the SRS had a long-lasting correspondence with the taxpayer on whether VAT was payable on the sale of forest (felling rights) owned by the taxpayer. The SRS, in the framework of the "Consult first" principle, asked the resident to assess whether tax was payable given that several felling trees had been sold in two real estates. The taxpayer, on the other hand, took the view from the outset that no tax was payable as he was not carrying out an economic activity but was selling his property. In correspondence with the SRS, the resident repeatedly asked the authority to impose the tax by decision so that he would have the opportunity to litigate and not be charged late payment penalties. In contrast, the SRS continued to correspond with the applicant for a year and a half, exchanging differing views. The Ombudsman concluded that the SRS was obliged to carry out tax control measures without delay in this case. As a result of the authority's delay, the taxpayer was charged a significant late payment penalty, which could have been lower if the SRS had acted proactively. In another case, the SRS, applying the 'advise first' principle, carried out tax control measures within a few months.

On inefficiency of institutions

Examined submissions, the Ombudsman found that people who decided to use the e-address were not informed about the [messages sent to the e-address](#) for a long period of time. The reason for this was that people had not confirmed the e-mail address to which the notification of receipt of information in the e-address should be sent. Consequently, people suffered adverse consequences (initiation of collections, etc.). Although the National Digital Development Agency had informed people about the need to confirm the e-mail, the Ombudsman concluded that the measures were not sufficient to provide the amount of information needed by people with different information technology literacy.

On the role of public consultation in a democracy

The Ombudsman expressed his considerations [on the annexation of the Garkalne parish to Ādaži municipality](#), stressing the importance of listening to people's opinions in a democratic state. The opinions of residents, regardless of the number of participants in the public consultation, have the highest value in balancing other criteria.

National preventive mechanism

National Preventive Mechanism is a unique state oversight mechanism, the functions of which in Latvia are exercised by the Ombudsman. National Preventive Mechanism (NPM):

- detect and prevent risks of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in institutions where the liberty of individuals is or may be restricted (e.g. prisons, mental hospitals, social care centres);
- complements the international treaty organisations that have been granted the right to perform monitoring visits to Latvian institutions where persons' liberty is or may be restricted.

The NPM is established in accordance with the requirements of [the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#).

To detect and prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in institutions where persons' liberty is or may be restricted, the Ombudsman shall have the right to visit such institutions, including closed institutions, at any time without prior notice.

The visit can be announced or unannounced and can take place at any time of the day, on a weekday or weekend. The Ombudsman may invite experts (e.g. psychiatrists) to participate in monitoring visits. Visits may also be carried out in cooperation with national monitoring bodies such as the Health Inspectorate or the Ministry of Welfare.

NPM monitoring helps reduce human rights violations by promoting accountability and transparency in the work of institutions.

Description of the reporting period

In 2024, the NPM division of the Ombudsman's Office performed a total of 39 monitoring visits (30 in 2023, 62 in 2022 and 32 in 2021). The choice of monitoring places and the frequency of visits were determined based on criteria such as the function of the institution, the number of persons, the level of turnover, the risk of ill-treatment and other relevant factors.

The monitoring visit teams included specialists such as a board-certified psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist.

As in 2023, during the reporting period the Ombudsman continued paying special attention to the guarantee of human rights in long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions. The NPM team continued visiting institutions identified during its 2023 [campaign "Life in a nursing home - what is it like?"](#).

In 2024, there were more visits to prisons and psychiatric hospitals. During these visits, the monitoring team consulted the management of the institutions on the systemic problems preventing the full exercise of human rights.

In addition to monitoring visits, international cooperation with other preventive bodies and relevant international organisations is a very important for NPM's work. The Ombudsman's Office is a member of the Council of Europe Network of National Preventive Mechanisms against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and maintains close cooperation with preventive bodies in other European countries.

Monitoring visits

Prisons

During the reporting period, 11 visits were carried out to Daugavgrīva Prison, Cēsis Juvenile Detention Institution, Riga Central Prison, Jelgava Prison, Jēkabpils Prison, Ilguciems Prison and Liepāja Prison. The visits focused on several themes.

First, the staff of the Ombudsman's Office, together with invited experts - a child psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist - conducted three visits to Cēsis Juvenile Detention Institution. Taking into account that the provision of mental health care to young people in detention is an essential aspect of their general well-being and successful reintegration into society, the Ombudsman prepared a [report](#) on access to mental health care for young people detained at the Juvenile Institution and issued recommendations to the responsible authorities to improve the situation. The Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, has started implementing Ombudsman's recommendations.

Secondly, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office visited Riga Central Prison to assess general living conditions in building No 5 of the prison, as the Ombudsman had received complaints about alleged human rights violations there over a long period of time. Attention was also drawn to the outside leisure areas available to detainees in Riga Central Prison.

Finally, the NPM team visited Jelgava Prison, Jēkabpils Prison, Ilguciems Prison and Liepāja Prison to find out about the current problems faced by prisons in ensuring rights of prisoners and to find out how work is progressing after the reform of the prison regime levels since 1 September 2024.

During a visit to the open prison in Jēkabpils, it was found that the transferred prisoners are housed in large barracks-type rooms, which should not be used according to international recommendations. Such facilities do not allow for privacy, make surveillance difficult, create a potential risk of conflict and develop an informal hierarchy among prisoners. There have been reports from prisoners of difficulties in arranging to receive guests in as private a settings as possible. When realising the possibility to work outside the prison premises, as well as to carry out other activities outside the prison, the attention of the State should be paid to ensuring that the prison has sufficient staff and financial resources to ensure the supervision of sentenced prisoners. Given the specific nature of open prisons and the emphasis on resocialisation rather than supervision, the State needs to provide sufficient resources to achieve this objective. From the submissions and visits, it appears that convicted persons lack a common understanding of the nature of open prison, their rights and obligations under this regime and that there is a need for educational measures to raise awareness.

Psychiatric (mental) hospitals

During the reporting period, the NPM team visited two psychiatric hospitals and the Forensic Psychiatric Examination and Compulsory Treatment Centre with Security of the National Mental Health Centre. The NPM team visited the Forensic Psychiatric Examination and Compulsory Treatment Centre with Security of the National Mental Health Centre, where expert examinations are provided for detained and convicted persons. The aim of the visit was to obtain information on the living conditions of persons undergoing expert examinations and whether their rights to communicate with their lawyer, the person conducting the proceedings and their relatives were respected, whether walks were provided, what is the procedure for handling complaints, etc. At the end of the visit, the NPM team discussed the identified aspects of the rights situation with the management of the institution.

The NPM team paid an unannounced visit to the Children's Psychoneurological (Mental) Hospital "Ainaži". The purpose of the visit was to check the observance of children's rights and the implementation of Ombudsman's recommendations from 2018.

During the reporting period, the NPM team visited the Strenči Psychoneurological (Mental) Hospital to find out the current situation and the challenges faced by the hospital management in its daily work on ensuring human rights.

Accommodation centres for detained foreigners

In response to a complaint regarding the detention of a foreigner at Riga Airport and his placement in detention facilities that were not suitable for long-term detention of persons, as they were overcrowded and did not provide for all basic needs, the NPM team carried out a monitoring visit to Riga Airport,

including inspecting facilities where foreigners who had entered the country in violation of the requirements set out in the Immigration Law could be detained.

The monitoring visit revealed that the State Border Guard had one temporary detention facility at the airport, where foreigners were last detained in 2019. The NPM team visited two rooms in the closed departures area in Terminal C, each room had a chair, a table and a bunk bed, where foreigners who had been refused entry could lie down and rest. The complaint of inhuman treatment and torture was not confirmed during the visit.

Long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions for adults

In 2024, without prior warning the NPM team and invited experts visited 14 long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions for adults.

During the visits, special attention was paid to the prohibition of torture and other cruel or degrading treatment, living conditions and the availability of social care and social rehabilitation services for the residents. During some of the monitoring visits, experts in the field accompanied the NPM team, and some visits were carried out in cooperation with experts from the Ministry of Welfare.

As in previous years, also in 2024 visits to several institutions revealed that:

- buildings do not provide adequate accessibility, making it difficult for residents with functional disabilities to get around;
- privacy of residents is not respected;
- residents are not treated with respect;
- meaningful leisure time activities are offered to residents only occasionally;
- regular walks in fresh air (especially for residents with reduced mobility) are not provided due to staff shortages;
- the number of staff and the distribution of competences do not correspond to the number and needs of the existing residents, thus jeopardising the provision of the necessary social care and social rehabilitation services in the long term.

The Ombudsman prepared [reports](#) on the deficiencies identified during the visits and invited responsible institutions to take the necessary actions to eliminate the shortcomings and ensure the rights of residents of long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions in the long term.

Financial resources and performance

The activities of the Ombudsman's Office - protection of human rights of individuals - are financed from the state budget programme 01.00.00 "Ombudsman's Office". The aim of the programme is to promote the protection of human rights and to ensure that public authority is exercised lawfully, efficiently and in accordance with the principle of good administration, as well as in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and international treaties binding on Latvia.

The 2024 Structured Explanatory Memorandum of the State Budget of the Ombudsman's Office is available [on the website of the Ministry of Finance](#).

Detailed information on the implementation of the 2024 budget of the Ombudsman's Office is available [at in the Treasury's report "State Budget Implementation by Institution, Budget Programme/Sub-programme and Classification Code"](#) , while the analysis of the State Budget implementation is available [on the Ministry of Finance's website](#).

State budget funding and its use (in euro)

No	Financial indicators	Actual implementation in the previous year	Approved by law for the reporting year	Actual implementation in the reporting year
1.	Financial resources to cover expenditure (total)	2 742 995	3 178 151	3 218 245
1.1.	grants	2 602 649	3 175 151	3 174 854
1.2.	paid services and other own revenue	17 759	3000	750
1.3.	foreign financial assistance	119 989	0	42 641
1.4.	donations and gifts	0	0	0
1.5.	transfers	2598	0	0
2.	Expenditure (total)	2 713 593	3 178 151	3 243 173
2.1.	maintenance costs (total)	2 697 278	3 178 151	3 217 700
2.1.1.	current expenditure	2 685 463	3 166 145	3 205 694
2.1.2.	interest expenses	0	0	0
2.1.3.	subsidies, grants and social benefits	0	0	0
2.1.4.	current payments to the European Community budget and international cooperation	11 815	12 006	12 006

No	Financial indicators	Actual implementation in the previous year	Approved by law for the reporting year	Actual implementation in the reporting year
2.1.5.	transfers of maintenance expenditure	0	0	0
2.2.	capital expenditure	16 315	0	25 473

During the year, the sub-programme 70.07.00 "Implementation of projects and activities of the Global Regional Cooperation Facility" of the Ombudsman's Office increased the appropriation for the use of foreign financial assistance granted to state budget institutions by EUR 42 641 and absorbed the balance of the previous year's foreign financial assistance of EUR 24 967 to complete the project "Support to national human rights institutions in monitoring fundamental rights and rule of law" under the European Economic Area and Norwegian Financial Instruments and the Global Regional Cooperation Facility programme.

The budget programme 01.00.00 "Ombudsman's Office" of the Ombudsman's Office was increased by an appropriation of EUR 5141 for the use of funding from the Danish Institute for Human Rights to implement the project "Business and Human Rights".

In 2024, the actual implementation of state budget funding was EUR 3.24 million. The budget of the Ombudsman's Office increased by EUR 621.9 thousand compared to the previous year's plan. The reallocation of budgetary resources resulted in a reduction of EUR 25.5 thousand in expenditure on goods and services, which was allocated to capital expenditure - the purchase of hardware, software, licences and equipment necessary for the continued operation of servers.

Performance indicators for the Ombudsman's Office in 2024

Output: informed public and timely prevention of infringements

Performance indicator	Plan for the reporting period	Implementation of the plan for the reporting period
Visits to state and local authorities (closed and semi-closed institutions, orphanages, educational institutions, etc.)	80	50
Educational seminars, discussions and other events	100	160
Participation in events organised by other institutions - lectures on issues within the Ombudsman's competence	150	413
Publications in the media	4800	8918

Output: respect for the principle of good governance

Performance indicator	Plan for the reporting period	Implementation of the plan for the reporting period
Opinions submitted to the Constitutional Court	20	13
Opinions to state institutions on draft legislation	45	45
Participation in working groups and commissions	90	149

Outcome: implementation of the Ombudsman's policy

Performance indicator	Plan for the reporting period	Implementation of the plan for the reporting period
Received (reviewed) submissions	1800	1945
Replies to submissions	1500	958
Replies to submissions without initiation of verification procedures	700	703
Verification procedures initiated based on submissions	50	77
Replies e-mail questions on issues within the competence of the Ombudsman's Office	1100	1182
Consultations:	5000	3031
on site	1000	1245
telephone	4000	1786
Verification procedures initiated by the Ombudsman	10	8
Surveys of foreigners to be returned	40	17

Additional funding allocated to priority actions

1. Increased funding for the priority measure "Strengthening the capacity of the Ombudsman's Office" in accordance with paragraph 43 § 2 of the Minutes of the Cabinet of 26 September 2023, Minutes No 47 of 26 September 2023, in the amount of EUR 352 505.
2. Increased funding for the priority measure "Establishment of an anti-discrimination unit in line with the National Position", in accordance with Minutes of the Cabinet of 26 September 2023, Minutes No 47, § 43, point 2 (including the creation of four new posts), in the amount of EUR 330 803.
3. Increased funding for the priority measure "Increase in rents of independent institutions", in accordance with Minutes of the Cabinet of 26.09.2023, Minutes of 26.09.2023, Minutes No 47, § 43, item 2, in the amount of EUR 12 190.

Key performance indicators

	2023 implementation	2024 implementation	2025 plan	2026 forecast	2027 forecast
Implementation of Ombudsman's recommendations, %	77,4	61,6	72	72	72
Customer Dynamics Index (baseline 1.0 with 8727 customers, target 1.1 with 9600 customers)	0,9	0,9	1,1	1,1	1,1

Quality indicators

	2023 implementation	2024 implementation	2025 plan	2026 forecast	2027 forecast
Evaluation of the educational activities organised by the Ombudsman (from 1 to 5)*	No data*	4,4	4,5	4,5	4,5
Claims satisfied by the Constitutional Court, %	No data**	0***	94	94	94

* A new quality indicator has been developed, as SKDS and NRA no longer conducted research on the public trust rating of the Ombudsman from 2021.

** One application was submitted to the Constitutional Court, which had not yet been examined by the end of the reporting period.

*** The examination of one application before the Constitutional Court has been completed and the claim has not been satisfied.

Research

According to the law, one of the Ombudsman's tasks is to conduct research and analyse the human rights situation. Thus, each year the Ombudsman puts forward one or more topics of public interest for in-depth research. The studies allow comprehensive conclusions to be drawn and the best possible quality of proposals to improve the situation in each area to be made. They also serve as a valuable tool for monitoring the human rights situation over comparative periods.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsman studied the following issues:

- [Public opinion, understanding of carer's leave](#)
- [Respect for human rights in the process of imposing medical coercive measures](#)
- [Web accessibility for state and local institutions. Technical analysis](#)
- [Assessment of the implementation of Directive 2016/2102 on the accessibility of websites and mobile submissions of public sector bodies in Latvian legislation and practice. Legal analysis](#)
- [Business and human rights. Preparing for the implementation of the European Union Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#)
- [Survey of trustees on access to banking services for persons with reduced legal capacity](#)
- [Public survey on the rights of people with disabilities](#)
- [Recommendations to trustees, lawyers, courts, Orphan and Custody Courts and credit institutions on the provision of banking services to persons with reduced legal capacity](#)
- [Survey of persons with disabilities about their situation in Latvia](#)
- [The concept of discrimination in Latvian media](#)
- [Taxi access for disabled people and parents of young children](#)
- [Artificial intelligence systems and discrimination](#)
- [Observance of the principle of non-discrimination in employment relations towards parents of young children. Survey of employers and parents](#)
- [Survey of Latvian employers and employees on the need for foreign language skills in the working environment](#)
- [Temporary protection against violence in court](#)
- [Experience of higher education institutions in the Republic of Latvia in the field of artificial intelligence](#)
- [Results of a survey of students, staff and faculty at Latvian higher education institutions on sexual harassment in higher education institutions](#)

Personnel

On 31 December 2024, there were 57 employees in the Ombudsman's Office, the average number of personnel in 2024 was 56. During the reporting year, four employees were recruited, and one left the Office. The personnel turnover rate was 0.10.

Breakdown by gender

In 2024, seven men and 50 women worked at the Ombudsman's Office

Breakdown by age

In 2024, there was 1 employee in the age group of 20-29 years, 15 employees in the age group of 30-39 years, 29 employees in the age group of 40-49 years, 7 employees in the age group of 50-59 years, 2 employees in the age group of 60-69 years, and 3 employees in the age group of 70-79 years.

Employment areas

In 2024, employees of the Ombudsman's Office covered the following areas: 43 employees in legal analysis and counselling (including prevention); 4 employees in communication and international cooperation; 8 employees in administration, document management, personnel and financial management, and 2 employees in supply and maintenance.

Education

In 2024, personnel of the Ombudsman's Office had the following education: 52 employees with a master's degree (including three PhD candidates); 3 employees with a bachelor's degree, and 2 employees with higher vocational education.

Information and involvement of the public

One of the Ombudsman's main functions is to inform, educate and raise public awareness on human rights, good governance and rights' protection mechanisms, with a particular focus on creating accessible content.

Publicity, cooperation with the media

In 2024, 146 news posts were published on the Ombudsman's website, 79 press releases were sent to the media and more than 250 replies were given to journalists. There were 8,918 media publications on the Ombudsman's activities and 393 social media posts. In addition, the number of followers of the Ombudsman's Facebook page increased from 4,800 to 5,274 during the reporting year.

Key campaigns, surveys

During the reporting year, the Ombudsman carried out significant public awareness campaigns, publishing information on social media accounts and on the website.

The Ombudsman explained discrimination issues [in the "Spark your empathy!" series of talks](#), invited the public to report [entertainment noise issues](#) via questionnaire, and published a short and modern [video tutorial "What to write in an application?"](#) (this tutorial is a follow-up to the video ["How to write an application?"](#) published in 2022), conducted an extensive online [survey of parents of schoolchildren](#) on school start times and getting to school, invited university representatives to participate in [a survey on sexual harassment in universities](#), and [with the campaign "I have the right to be sick, to be treated and to be healthy! Myths and reality"](#), drew public attention to patients' rights.

Main local events

Organised events

The Ombudsman in cooperation with Riga Graduate School of Law and the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office organised the Business and Human Rights Conference "[Human Rights as the New Fuel for Business](#)" to highlight the close relationship between business and human rights.

In April 2024, [the Ombudsman's Office hosted representatives of children's ombudsmen from the Baltic States and Poland](#) to jointly discuss current developments in the field of children's rights, exchange experiences, get inspiration and at the same time discuss ways to address existing gaps, paying particular attention to current issues in the field of children's and young people's mental health.

Also in 2024, the Ombudsman organised the [Human Rights Moot Court 2024](#).

During the reporting year, several public and very important discussions took place in the field of civil and political rights - on the [risks of trafficking in human beings in public procurement](#), [cyber-bullying of recognizable women in Latvia](#) and the [effectiveness of the temporary protection mechanism against violence](#).

At the end of the year, as usual, the Ombudsman in cooperation with the Association of Persons with Disabilities and their Friends "Apeirons" and the National Library of Latvia ambitiously celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities organising an inspirational [conference for opinion leaders "Human and Value"](#), ["NGO contact exchange"](#) with stories of the most powerful projects and for the tenth time presented awards to the winners of the ["Annual Award for Support of People with Disabilities"](#).

Participation in events

During the reporting period, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office participated in more than 400 different events - conferences, seminars and discussions.

Particular highlight was participation of the experts of the Ombudsman's Office in [the discussion at the festival Lampa](#) on the entertainment noise , as well as in talks on violence in the workplace, regional schools and their role in local community.

Experts of the Ombudsman's Office gave lectures to students of secondary schools in the [school programme "Ready for Life"](#) on electoral literacy, legal literacy, freedom of expression and hate speech, as well as on the different forms of human trafficking.

Lectures "Children - victims of trafficking in human beings" on the risks of human trafficking in general, ensuring the rights and interests of the child in the work of law enforcement agencies were provided to representatives of state and local authorities.

During the traditional [Shadow Day](#), the Ombudsman's Office hosted students from different regions of Latvia. [During the Job Opportunities Festival "For All!"](#) experts from the Ombudsman's Office provided advice on labour law issues.

During the year, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office mainly discussed topics such as hate speech and freedom of expression, human trafficking, mobbing and bossing, ageism, personal data protection, artificial intelligence, health protection, protection of children's rights, education, web accessibility, rights of people with disabilities, etc.

Accessible content

Accessible content continued being one of the Ombudsman's communication priorities during this reporting period. It is content that can be accessed and understood by everyone, including people with temporary or long-term accessibility or perception difficulties.

From January 2024, [documents issued by the Ombudsman's Office were formatted to meet accessibility requirements for people with visual and perceptual impairments.](#)

International cooperation and events

In 2024, the Ombudsman and representatives of the Ombudsman's Office continued to be actively involved in [global, European and regional organisations](#), including by participating in their annual conferences and seminars.

In February 2024, experts from the Ombudsman's Office met with representatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to discuss good governance practices in municipalities, opportunities for public participation and the impact and challenges of the administrative-territorial reform, while in March the Office's representatives discussed with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities the current issues affecting national minorities in Latvia, including education and hate speech.

In June 2024, representatives of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance visited Latvia to meet with representatives of the Ombudsman's Office and discuss the current situation regarding all forms of hate speech and the situation of Roma. The experts of the Ombudsman's Office informed the participants of the European Network for Legal Education exchange programme - prosecutors and judges from different European countries - about the tasks and functions of the Ombudsman in Latvia, the role of the Ombudsman in relation to the State's participation in international organisations and ECtHR cases against Latvia, as well as the right to a fair trial.

Priorities for 2025

The Ombudsman's Annual Action Plan, with its specific priorities, is basically in line with [the Ombudsman's strategy](#). At the same time, it should be noted that every year the changing circumstances and events in society highlight new topical issues which cannot be postponed, but which could not have been foreseen or planned for in advance. Consequently, the Ombudsman responds flexibly to developments in society to prevent possible violations of human rights and the principle of good governance. The thematic part of the report has already highlighted several key topics, which have been explored in the current reporting year and will continue to be explored in the coming period. In addition, the Ombudsman selects new topics for investigation each year.

In 2025, in line with the Ombudsman's strategy and the topicality of themes, the following themes have been identified as priorities:

- civil and political rights – security and human rights guarantees;
- social, economic and cultural rights – good governance, in particular, the aspect of expedience in decision-making of public administration, the effectiveness of rotation in the civil service, and raising awareness of good governance;
- children's rights – protecting the rights of child victims of abuse
- discrimination prevention – raising awareness about different aspects of discrimination, including sexual harassment, and how to recognise discrimination in different settings.

Ombudsman's recommendations and their implementation

This section sets out only the most relevant and systemic recommendations made by the Ombudsman.

The Parliament (Saeima)

Topic	Clarification of Section 9(1) Para 33 of the Law on Personal Income Tax
Recommendation	Clarify the provision so that it becomes as comprehensible as Paragraph 45 of Cabinet Regulation No 899 of 21 September 2010 "Procedure for Application of Provisions of the Law on Personal Income Tax".
Result	The Ministry of Finance informed that it would assess the current situation in terms of tax anti-avoidance and, if necessary, clarify the wording of Section 9(1) Para 33 of the Law, which would be forwarded together with the current amendments to the Law. The recommendation is in the process of being implemented.
Topic	Payment of tax on income seized in criminal proceedings
Recommendation	Amend the Law on Taxes and Fees by adding Para 7 to Section 26(6). Namely, recovery of overdue tax payments shall not be initiated in an unconditional order and the recovery of overdue tax payments initiated in an unconditional order shall be suspended if at least one of the following conditions is present: (...) "(7) the funds from which the tax is to be paid are the subject of criminal proceedings relating to the proceeds of crime, for the period of the attachment."
Result	Recommendation not met.
Topic	Repeal restrictions of the Maintenance Guarantee Fund Law on the maintenance payment to young adults studying abroad
Recommendation	To eliminate the unequal treatment of young adults who permanently reside in Latvia and continue to receive basic, secondary, vocational or special education in an educational institution abroad until they reach the age of 21, as provided for in Section 10(1) Para 3 of the Maintenance Guarantee Fund Law.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented, amendments to the Maintenance Guarantee Fund Law entered into force on 1 September 2024.

Topic	Personal income tax on municipal co-financing of children's education
Recommendation	Amend Section 9(1) of the Law on Personal Income Tax by adding a paragraph providing that the annual taxable income shall not include and shall not be taxed on co-financing (compensation) for children's pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational or interest education.
Result	The recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

Topic	Draft Law "Amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance" (No 753/Lp14)
Recommendation	Carefully assess whether, in the current economic situation, reducing social support for the poorest part of the Latvian population (not only GMI benefit recipients, but also poor and low-income families) is a socially responsible and proportionate.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Parliamentary Legal Committee

Topic	Submission of proposals for the draft law "Amendments to the Law on Administrative Penalties for Offences in the Field of Administration, Public Order and Use of the Official Language"
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearer definition of "sexual harassment" in the law. 2. Provide for a minimum sanction, leaving the specific amount to the discretion of the legislator. 3. Criminalise also sexual harassment which has the characteristics of a repeated or continuous offence. 4. Continue the discussion on activities in the digital environment or information and communication technologies. 5. Provide support measures and counselling for victims.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Clarification of the wording of the draft law "Amendments to the Law on Administrative Penalties for Offences in the Field of Administration, Public Order and Use of the Official Language" (No 598/Lp14) before the third reading
-------	---

Recommendation	The Ombudsman calls for Section 11. ² of the draft law to read as follows: "Section 11 ² . Sexual harassment. For sexual harassment, meaning, unwanted physical, verbal or written conduct of a sexual nature directed against the dignity of a person or which places him or her in intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive conditions, a fine of up to one hundred and forty penalty units shall be imposed."
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Human Rights and Public Affairs Parliamentary Committee

Topic	Determining the earliest start time for school classes
Recommendation	Promote a debate based on the Ombudsman's findings on the link between children's right to a good night's sleep and start time of school classes.
Result	The recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

Education, Culture and Science Parliamentary Committee

Topic	Determining the earliest start time for education
Recommendation	Promote a debate based on the Ombudsman's findings on the link between children's right to a good night's sleep and start time of school classes.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Social and Employment Matters Parliamentary Committee

Topic	On the draft law "Amendments to the Labour Law"
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess whether the different treatment in Section 1 of the draft law, setting different limits for the admissibility of foreign language requirements in job advertisements depending on the foreign language concerned, is objectively and reasonably justified. 2. Assess whether it is possible and necessary to list in Section 1 of the draft law certain groups of professions for which the indication of a specific foreign language proficiency in a job advertisement should be allowed, if the legal provision already requires an assessment of the need for a foreign language in each specific case.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Budget and Finance (Taxation) Parliamentary Committee

Topic	Support for mortgage recipients
Recommendation	To consider the need to ensure legal equality for all mortgage recipients who qualify for support under the criteria set out in Section 8 ⁴ (1) and (2) of the Consumer Rights Protection Law.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Amendments to the Consumer Rights Protection Law (No 575/Lp14)
Recommendation	To supplement the draft law "Amendments to the Consumer Rights Protection Law" by introducing the following transitional provisions: "45. The amendment to Section 8. ⁴ of this Law on the rewording of the third paragraph by adding the sentence "The Law shall also apply to banks in liquidation, including mortgagees who continue to pay their mortgage to the administrator of such bank" shall apply from 1 January 2024".
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Cabinet of Ministers

Topic	Regulated professions and work-life balance
Recommendation	In cooperation with non-governmental organisations representing the sector, review in detail the requirements for regulated professions to balance work and private life in cases of single or successive pregnancies.
Result	The recommendation is in the process of implementation.

Topic	Entertainment noise legislation
Recommendation	To amend Cabinet Regulation No 16 of 7 January 2014 "Noise Assessment and Management Procedure", eliminating the violations of Articles 96, 111 and 115 of the Constitution (Satversme) identified in the Ombudsman's opinion.
Result	The recommendation is in the process of implementation.

Topic	Eligibility for state aid for electricity bills for fee reductions
Recommendation	Ensure that all protected users are in fact entitled to protected user support if they are not the direct contracting parties to the electricity sales contract, but are sub-users and the end-user (owner, manager, etc.) has not made a socially responsible decision to contract with an electricity trader who is obliged to provide the service or who provides it voluntarily.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Topic	Disadvantages of applying a higher real estate tax rate to buildings not put into operation
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend Section 3(1⁶) of the Law on Immovable Property Tax by providing that the immovable property tax rate of three per cent shall be levied on buildings which do not have a valid building permit. 2. Ensure the correct application of Section 3(1⁶) of the Law on Immovable Property Tax in all municipalities.
Result	No answer has been received

Topic	Breach of the prohibition of gender-based discrimination
Recommendation	Develop and adopt a Cabinet Code of Conduct, including a procedure for assessing the conduct of ministers and the consequences in the event of a breach.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Topic	Determining the earliest start time for school classes
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that in national policies on children's education and health sufficient attention is paid to the right of the child to the highest attainable standard of health, including the right to a healthy sleep. 2. Develop guidelines and recommendations for local authorities, parents and pupils to raise public awareness of the importance of sleep for children's development and to promote the prioritisation of school start times that are in children's best interests. 3. Determine in regulatory framework that classes do not start before 8.00.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Prime Minister

Topic	Regulatory framework for children's palliative care
Recommendation	Improve Cabinet Regulation No 112 of 20 February 2024 "Palliative Care Regulations", including state-provided palliative care services for children and the procedure for receiving them.
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

State Chancellery

Topic	Human resources development policy for public administration
Recommendation	Assess potential risks that may adversely affect the operation of public administration in the special regime area (the administrative territory of Jūrmala City).
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Topic	Access to mental health care for young people placed in Cēsis Juvenile Detention Institution
Recommendation	Develop a common information sharing tool to ensure that the Juvenile Institution has all the information it needs about the health status of the young people in placed there and to ensure continuity of treatment both in the institution and after the young person's release.
Result	The recommendation is in the process of implementation.

Ministry of Finance and related institutions

Ministry of Finance

Topic	Civil liability insurance for a vehicle belonging to a child
Recommendation	Propose amendments to the Compulsory Civil Liability Insurance of Owners of Motor Vehicles Law providing that when concluding an insurance contract for the purpose of determining the amount of the insurance premium in cases where, based on Section 10(5) of the Road Traffic Law a minor has become the owner of the vehicle, the holder of the vehicle indicated in the vehicle registration certificate shall be treated as the owner of the vehicle.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

State Revenue Service

Topic	Notifications from the State Revenue Service
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the content of notices and make improvements. 2. Evaluate and improve the reasoning of decisions on the application of performance bonds. 3. Not to be satisfied with case law, but to strive to improve the services we provide.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Delay of the deadline for examination of the contestation application
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refrain from the practice of disregarding the maximum time limit set by the legislator for the examination of an application. 2. Improve the institution's internal processes to prevent a recurrence.
Result	There is no deadline for implementation of recommendations.

Ministry of the Interior and related institutions

Ministry of the Interior

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendation	Amend the provisions of the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights to provide for the closure of the State Police Prevention Institution.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

State Border Guard

Topic	Forced return of a Ukrainian national
Recommendation	Check whether the person has indicated on the decision on forced return that he or she opposes the return on the grounds of continuous warfare in Ukraine and, if this is confirmed, act in accordance with the principle of respect for the rights of private persons laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

State Police

Topic	Effectiveness of pre-trial criminal investigations and of the appeal mechanism against decisions to discontinue criminal proceedings
Recommendation	Consider the conclusions of the Ombudsman's Opinion No 6-6/25 and to take all necessary measures to prevent undue delays in the progress of criminal proceedings and thus ensure effective investigation and monitoring of criminal proceedings.
Result	No answer has been received.

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendation	Decide whether to take the child to a crisis foster family (if there is information about such a family) or to a child-care institution, including crisis centres, in any situation where it is not possible to hand the child over to his or her legal representatives. If the child is refused, notify the Child Protection Centre the next working day.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Topic	Administrative offence proceedings
Recommendation	Raise awareness among staff of the norms under which administrative offences against children are dealt with.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Ministry of Education and Science and related institutions

Ministry of Education and Science

Topic	Methodological materials for assessing children's sexual behaviour
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that children have access to quality and age-appropriate sexuality education that protects them from harmful sexual behaviour and sexual exploitation and empowers them to act in a sexually responsible manner. Not allow the use of the flag system method included in the Flag System Book with children under 16 years of age.
Result	The recommendations are in the process of implementation.

Topic	Obtaining a general secondary education certificate
Recommendation	Ensuring that graduates can receive the necessary educational documents in accordance with the current legal framework, but according to their individual situation.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Reduction in catering fee for pupils staying in border schools overnight
Recommendation	Consider the potential risks of separating children from their families during school and instruct municipalities to organise the ecosystem of educational institutions in line with the Ministry's teacher pay model. Pay particular attention to children attending pre-school.
Result	No answer has been received.

Topic	Systematic delays in response deadlines in the education sector
Recommendation	Address the problem of delays in deadlines of replies by the Ministry of Education and Science and its sectoral bodies.
Result	There is no deadline for implementation of the recommendation.

National Centre for Education

Topic	Obtaining a general secondary education certificate
Recommendation	Ensure that graduates receive the necessary educational documents in accordance with the current legal framework, but according to their individual situation.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Ministry of Climate and Energy and related institutions

Ministry for Climate and Energy

Topic	Informing the public about solar parks
Recommendation	In cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, develop guidelines for municipalities or amend legislation to ensure public participation in cases of solar parks with a potential capacity that far exceeds the needs of a single household and where the area occupied is a visible change to the traditional rural landscape.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Environmental noise in Vecmīlgrāvis
Recommendation	Initiate a more rapid progress of the draft laws and to consider the shortcomings identified in the Ombudsman's opinion regarding public involvement in environmental decision-making.
Result	The recommendation has been partially implemented.

Ministry of Culture and related institutions

Ministry of Culture

Topic	Draft Position No 3 of the Republic of Latvia "Proposal for a Council Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop provisions of the Directive that are in line with Latvia's and the European Union's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 2. Coordinate with organisations representing people with disabilities. 3. Clarify terminology in the section indicated. 4. Do not justify the failure to support the shortening of the transposition deadline for the draft Directive by Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of websites and mobile apps of public sector bodies.
Result	There is no deadline for implementation of the recommendations.

Ministry of Welfare and related institutions

Ministry of Welfare

Topic	Methodological materials for assessing children's sexual behaviour
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include and implement measures in policy planning documents that protect children from harmful sexual behaviour and promote the recognition and appropriate response to such behaviour. 2. Develop guidelines and algorithms adapted to the Latvian situation for professionals to identify child sexual abuse, assess the signs identified and develop result-oriented intervention plans in line with the recommendations of the assessment "Identification of possible cases of sexual abuse of children in out-family care". 3. Develop a methodology for professionals to identify, assess and provide result-oriented interventions on child sexual abuse. Develop methodological material, as well as face-to-face and online training programmes, to create the conditions for a common understanding among professionals. 4. Do not allow the use of the flag system method included in the Flag System Book with children under 16 years of age.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Children's right to freedom of expression and to be protected from harmful information and material
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop guidelines to protect children from information and material harmful to their well-being, considering children's right to freedom of expression and the right of parents to raise their children in accordance with their own views. 2. Define the term "material of an erotic nature" in the regulatory framework. 3. Establish in the legal framework the liability for violation of the prohibitions and restrictions (cruel behaviour, violence, eroticism) set out in Section 50 of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights. 4. Encourage discussion on the application of Section 50 of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights, including the labelling of printed matter intended for children which contains information harmful to children's well-being.
Result	The recommendations are in the process of implementation.

Topic	Specialised knowledge on child protection
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate the need for and propose amendments to Paragraph 27 of the Transitional Provisions of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights by adding the following words: 'represents the parents of the child in civil cases concerning custody and access rights; in administrative cases, appealing against administrative acts and factual actions of Orphans' and Custody Courts or other authorities, if this affects or may affect the rights and interests of the child'. 2. Assess the need for and propose amendments to Section 5.¹ of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights, adding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) wording "and the assistant lawyer" to Section 19.¹ 2) wording "and the assistant bailiff" to Section 19.² 3) wording "and an assistant sworn notary" to Section 19.⁴
Result	The recommendations are in the process of implementation.

Topic	Capacity of the National Commission for Health and Work Capacity Examiners
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider increasing the capacity of the Commission to take timely decisions on the extension of disability status. 2. To assess the necessity of extending the framework set out in Paragraph 15 of the Transitional Provisions of the Disability Law in the context of limited capacity of the Commission.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Criteria for determining the need for special care for disabled people
Recommendation	Improve the criteria for determining the need for special care for disabled persons and address cases when after reaching the age of majority, functional capacity is determined according to the Barthel scale to the extent that the amount of support received is reduced. In such cases, the disabled person's capacity for self-care has not improved compared to the time before reaching the age of majority, thus worsening the situation of both the disabled person and his/her family members.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Topic	Improving the guardianship institute
Recommendation	The Ombudsman repeatedly called to remedy the shortcoming in the legal framework and to provide in Section 316 of the Civil Law that there can be one or two guardians (spouses).
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the possibility of establishing a service in an institution for children who are victims of unlawful acts, organised by the Latvian Children's Fund, also in Riga, as well as to consider the possibility of admitting children in crisis situations to institutions where the state-funded service is provided, as has been done so far.

2. To fill the gap in the state delegation to the Adolescent Resource Centre under Section 13(2.¹) of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance regarding the provision of social rehabilitation services in an institution for children who have developed dependence on narcotic, toxic or other intoxicating substances or on addictive processes.
3. Elaborate regulations in accordance with the delegation to the limited liability company "Children and Adolescent Resource Centre" under Section 13(2.⁴) of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance on the conditions and procedures for the provision of social rehabilitation services and to submit them to the Cabinet of Ministers.
4. To harmonise the regulation set out in Section 60 of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights with the regulation set out in Paragraph 51 of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 354 of 26 June 2018 "Foster Family Regulations" on situations when children are placed in a crisis foster family or a foster family with a police decision.
5. Ensure that in cases where it is necessary to impose special restrictions on a child, Cabinet Regulation No 162 of 4 May 1999 "Procedures for the Isolation of a Child in a General Institution for the Care and Education of Orphans and Children Left without Parental Care" is applied.
6. To draft amendments to the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 338 of 13 June 2017 "Requirements for Social Service Providers" in line with Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 162.
7. Ensure that institutional social rehabilitation services are available in the country for children who have developed dependence on narcotic, toxic or other intoxicating substances or on addictive processes.
8. Improve access to residential social rehabilitation services for children who have developed dependence on narcotic, toxic or other intoxicating substances or on addictive processes by providing services throughout the country.
9. Ensure that children separated from their families endangering their health or development by using of alcohol, drugs or other toxic substances receive appropriate help and care in out-family care (feel the sense of protection and have conditions for their development and well-being).

	<p>10. Ensure adequate funding for social rehabilitation services for children who have developed addiction on narcotic, toxic or other intoxicating substances or on addictive processes.</p> <p>11. When monitoring and controlling compliance with the laws and regulations governing the provision of social services and the quality of social services in social services and childcare institutions, ensure that information received from the police or medical institutions or medical persons is followed up with appropriate action to meet the child's needs.</p>
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.
Topic	Parental allowance when the child is born prematurely
Recommendation	Call for amendments to the Law on Maternity and Sickness Insurance to address the disparate treatment of parents whose children are born prematurely.
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.
Topic	Web accessibility for people with disabilities
Recommendation	Provide training to staff on web accessibility.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.
Topic	Provision of a minimum old-age pension in the event of aggregation of insurance periods
Recommendation	Assess the specific situation that has not been regulated and, in cases where a person's insurance record has been acquired as a result of the aggregation of insurance periods in Latvia and another country and the amount of the Latvian old-age pension in aggregate with the amount of the pension of another country does not reach the amount of either the state social security benefit or the minimum pension, to consider the need to establish a legal framework that would ensure at least some form of minimum amount of social security and to propose amendments to the legislation accordingly.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Rights of the child in adoption process
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the legal framework for adoption. 2. When improving the legal framework for adoption, assess the need to involve two or even three Orphan and Custody Courts (the one which has decided on the child's out-family care, and the court of the adopter's place of residence, and the court of the child's current place of residence) in order to minimise the administrative burden and to best meet the individual needs of each child . 3. Until the legal framework for adoption is improved, ensure that the child's right to identity is exercised in the adoption process in accordance with the child's best interests and that the nationality, culture and language of communication of the child and the adoptive family are considered when providing adoptive parents with information about the child to be adopted. Ensure that the child's right to identity and the right to grow up in a family are balanced in the best way for the child, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the fundamental principles of child protection.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Child Protection Centre

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop methodological recommendations for Orphan and Custody Courts for taking decisions on compulsory treatment of a child who has suffered mental or behavioural disorders due to abuse of alcoholic beverages, narcotic, psychotropic, toxic or other intoxicating substances: 1) consenting to treatment instead of the child or his/her legal representative if the child or his/her legal representative does not consent to compulsory treatment; 2) taking individual decision on the compulsory treatment of the child alone if the child or his/her legal representative does not consent to compulsory treatment or unreasonably wishes to discontinue it and if this is necessary for the protection of the child's interests. 2. When monitoring compliance with children's rights and interests, as well as compliance with laws and regulations in the field of child protection in orphanages and childcare institutions, ensure that information received from the police or medical institutions or medical practitioners is followed by appropriate action to meet the child's needs.
Result	The deadline for implementing the recommendations has not passed.

Topic	Rights of the child in adoption proceedings
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the methodological recommendations on adoption included in the Handbook for Orphan and Custody Courts, considering the amendments to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 667 of 30 October 2018 "Adoption Procedure". 2. Provide methodological support to all Orphan and Custody Courts for obtaining and recording opinions and other information in the minutes of in-person interviews, by familiarising the person being interviewed with the minutes and obtaining his/her signature of consent to the information contained in the minutes, as well as for obtaining opinions and information in writing when it is not objectively possible to obtain opinions in person, including within the framework of cooperation between Orphan and Custody Courts.

	3. Provide methodological support to all Orphan and Custody Courts to seek the views and other information of children, even if they are young or have limited communication capacities due to health or developmental conditions.
Result	The recommendations are in the process of implementation.

State Social Insurance Agency

Topic	Payment of benefits to a disabled person
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review decisions and issue more favourable administrative acts to the applicant. 2. Consider the possibility of reviewing the administrative acts issued by the Agency concerning similar cases for other persons for at least the last three years.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Granting the service to a person with the insurance record abroad
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the process of examination of submissions in accordance with the provisions of Section 64(1) and (2) of the Administrative Procedure Law and Section 27(3) of the Law on State Social Insurance. 2. Ensure that a decision is taken within one month of receipt of the person's application, or within four months at the latest if there is an objective reason to do so, to provide for the provisional payment or advance payment of the service in accordance with Article 50 of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems. 3. Ensure that a person can apply for an old-age pension at least six months before the entitlement to an old-age pension becomes effective. 4. Provide for an application procedure for cross-border cases with strict controls over compliance in the Agency's Regulation No 01-5/18 of 19 April 2023 "Rules for the allocation of services and the preparation of cost lists".

Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.
Topic	Principle of good governance
Recommendation	Review the current practice of refusing to recalculate pensions and asking for a resubmission after one day and simplify and streamline the decision-making procedure.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

State social care centre "Latgale"

Topic	Respecting customer rights
Recommendation	Ensure that Ukrainian citizens are supported in the preparation of submissions.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Ministry of Transport

Topic	Disability discrimination
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organise a discussion on the problems identified in the opinion regarding the accessibility of the environment for persons with disabilities in the context of Paragraph 98 of the Road Traffic Regulation, including the accessibility of the environment for persons with disabilities living in the Old Town, involving other responsible institutions (municipality, police) in order to reach the best possible, fair solution and to avoid the risks of unfair use of exceptions. 2. Based on the discussion, amend the regulation of paragraph 98 of the Road Traffic Regulation to eliminate its discrimination on grounds of disability.
Result	<p>The first recommendation has been met.</p> <p>The second recommendation is not yet due.</p>

Ministry of Justice and related institutions

Ministry of Justice

Topic	Simplified procedure for maintenance recovery
Recommendations	<p>Correct the deficiencies identified in the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 250.¹⁹(1) of the Civil Procedure Law in relation to the initiation of a simplified procedure in an action for the recovery of maintenance, to increase the total amount of payments on the date of filing of the action to a total amount not less than the national minimum annual amount of maintenance 2. Section 250.¹⁹(2.¹) of the Civil Procedure Law in relation to the grounds for bringing proceedings, that the amount of the claim in a case for the recovery of child support shall be related to the national minimum amount of child support.
Result	<p>The first recommendation has been implemented.</p> <p>The second recommendation has not been implemented.</p>
Topic	Updating entries in the public registers after a company has been excluded from the commercial register
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the regulation of the Law "On the Register of Enterprises of the Republic of Latvia", which would enable a natural person in exceptional cases to request the Register of Enterprises to update information relating to his/her personal data after the liquidation of a company. 2. Revisit the issue of the retention periods for data contained in registers.
Result	<p>The first recommendation has not been implemented, as it was remedied by a change in practice, so there was no need to amend the law.</p> <p>The second recommendation has been implemented.</p>

Topic	Openness of court hearings in administrative proceedings
Recommendation	Eliminate the deficiencies in Section 108 of the Administrative Procedure Law providing for exceptions to hearing of administrative cases in closed court, ensuring the protection of the rights of persons (in particular children) to the same extent as in civil and criminal proceedings.
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Topic	Grandparents' obligation to support grandchildren
Recommendation	Consider proposing amendments to Section 179(4) of the Civil Law to read as follows: "If one or both parents of a child fail to provide maintenance for the child, this obligation shall fall on the grandparents in equal shares. Where the grandparents are unequally circumstanced, the court may impose a maintenance obligation on them in proportion to the situation of each."
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Topic	Registering the birth of a child
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a child rights protection mechanism to ensure that the birth of a child is registered in cases where a parent fails to comply with his/her obligation to report the birth of a child. 2. Consider imposing parental responsibility if the parent fails to fulfil the obligation laid down in Section 25(1) of the Law on Registration Civil Status Acts.
Result	Recommendations has not been implemented.

Topic	Amendments to Criminal Procedure Law
Recommendation	Amend the Criminal Procedure Law regarding persons subject to the procedure for the imposition of coercive measures of a medical nature and their participation in that procedure.
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that C�sis Juvenile Detention Institution has sufficient resources to provide appropriate treatment and social rehabilitation for young people with substance abuse problems who are placed in the institution. 2. Promote uniform case law in cases when children are subjected to an educational coercive measure - a behavioural restriction - with an obligation to attend counselling with a psychologist, doctor or other specialist and additional educational coercive measure - an obligation to undergo treatment for abuse of alcohol, drugs, psychotropic or toxic substances or other addictions. 3. To eliminate the shortcomings in the first part of Section 14 of the Law on the Imposition of Compulsory Measures of Correctional Nature on Children by removing the condition that consent to treatment is required for the court and the administrative commission to order a child to undergo treatment for alcohol, narcotic, psychotropic or toxic substances or other addiction if it was the reason for the commission of the offence or misdemeanour. 4. To eliminate the shortcomings in Section 13 of the Law on the Imposition of Compulsory Measures of Correctional Nature on Children and to establish the procedure for the forced execution of a court decision ordering a child to undergo treatment for alcohol, narcotic or psychotropic substance dependence if the child fails to comply with the court decision and does not undergo treatment.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Court administration

Topic	Banking services for persons with reduced legal capacity
Recommendation	Disseminate the guidelines within their area of responsibility.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Register of Enterprises

Topic	Updating of entries in the public registers after a company has been excluded from the commercial register
Recommendation	Review the person's situation regarding updating data.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Members of the Judiciary

Prosecutor General of the Republic of Latvia

Topic	Protection of victims of violence
Recommendation	Scrutinise the actions and decisions of officials in a particular case.
Result	There is no deadline for implementation of the recommendation.

Topic	Delaying pre-trial proceedings
Recommendation	Carry out a case-by-case review of possible delays in the pre-trial process, paying particular attention to why procedural coercive measures (detention, placement in a medical institution for expert examination or forced removal) have not been used to date to secure the criminal proceedings.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Attorney General's Office

Topic	The right of the child to be protected from exposure to tobacco smoke
Recommendation	To promote a common understanding and practice among prosecutors in cases concerning a child's right to be protected from exposure to tobacco smoke and to apply the provisions of Section 1(11) of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights in cases where a child is exposed to such exposure outside places listed in Section 10(2) of the Law on Circulation of Tobacco Products, Tobacco Substitutes, Herbal Smoking Products, Electronic Smoking Devices and Their Liquids.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Effectiveness of pre-trial criminal investigations and of the appeal mechanism against decisions to discontinue criminal proceedings
Recommendation	Consider Ombudsman's conclusions of the verification procedure No 2024-15-4A,32 and take all necessary measures to prevent unjustified delays in the progress of criminal proceedings and thus ensure effective investigation and monitoring of criminal proceedings.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Pierīga prosecutor's office

Topic	Ensuring a reasonable deadline
Recommendation	To give the particular criminal proceedings the benefit of the law in providing a reasonable time to respect and protect the rights of the child.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Jelgava Court House of the Administrative District Court

Topic	Hearing the case within a reasonable time
Recommendation	Take appropriate measures to facilitate the examination of the administrative case within a reasonable time.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Riga Regional Court

Topic	Sending a decision on temporary protection against violence to the social services
Recommendation	To update the judges on the issue of sending the decision on temporary protection against violence to the social services in accordance with Section 250. ⁶² (5) of the Civil Procedure Law.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Riga City Court

Topic	Civil proceedings concerning custody and access rights
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deal with cases relating to the rights and interests of children out of turn within a reasonable time. 2. To set reasonable deadlines for orphans' courts to issue opinions in civil cases, in accordance with the procedural procedure laid down in the normative enactments regarding their preparation and ensuring the participation of persons. 3. In civil cases involving children's rights, to set procedural time limits to enable the parties to exercise the rights and perform the obligations under the Civil Procedure Law.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Ministry of Health and related bodies

Ministry of Health

Topic	Compliance of Latvian Medical Association's Trade Court Proceedings with the principle of good governance
Recommendations	<p>In collaboration with the Latvian Medical Association:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the necessary changes in the regulatory framework in order to clarify the actual status and tasks of the Vocational Court (and, if necessary, other institutions of the Latvian Medical Association, such as the Ethics Committee) in the implementation of the delegated state administration function - certification of doctors and dentists. 2. Strengthen the status of the Latvian Medical Association in the area of disciplinary liability of doctors and dentists by providing a clear legal framework and scope of rights and obligations. 3. In the light of the above, including the Latvian Medical Association's indication of a lack of resources, ensure that the resources of the Vocational Court are adequate to its tasks and allow it to carry out the functions delegated by the State, respecting the principle of good governance and human rights.
Result	The recommendations are in the process of implementation.

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent the failure of the mechanism of compulsory treatment for children meant for the protection of children's rights and established in the national legislation. 2. Submit a proposal to clarify the term "compulsory treatment" in the Medical Treatment Law. 3. Prevent the principle of patient participation from being applied to children over 14 years of age who suffer from mental or behavioural disorders because of substance abuse, rather than the principle of the best interests of the child.

4. The hospitalization plan should provide for a sufficient network of services to enable the Emergency Medical Service to take children under the influence of intoxicants to the nearest health facility for assessment of their condition.
 5. Ensure that GPs receive information without delay about a child under the influence of intoxicants who has been admitted to a treatment facility, both outpatient and inpatient.
 6. Ensure uniform practice among narcologists regarding the entry of information in the narcological patient register.
 7. To assess in which cases the authorities are entitled to request and receive information on a person from the register of narcological patients, in particular on the period when the person was a minor, and to propose amendments to the regulatory enactments.
 8. Introduce a 24-hour helpline for immediate help with addiction issues.
 9. Ensure that hospitals have certified medical practitioners available 24 hours a day to carry out medical tests for possible alcohol, drug, psychotropic or toxic effects.
 10. Eliminate the deficiency in Section 61 of the Medical Treatment Law regarding the voluntary treatment of patients suffering from alcohol, drug, psychotropic, toxic substance, gambling or computer game addiction and provide an exception for the treatment of children.
 11. Close the loophole in the regulation on the doctor's right to refuse further treatment of a patient in Section 42 of the Medical Treatment Law and provide an exception for treatment of children.
-

12. To ensure that narcologists in practice act in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 726 of 16 December 2003 "Procedure for Compulsory Treatment of Children with Mental or Behavioural Disorders Due to the Use of Alcoholic Beverages, Narcotics, Psychotropic or Other Intoxicating Substances and Procedure for Compulsory Treatment of Children in Social Correction Education Institutions for Alcohol, Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances" (hereinafter - Cabinet Regulation No 726 of 16 December 2003), and the procedure for providing compulsory treatment for alcohol, narcotic and psychotropic substance dependence to children in social correction education institutions. 726) stipulates that continuous and systematic compulsory treatment of a child for alcohol, narcotic, psychotropic or other intoxicating substance dependence shall be organised and provided by a certified narcologist in cooperation with a family doctor and other medical practitioners, psychologist, social worker and social pedagogue.
 13. Facilitate the cooperation of medical practitioners with the police in relation to the forced removal, examination or treatment of children suffering from addiction, on the basis of Section 11(3) of the Law on Police, which stipulates the duty of a police officer to assist medical institutions and medical practitioners.
 14. Harmonise the name and content of the service programme in narcology implemented at the hospital "Ģintermuiža" and the programmes "Inpatient drug rehabilitation for children" and "Compulsory narcological assistance for children after the decision of the Orphan and Custody Court" specified by the NHS with the programme of psychotherapeutic motivation treatment specified in Paragraph 20 of Cabinet Regulation No 726.
 15. Assess the need for a psychotherapeutic motivational treatment programme for separately motivated and unmotivated children.
 16. Promote the objective diagnosis of children abusing addictive substances.
 17. Ensure that the Health Inspectorate assesses the quality of health care provided to a child in all cases at the request of the child's legal representative.
-

	<p>18. Eliminate the deficiencies in the regulation provided for in Paragraph 5 of Cabinet Regulation No 726 (consent of the child and the legal representative), aligning it with the provision of Section 13(3) of the Law on the Rights of Patients, i.e. if the child refuses to give his/her consent to medical treatment, then his/her legal representative shall give consent.</p> <p>19. Eliminate shortcomings in the practical application of the regulation laid down in Paragraph 5 of Cabinet Regulation No 726 and to promote the provision of narcological assistance without consent when a child has developed a mental disorder that endangers himself, his relatives or other persons by his actions.</p> <p>20. Ensure adequate funding for drug treatment for children.</p>
Result	The recommendations has not reached the implementation deadline.
Topic	Access to mental health care for young people placed in Cēsis Juvenile Detention Institution
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide diagnosis of mental, behavioural and neuropsychiatric disorders of young people placed in the juvenile institution (according to clinical algorithms and patient pathways approved in Latvia). 2. Ensure access to evidence-based pharmacological therapies. 3. Ensure access to non-medical therapies and psychosocial rehabilitation services. 4. Provide evidence-based addiction treatment for young people placed in the juvenile institution with the necessary resources. 5. Develop a common information sharing tool to ensure that the juvenile institution has all the information it needs about the health status of the young person in placement and to ensure continuity of treatment both within the juvenile institution and after the young person's release.
Result	The recommendations are in the process of implementation.

Health Inspectorate

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that in all cases, the quality of health care provided to a child is assessed at the request of the child's legal representative. 2. Staff members whose management decisions (in particular administrative acts), actual conduct or other performance of their duties or functions affect or are likely to affect the rights and legal interests of children, to acquire special knowledge in the field of children's rights in accordance with the provisions of Section 5.¹ of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development and related institutions

Ministry for Smart Administration and Regional Development

Topic	Reduction of catering fees for pupils staying at boarding schools overnight
Recommendation	Consider the conclusions of the Ombudsman's opinion on the principle of priority of children's interests and prevent municipalities, when drafting binding regulations, from providing incentives for families who choose to place their children in boarding schools or pre-school boarding facilities.
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Topic	Web accessibility for people with disabilities
Recommendation	Initiate the necessary changes to the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 445 of 14 July 2020 "Procedure for posting information on the internet by institutions" to comply with the requirements of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of websites and mobile submissions of public sector bodies.
Result	The recommendation is in the process of being implemented.

National Digital Development Agency

Topic	Validation of e-mails as part of the upgrade of the e-address system of the Latvia.gov.lv portal
Recommendation	Repeatedly inform the public on the need to validate e-mail addresses for communication, including the steps to be taken, the meaning and legal consequences of e-mail validation, and accessibility requirements for the perceptually and visually impaired.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Municipalities and related bodies

Aizkraukle Municipality

Topic	Municipal housing assistance
Recommendation	Exclude the condition of the duration of residence declaration as a prerequisite for persons to qualify for municipal housing assistance in priority order.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Aizkraukle Education Board

Topic	School supplies in Aizkraukle Secondary School
Recommendation	Instruct Aizkraukle Secondary School to update the lists of school supplies issued to parents in accordance with the provisions of the Education Law.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Alūksne Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Augšdaugava Municipality

Topic	Municipal housing assistance
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclude the condition of the duration of residence declaration as a prerequisite for persons to qualify for municipal housing assistance in priority order. 2. Assess the proportionality of the requirements in the Binding Provisions regarding a certain duration for declaring a place of residence.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Ādaži Municipality

Topic	Priority enrolment of siblings in pre-school
Recommendation	Provide in the binding regulations that, whenever possible, children of one family are enrolled in the same educational institution.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Balvi Municipality**Balvi Municipality Nursing Home "Balvi"**

Topic	Ensuring human rights in a nursing home
Recommendations	Implement 13 recommendations related to living conditions, prevention of risks of ill-treatment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Bauska municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Cēsis Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Provision of school supplies in Amata Primary School
Recommendation	Ensure that parents are provided with lists of school supplies to be purchased in accordance with the legal framework.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Cēsis Education Board

Topic	School supplies in Cēsis Primary School No 2 and Cēsis City Secondary School
Recommendation	Instruct Cēsis Primary School No 2 and Cēsis City Secondary School to update the lists of school supplies issued to parents in accordance with the provisions of the Education Law.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Cēsis Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Children's right to identity and access
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attract the right professionals to restore the parent-child relationship. 2. Respect the court's decisions and, within the limits of its competence, ensure that parents and children comply with them. 3. Not to infringe the powers of the Orphan and Custody Court and to respect the competence and responsibility of the social services. 4. Assess the impact of the child's mother's actions on the child's emotional state and relationship with the father by informing the child of descent from a person whose paternity has not been proven in court.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. As regards the mother's influence on the child, make sure that she not only does not obstruct the relationship between the child and the father, but also consciously and purposefully promotes it. 6. Assess the need for both parents to attend counselling with the most appropriate specialist(s) to improve their parenting skills. 7. Conduct explanatory work with both parents (preferably at the same time) to reach a common understanding and goal regarding the child's visits to specialists, to reconcile the conflicting interests of both parents and to respect the procedures for exercising the right of access as laid down in the court decision.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Cēsis City Nursing Home

Topic	Ensuring human rights in Cēsis City nursing home
Recommendations	Implement the seven recommendations on living conditions, environmental accessibility, respect for privacy, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Dienvidkurzeme Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Dobele Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Gulbene Municipality

Topic	Reduction of catering fee for pupils staying at boarding school
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate the unequal treatment of children who do not stay in the boarding school as set in the binding regulation No 19 of 30 November 2023 "On the relief of boarding fees for pupils in the Gulbene Municipality". 2. Encourage children to stay with their families through incentives.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Jelgava Municipality

Topic	Ethics of communication and actions and bossing of the Council Chairperson
Recommendation	Assess the behaviour and actions of Madars Lasmanis as the Council Chairman in the Ethics Committee in accordance with the ethical norms of the municipality.
Result	Recommendation has not been implemented.

Jelgava City Municipality

Topic	Disadvantages of applying a higher real estate tax rate to buildings not put into operation
Recommendation	Recalculate the real estate tax in accordance with Paragraph 59 of the Transitional Provisions of the Law "On Immovable Property Tax" for 137 structures for which the maximum period for construction works had expired but the building permit was issued before 1 July 2013.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Jelgava City Municipal Police

Topic	Circumstances in the sobering facility
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not to allow a person's liberty to be restricted without a procedure laid down by law and to allow the person to leave the facility as soon as he or she is willing and able to do so. 2. Ensure that medical staff are always present in the facility. 3. Ensure that persons placed in the facility have regular, undisturbed access to the toilet.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Jūrmala City Municipality

Topic	Provision of school supplies at Jūrmala Aspazija Primary School
Recommendation	Ensure that parents of pupils of Jūrmala Aspazija Primary School (and other educational institutions) are provided with lists of school supplies to be purchased in accordance with the regulatory framework as soon as possible.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Jūrmala Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Protection of children's rights
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comply with the provisions of Section 22 (1) and (5) of the Law on Orphans' and Custody Courts and, upon receipt of a court decision on the application of temporary protection against violence in a family with a child, if the perpetrator of violence is the child's parent, to initiate administrative proceedings for termination of custody rights and to act in accordance with Section 22(1¹) of the Law on Orphans' and Custody Courts. 2. Record the child's views in the minutes of the conversation in a direct, child-participatory way. 3. Ensure that envelopes containing restricted documents in the administrative file are sealed to prevent access to their contents by the parties. To prevent the inspection of the administrative file without the presence of a member of the Orphans' and Custody Court staff, including temporary distraction.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Krāslava Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Kuldīga Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Registering family in the assistance register
Recommendation	Consider registration of the given family for receiving municipal assistance in solving the housing issue in general procedure in accordance with sub-paragraphs 5.2 and 5.2.1 of the municipal binding regulations No 9/2024 "On Assistance in Solving Housing Issues in Kuldīga Municipality" and to adopt a decision favourable to the family and in accordance with the legal norms.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Kekava Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Municipal housing assistance
Recommendation	Exclude the condition of the duration of the residence declaration as a prerequisite for persons to qualify for municipal housing assistance in priority order.
Result	The deadline for implementing the recommendation has not passed.

Topic	Provision of school supplies in Baloži Secondary School
Recommendation	Ensure that parents are provided with lists of school supplies to be purchased, in accordance with the legal framework.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Kekava Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Rights of the child in adoption proceedings
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent situations when the clarification of opinions and other information in administrative cases takes place over the phone rather than in person. 2. Ensure that child's opinion is heard in decision-making, if necessary involving a specialist who can do this in the best way for the child. 3. In the specific pre-adoption process, when making decisions that will affect the child in the long term, consider and include in the decisions information about balancing the child's right to identity and the child's right to be adopted and to grow up in a family . 4. Prevent situations in which the Orphan and Custody Court, which is the child's legal representative, is not involved in the administrative decision to place the child in pre-adoption care, as well as in other decisions (with the exception of a sole decision). 5. Critically assess the provision of advice by professionals that may result in a significant violation of the child's rights by failing to adequately prepare the child for the transition to a new family and to inform the child of the next steps to take, in accordance with the child's age. 6. Prevent situations in which the foster family in which the child has been placed is not called upon to take a decision on the placement of the child in pre-adoptive care in an administrative case concerning the adoption of a child. 7. Issue a decision to foster families on the placement of a child in pre-adoption care based on Section 25(4) of the Law on Orphans' and Custody Courts.
Result	The deadline for implementing the recommendations has not passed.

Social care centre "Baldone"

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the social care centre "Baldone"
Recommendations	Implement nine recommendations related to general living conditions, avoiding risks of ill-treatment, respect for privacy, etc.

Result

The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Liepāja City Municipality**Topic**

Home care service for children with disabilities

Recommendation

Until the existing binding regulations are amended or new ones adopted on the procedures for home care service for children with disabilities, the home care service for children with disabilities [shall continue to](#) be provided to the same extent and under the same conditions as before 3 December 2024.

Result

The recommendation has been implemented.

Limbaži Orphan and Custody Court**Topic**

Protecting the rights of the child

Recommendations

1. [Immediately put an end to the](#) long-standing situation when the child staying for several days with his mother in prison and with his mother's husband abroad without a decision of the Orphan and Custody Court and decide on the matter in the best interests of the child.
2. Consider the guardian's application without delay and take a decision in the best interests of the child.
3. Resolve disagreements between the child's mother and guardian on child custody matters, involving the social services and the administration of Iļģuciems Prison, and to consider the possibility of providing a mediation service.
4. In future work, avoid the shortcomings identified in this case and comply with the duties of the Orphan and Custody Courts established in the regulatory enactments.

Result

The recommendations have been implemented.

Līvāni Municipality

Topic	Closure of Rožupe primary school
Recommendation	Improve communication with the public and involve them in decision-making.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Madona Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Mārupe State Gymnasium

Topic	Drawing up administrative acts
Recommendation	Draw up administrative acts in accordance with the provisions of Section 67(2) of the Administrative Procedure Law.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Topic	Ensuring the right to education of students with special needs
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring timely action to fulfil the right to education of learners with special needs. 2. If necessary, apply to the Special Education Development Centre and the National Centre for Education for methodological assistance on the application of support measures, the development of an individual curriculum plan and the assessment of the dynamics of learning achievements of a learner with special needs. 3. Improve the Gymnasium's procedure for responding to submissions by ensuring that teachers and administrators respond in writing to submissions (letters) received in the school management system.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Olaine Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Municipal housing assistance
Recommendation	<u>Exclude</u> the condition of the duration of residence declaration of as a prerequisite for persons to qualify for municipal housing assistance in priority order.
Result	The deadline for implementing the recommendation has not passed.

Ogre Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Content of the municipal newsletter
Recommendation	<u>Include in</u> the municipality's newsletter only the information specified in Section 52 of the Local Government Law.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Topic	Conflict resolution
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Code of Conduct for municipal councillors. 2. Implement measures to educate central administration staff and councillors on professional communication ethics and conflict resolution. 3. Strengthen internal conflict resolution capacity, where necessary by using specialists to facilitate dialogue and mediate communication between persons who are no longer able or willing to talk humanely.
Result	The deadline for implementing the recommendations has not passed.

Ogre Education Board

Topic	Provision of school supplies at Jumprava Primary School
Recommendation	Ensure that parents are provided with lists of school supplies to be purchased in accordance with the legal framework for their child's school needs.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Rēzekne Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Action by the Orphan and Custody Court
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Treat both parents equally. 2. Requests to the court must be made in accordance with the Civil Procedure Law. 3. Note that every parent has the right to take his or her child and his or her rights to court and to exercise the rights set out in the Civil Procedure Law. The Orphans' Court may not directly or indirectly cause adverse consequences for parents for exercising their rights under the legislation.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Topic	Municipal housing tenants' debts
Recommendation	Take immediate action to pay all or at least part of the municipality housing tenants' debt to restore the building's heating supply.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Rēzekne City Municipality

Topic	Enforcement of a court judgment
Recommendation	Take all possible measures to enforce the judgment of the Court in Administrative Case No A42034316.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Rēzekne City Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Right of access and deprivation of custody
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not allow restrictions on access rights without a decision of the Orphan and Custody Court. 2. Comply with Paragraph 58 of Cabinet Regulation No 354. 3. Respect the time limits for responding set out in the Law on Submissions. 4. Improve cooperation with Latgale Family Support Centre "Daugavpils " regarding the provision of access rights and the organisation of access for children placed in foster care. 5. In administrative cases on parental custody, set reasonable time limits for parents to address the risks identified by the Orphan and Custody Court. 6. In any case where paternity has not been established, but the possible father of the child becomes known to the Orphan and Custody Court, encourage paternity to be established regardless of the health of the parent.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Action by the municipal Orphan and Custody Court
Recommendation	Inform the child's parent about the opening of an administrative case on custody rights of the other parent and about the possibility of submitting a request to be heard as a third party if the Orphan and Custody Court has not already granted such a status on its own initiative.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Riga City Municipality

Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendation	Find a solution to attract staff to the Riga Social Support Centre for Children, Youth and Families, including adequate remuneration and social guarantees.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Topic	Religiously motivated restriction on burial and possible disproportionate restriction of human rights
Recommendation	Make information on cemeteries with special burial arrangements publicly available (e.g. by creating an annex to the Riga City Council's binding regulations).
Result	Information has been received that implementation of the recommendation has started.

Topic	Special education
Recommendation	Assess the need to make special education more accessible, taking into account the material sent on specific cases in the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Riga City Council Chairperson

Topic	Compliance with the principle of good governance
Recommendation	Review and improve the work of the municipality's institutions and departments by introducing the practice of directing questions from institutions and citizens immediately to the responsible department or institution within the framework of cooperation, rather than providing a formal indication of the institution to which a specific question should be addressed.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Riga City Municipality Administrative Commission

Topic	Appealing against a decision
Recommendation	Eliminate situations where the decision does not include information on the possibilities of appeal.
Result	<p>The recommendation has been implemented.</p> <p>The Sub-Commission requested the Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior to improve the Administrative Offence Procedure Support System (APAS) so that in cases when the administrative offence procedure is terminated in accordance with Section 11 of the Law on Administrative Liability and one of the parties is the victim or the owner of the damaged property, the decisions include information in accordance with the requirements of Article 166(1) of the Law.</p>

Riga City Municipality Department of Open Space and Mobility

Topic	Informing citizens about roadworks at night
Recommendation	Consider including in the permit for planned road works (especially at night) a condition that the proponent or contractor must give reasonable notice to residents of the planned works (e.g. by posting notices at nearby houses) the day before the works are due to start.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Riga State Municipality Housing and Environment Department Cemetery Administration

Topic	Unlawful burial and failure to respect the principle of good administration
Recommendation	Act to prevent the violation of personal rights.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Riga City Council Committee on Security, Order and Prevention of Corruption

Topic	The right of the child to be protected from exposure to tobacco smoke
Recommendation	Provide solutions and engage to improve the work of the Riga City Municipal Police to enforce the restrictions on smoking set out in the Law on the Circulation of Tobacco, Tobacco Substitutes, Herbal Smoking Products, Electronic Smoking Devices and Their Liquids and the regulations set out in Section 1(11) and Section 48 of the Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights in Riga City and to enhance their ability to respond to such violations.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Riga City Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Civil proceedings relating to custody and access rights
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comply with the procedural deadlines laid down in the laws and regulations for issuing opinions at the request of a court and for serving decisions. 2. Prevent any action that could hinder the work of the courts in civil cases involving children's rights.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Topic	Action in an administrative case
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect the principle of good administration and the time limit for adoption of the administrative act set out in Section 64 (1) of the Administrative Procedure Law. 2. If due to objective circumstances it is not possible to issue an administrative act within four months, to comply with the second part of Section 64 of the Administrative Procedure Law - to extend the deadline for issuing an administrative act by a motivated decision of the Chairperson of the Orphans' Court. 3. Note that Paragraph 53 of Cabinet Regulation No 1037 of 19 December 2006 "Rules of Procedure of the Orphans' Court" (hereinafter - Cabinet Regulation No 1037) lists the cases when a session of the Orphans' Court may be postponed, however, the legal provision does not oblige the Orphans' Court to postpone a case whenever one of the grounds specified in Paragraph 53 of the said Regulation arises.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Topic	Action by the Orphan and Custody Court
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take note of the explanation of the State Social Insurance Agency that an authorised person is not entitled to claim and receive a survivor's pension granted to a child for a deceased parent, and a reminder that the Orphans' Court, when protecting the personal interests of a child in relations with parents, guardians and other persons, may decide on the payment of a survivor's pension to the person who actually raises the child. 2. Provide legally appropriate information to persons applying to the Orphans' Court. 3. Comply with the provisions of the Law on Submissions regarding the transmission of an application to another authority, including the statutory time limits for transmission and the obligation to inform the applicant. 4. To comply with the deadline for informing the applicant about the extension of the deadline for issuing an administrative act, as laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.

Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.
--------	--

Riga City Council Department of Education, Culture and Sport

Topic	Breach of the principle of good administration
Recommendation	Continue to follow the procedure for responding to individuals' submissions, as laid down in the laws and regulations.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Riga Secondary School No 80

Topic	Teaching tools and advice
Recommendations	<p>To inform teachers about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the allocation of teaching resources to be provided and the appropriate action to be taken when a teacher wishes to use technical resources in the teaching process; 2. good practice in organising counselling by informing the learner in good time and agreeing a time for counselling.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Riga Cultures Secondary School

Topic	Withholding the certificate
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apologise in writing to the child and his/her parents for not issuing certificate on 31 May 2024. 2. Further facilitate the fulfilment of obligations in accordance with the procedures laid down in the laws and regulations and to avoid withholding of documents in case of outstanding obligations.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Riga pre-school No 233

Topic	Ensuring the right to education for children with special needs
Recommendation	Prevent further breaches of the principle of good governance and to take timely action to ensure the right to education of learners with special needs.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Riga City Municipal Police

Topic	The right of the child to be protected from exposure to tobacco smoke
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent police officers from leaving the scene after being informed that a child has been exposed to tobacco smoke, or from leaving late (several days later). 2. To promote a common understanding and practice among staff in cases concerning a child's right to be protected from exposure to tobacco smoke and to apply the provisions of Article 1(11) of the FCTC when a child is exposed to such exposure outside the places listed in Article 10(2) of the Law on the Circulation of Tobacco Products, Tobacco Substitutes, Herbal Smoking Products, Electronic Smoking Devices and Their Liquids. 3. The police shall consider the decision of the Riga City Court of 12 December 2023 in case No 16077001024623.1.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Ropaži Municipal Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Action by the municipal Orphan and Custody Court
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comply with Paragraph 14 of Cabinet Regulation No 1037 on the right of a participant in the administrative procedure to get acquainted with the case materials. 2. Justify the prohibition of a party to an administrative case from consulting a document in the administrative case on the basis of the relevant provisions of law. Inform the party in writing of the restriction on the right to inspect a particular document, giving reasons for the restriction.

3. When contracting a psychologist to carry out psychological research on a child and parents, the terms of the contract must be in accordance with the provisions of the Psychologists Act and must provide for the provision of a report to the parents on the research carried out on them and the child, with the parents being prohibited from consulting only information that may harm the child-parent relationship.
4. In cooperation with the psychologist, prevent the violation of the rights of both parents and the child and provide them with the psychologist's opinion in a section on each parent and the child, excluding information that is harmful to the children, but indicating that such information has been obtained but not disclosed to the parents.
5. Consider that court decisions are enforceable by both parents and children, and encourage parents and children to comply with them. In cases where, in the opinion of the orphans' court, the enforcement of a court order in the manner prescribed by the court does not correspond to the rights of the child due to objective circumstances, encourage the parents, to protect the rights of the child, to apply to the court for a review of the access arrangements established by the court. If the parents do not apply to the court, then, in the exercise of the orphans' court's task of ensuring the protection of the child, apply to the court to review the interim decision on access to the separated parent.
6. In cases where the municipal Orphan and Custody Court, at the request of one parent, is involved in contact with a separated parent, if the court has not designated the municipal Orphan and Custody Court as the contact person, obtain the consent of the other parent to the presence of the municipal Orphan and Custody Court.
7. Continue to comply with the Ombudsman Law and the FTAA and to issue the documents necessary for the exercise of the Ombudsman's functions.

Result

The recommendations have been implemented for the applicant's specific situation.

Salaspils Municipality

Topic	Special education
Recommendation	Assess the need to make special education more accessible, taking into account the material sent on specific cases in the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Saldus Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Sigulda Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Sigulda Regional Municipal Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	Rights of the child in adoption proceedings
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prevent situations where clarification of opinions and other information in administrative cases is carried out over the phone rather than in person. 2. Prevent the Orphans' Court, as the legal representative of a child placed in foster care, from clarifying the child's views. If necessary, involve a specialist who can do this in the best way for the child. 3. To prevent situations where the pre-adoption process of a child whose out-family care has been decided by an municipal Orphan and Custody Court is not managed and monitored, especially if the child has been placed in a foster family.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To act as the legal representative of a child placed in foster care in the pre-adoption process, to act in any situation where the child's rights and needs are not respected. Not to allow decisions with a long-term impact on the child to be taken without the presence or opinion of the legal representative. 5. In the case of a particular child, carry out checks in the adoptive family to ensure that the child's right to identity is preserved in the best possible way during the adoption process and balanced with the child's right to be adopted and to grow up in a family.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Smiltene Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Talsi Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Provision of teaching resources at Talsi Primary School
Recommendation	Ensure that parents are provided with lists of school supplies to be purchased, in accordance with the legal framework.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Talsi Municipality Social Service

Topic	The right to live in society
Recommendation	To assess whether in the given situation the person has possibilities to receive community-based services replacing institutional care; to inform the person's guardian, as well as the Talsi Municipality Municipal Orphan and Custody Court, about community-based services available in the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Talsi Orphan and Custody Court

Topic	The right of a person with reduced capacity to live in the community
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hear the views of the person with limited legal capacity on the choice of a guardian and to find out whether the guardian has fully assessed the possibilities of receiving other community-based services as alternatives to institutional care and has taken the person's views into account. 2. Explain and instruct the guardian that he has no right to restrict the person's privacy under the legislation. 3. Ensure that the rights and interests of a person with limited legal capacity are respected, to cooperate with the Talsi Municipality Social Service, the person concerned and his/her guardian.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Dundaga Secondary School of Talsi Municipality

Topic	Child support measures
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply to the special education development centre for methodological assistance on the application of support measures, the development of an individual learning plan and the assessment of the dynamics of the learning achievements of a special needs pupil. 2. Develop and implement a new Individual Education Plan for the child. 3. Improve cooperation with the child's legal representative.

Result	The recommendations have been implemented.
Tukums municipality	
Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Tukums Ernests Birznieks-Upitis Primary School No 1

Topic	Actions of the Ernests Birznieks-Upītis Primary 1 School in Tukums
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the conduct of the psychologist of the educational institution in failing to ensure that the child's medical documents are handed over to the management and that an individual education plan is drawn up. 2. Update the norms of professional ethics of teachers by explaining to teachers the circumstances mentioned in Sub-paragraph 6.2 of the Opinion of the Ombudsman, and to assess the compliance of teachers' actions with these norms. Publish the institution's code of ethics, if any, on the website of the educational institution.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Valmiera Municipality

Topic	Identification means for categories of passengers granted travel concessions
Recommendation	Find alternative solutions if a personalised travel card for disabled people is not possible in a particular situation.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Local government support for catering costs
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the groups of pupils for whom catering costs are covered, define the criteria according to which pupils can receive municipal support for catering costs, and to ensure that support is provided to all pupils declared in Valmiera municipality, regardless of the educational institution where they study. 2. Consider the need to establish a single normative act to regulate the legal framework regarding catering for pupils.
Result	Recommendations have been partially implemented (recommendation 2 has been implemented).

Valmiera District Social Affairs Office

Topic	Support for social and psychological rehabilitation
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconsider the person's application requesting that all necessary social and psychological rehabilitation support be provided for her children. 2. To further comply with Section 12 (1) and (2) of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance that the municipality social service is obliged to inform the person who has requested a social service or social assistance about the adopted decision and in case of refusal to provide in writing the reasons for the refusal, as well as the time limits and procedure for appealing the decision. 3. Consider the Supreme Court's jurisprudence that separate custody of one parent does not mean deprivation of the other parent's custody, since the other parent retains the rights and obligations arising from custody, albeit to a limited extent.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Ventspils Municipality

Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the need to improve transport services for pupils (school buses), considering the Ombudsman's information sent to the municipality.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

All municipalities

Topic	Openness of meetings of the City Council committees
Recommendation	Publishing on in a timely manner the minutes of council committee meetings and audio or audiovisual recordings of meetings the official website of the municipality .
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.
Topic	Transportation of pupils to the educational establishment
Recommendation	Assess the possibility of improving pupil transport services, considering the arguments set out in the letter, the views and needs of residents and educational institutions, as well as the rights and best interests of children.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.
Topic	Providing help for children abusing addictive substances
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide contact information on the Orphan and Custody Court on the municipality's website for immediate assistance to children. 2. Municipal cooperation groups to develop a procedure for organising cooperation and procedures for the protection of children's rights in the municipality outside the working hours of the institutions, including the placement of children (including children under the influence of intoxicating substances) if they do not need to stay in a medical institution, but there are obstacles to transferring the children to their legal representatives. 3. Eliminate the practice of excluding children under the influence of intoxicants who are accommodated in child-care institutions. 4. Develop security measures to ensure the safety of every child in out-of-home care in situations where a child's aggressiveness needs to be addressed, for example by involving the municipal police or a security company. 5. Eliminate the practice of not admitting children to municipal childcare institutions who should be admitted under a police decision.
Result	The recommendation has not reached the implementation deadline.

Topic	Situation in the provision of out-family care for children
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the obligation for local governments to provide personalised services to meet children's needs. 2. Encourage an increase in the number of foster families and guardians, so that children in out-family care are placed in families rather than institutions.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Topic	Organising rest in pre-schools
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Familiarize with the Ombudsman's opinion and the attached annex containing a summary of good practices of municipalities regarding the organisation of rest after lunch. 2. Consider the possibility of providing children of compulsory school age in pre-schools with a more appropriate rest after lunch, including the possibility of taking a nap.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Legal persons governed by private law

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the social care centre "Derpele"
Recommendations	Implement 13 recommendations related to general living conditions, accessibility of the environment, prevention of risks of ill-treatment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Ensuring human rights at the Liepa social care centre SIA "Senioru nams"
Recommendations	Implement 15 recommendations related to general living conditions, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the social care centre "Landze"
Recommendations	Implement 12 recommendations related to general living conditions, prevention of risks of ill-treatment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Document retention Norma A, Ltd.
Recommendation	Ensure that in future, if a person's identity document is seized by a bus driver, the person is immediately informed of the legal basis for the driver's action and that the document is sent to the issuing authority.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Topic	Meals for accompanying person at Liepaja Regional Hospital
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post on the hospital's website information on the stay of accompanying persons in hospital, as specified in the NHS manipulation list. 2. Clarify information on free meals provided by the hospital for persons accompanying children.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Good governance in the provision of technical assistance
Recommendation	Vaivari Technical Aids Centre: assess the possibility of improving the procedure for granting technical aids by informing the person about the period of time when the technical aid will be available, as well as about the right to purchase a technical aid with co-payment if the person needs it sooner.
Result	The recommendation has been partially implemented.

Topic	Collecting donations in an educational institution
Recommendation	Riga Centre Humanities Secondary School Support Society: when addressing parents, do not specify the desired donation amount and the distribution of donations by class, as well as inform the legal representatives of the pupils about the voluntary nature of the donation.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the social care centre "Stūrīši"
Recommendations	Implement 23 recommendations related to general living conditions, prevention of risks of ill-treatment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Ensuring human rights at the Senlejas social care centre
Recommendations	Implement 17 recommendations related to general living conditions, access to the environment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Right of access and deprivation of custody in Latgale Family Support Centre "Daugavpils"
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comply with the provisions of the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 355 of 26 June 2018 "Regulations of the Out-family Care Support Centre", Sub-paragraph 12.16, and to organise communication according to the needs of children placed in foster families. 2. Note that contact can only be restricted by a decision of the orphans' court if there is no agreement on the most appropriate contact for the child with those involved - the child's parents or other relatives, the foster family, the orphans' court and the support centre. 3. Improve cooperation with the Rezekne City Orphan and Custody Court on ensuring access rights and organising access for children placed in foster care.
Result	The recommendations have been implemented.

Topic	Disagreement between a trainee and a teacher at the education centre SPA SCHOOL
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify the descriptions of the classes available on the online sites, indicating where necessary whether the advanced techniques classes would require basic knowledge in the specific area. 2. Consult the Data Protection Officer or the Data Protection Inspectorate before processing sensitive personal data of learners.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.

Topic	Content of job advertisements in the Latvian branch of Luminor Bank
Recommendation	Evaluate the job advertisements published on the Bank's website and to be published in the future to ensure their compliance with Section 32 of the Labour Law.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendation.

Topic	Accessibility of office premises and website of the political party "Stabilitātei!"
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct an accessibility assessment of the Party's website in line with the digital accessibility requirements. 2. Update the party's website with information on the accessibility of the party's offices for people with disabilities. 3. Inform about the progress in providing physical accessibility solutions for the premises at Latgales iela 52, Rezekne, and Rīgas iela 59e, Daugavpils.
Result	No answer has been received. No improvements or changes to the website. Repeated request for a reply (26 January 2025).

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the short-term social care centre of Riga 1st Hospital, Ltd.
Recommendations	Implement 19 recommendations related to general living conditions, prevention of risks of ill-treatment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the residence "Dzintara melodija" of Senior Baltic Ltd.
Recommendations	Implement 11 recommendations related to the complaints mechanism, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The recommendations have been partially implemented.

Topic	Ensuring human rights in the social care centre "Mārsnēni"
Recommendations	Implement 16 recommendations related to living conditions, access to the environment, respect for privacy, access to social care and social rehabilitation services for residents, etc.
Result	The deadline for implementing the recommendations has not passed.

Topic	Respect for children's rights at the Children's Psychoneurological Hospital "Ainaži"
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that truthful information about the type of hospital (specialised or care) is made public and that it operates according to the type of hospital. 2. Ensure that the minor patient's legal representative or another representative designated by the patient can be present at all times and support the patient during treatment. 3. Review and ensure the availability of existing psychiatrists according to the needs of children and ensure that the doctor is involved in the decision to impose, initiate and discontinue restraint, where appropriate. In the absence of one doctor, ensure that the other doctor is available more frequently to fully meet the needs of patients. 4. Comply with Paragraph 12 of Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 265 of 4 April 2006 "Procedures for Record-keeping of Medical Documents" providing for the course of the disease to be noted in the medical records within 24 hours after the patient's admission to the inpatient medical institution. 5. Review the use and dosage of medicines according to each patient's individual needs. Provide non-medication therapies appropriate to patients' individual needs. 6. Ensure collaboration with the child's caregivers to raise awareness and educate them about the needs of patients and the use to social services. 7. Furnish wards for children that are appropriate and cosy (e.g. bright colours, toys). 8. Set later bedtimes and wake-up times in the patients' daily regimen, e.g. bedtime between 21.30 and 07.30. 9. Review the number and workload of hospital staff not directly involved in the treatment and rehabilitation of children, considering the possibility of outsourcing some services, thus allocating more financial resources to children's therapy, rehabilitation and the provision of services that improve patients' health.
Result	The recommendations have not reached the implementation deadline.

Topic	Respect for Patients' Rights at Strenči Psychoneurological Hospital
Recommendation	Review recent amendments to the hospital's internal rules, ensuring the establishment of a daily regime that respects patients' rights.
Result	The recommendation has been implemented.

Topic	Language-based discrimination at Armiks, Ltd.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include in job advertisements only the foreign language skills that are reasonably required for the job and that the company can explain. 2. Review HR policies, including HR documents (job descriptions, contracts of employment) and make necessary amendments - remove the requirement for foreign language skills from HR documents and job advertisements for staff who do not need foreign language skills and do not include this requirement in employment relationships, and for staff who do need foreign language skills, make necessary changes to HR documents, clearly and understandably indicating the job duties for which the skills are required.
Result	There is no deadline for implementing the recommendations.