



Republic of Latvia Ombudsman

## Comments on the best interests' determination as a formal procedure

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### Risk groups

- children in out-family care
- unaccompanied children on move
- children from social risk families

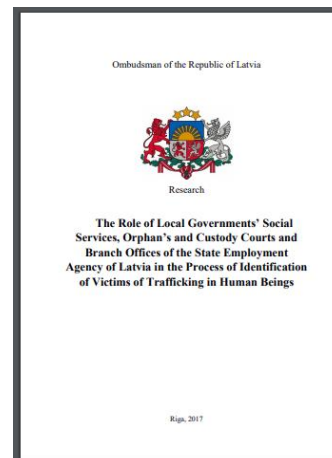
## Current protection – Orphan and Custody courts

- Social care -> municipality function
- 119 local municipalities, 132 Orphan and custody courts (139 in 2016)
- Settles disagreements (parents, parents <-> children, parents <-> guardians)
- Determines guardians for unaccompanied children on move
- Best interests determination -> Custody institutions

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## Issues

- De-centralized system
- Tax income differences
- Qualification of employees
- Boarding schools as out-family care institutions
- Best interests determination procedure – not clearly defined



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# Training

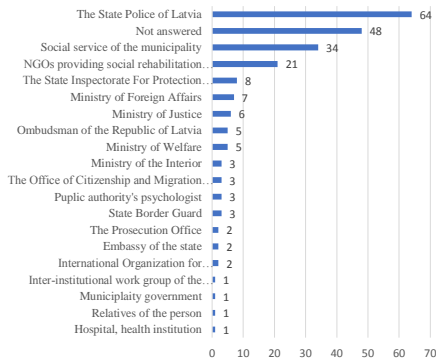


- 46% of custody institutions – no formal training on human trafficking (end of 2016 data)

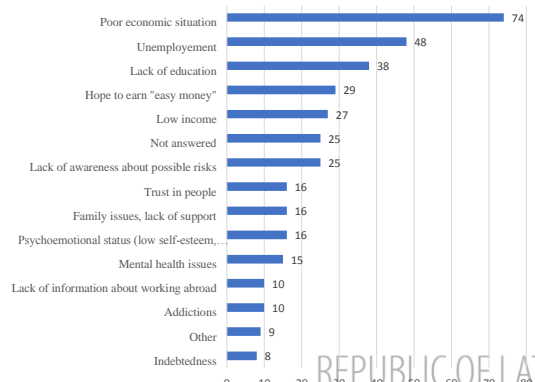
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# Custody institutions as a resource

The Institutions Which Orphan's and Custody Courts Would Notify About the Case of Trafficking in Human Beings



Opinions of Orphan's and Custody Courts Regarding the Causes of Trafficking in Human Beings



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## Future

- Ombudsman campaigns against placing children in institutional care;
- Political support from Ministry of Welfare and NGOs, different approaches in municipalities;
- More training and methodological support;
- More monitoring activities

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