



LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS
SAEIMA



■ Meeting of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee

Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee

The Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee of the Saeima (hereinafter—Committee) is one of the standing committees established on the basis of Article 149 of the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima.

Structure of the Committee

The setup of the Committee is determined by the Saeima. The number of Committee members from each parliamentary group is proportional to the number of its seats in the Saeima. Currently, the Committee consists of eleven Members of Parliament. It is chaired by Leila Rasima, with Augusts Brigmanis serving as Deputy Chair and Didzis Šmits as Secretary.

Chairs of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee

Convocation	Name, surname	Tenure
5 th Saeima	Inese Birzniece	21.07.1993. – 06.11.1995.
6 th Saeima	Antons Seiksts	16.11.1995. – 02.11.1998.
7 th Saeima	Antons Seiksts	12.11.1998. – 04.11.2002.
8 th Saeima	Ina Druviete	15.11.2002. – 16.12.2004.
	Ingrīda Circene	21.12.2004. – 06.11.2006.
9 th Saeima	Jānis Šmits	20.11.2006. – 15.01.2009.
	Oskars Kastēns	21.01.2009. – 26.03.2009.
	Ingrīda Circene	26.03.2009. – 02.11.2010.
10 th Saeima	Ingrīda Circene	08.11.2010. – 17.10.2011.
11 th Saeima	Ināra Mūrniece	21.10.2011. – 04.11.2014.
12 th Saeima	Inese Laizāne	07.11.2014. – 13.10.2016.
	Ritvars Jansons	18.10.2016. – 12.01.2017.
	Inese Laizāne	17.01.2017. – 05.11.2018.
13 th Saeima	Artuss Kaimiņš	20.11.2018. – 01.11.2022.
14 th Saeima	Didzis Šmits	23.11.2022. – 15.12.2022.
	Ieva Brante	21.12.2022. – 19.09.2023.
	Leila Rasima	Since 27.09.2023.

Functions of the Committee

Based on a Saeima decision, the Committee considers draft laws submitted to the Saeima by the Cabinet of Ministers, the Committee itself, or at least five MPs, as well as draft laws that have been initiated by the President of Latvia or a tenth of the electorate according to the procedure and in cases prescribed in the Constitution.

Legislative functions of the Committee include:

- preparation of assigned draft laws for parliamentary consideration;
- providing opinions on draft laws under joint assignment procedures;



■ Chair of the Committee Leila Rasima

- proposing suggestions for draft laws and initiating legislative proposals;
- advancing draft decisions on the appointment or dismissal of public officials for approval by the Saeima.

Parliamentary oversight of sector-relevant institutions enables the Committee to request from the responsible ministers and their subordinate institutions (subordinated to or supervised by ministers) and local governments any relevant information and explanations, and invite the relevant officials to provide explanations during Committee meetings. Ministry, public institution, and local municipality officials and NGO representatives are actively involved in the work of the Committee to ensure a more effective tackling of public issues within the scope of the Committee's competence.

The Committee also reviews and replies to submissions and proposals ▶



■ Meeting of the Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee

submitted by private and legal entities on issues that fall within the scope of its competence.

Areas and issues covered by the Committee

The Committee covers all issues related to human rights, including children's rights, rights of people with disabilities, minorities, and asylum seekers.

When it comes to public affairs, the Committee deals with an even broader range of questions. The Committee handles issues related to children, youth, religious organisations, public holidays and commemorative days, veterans of World War II, and members of the national resistance movement.

A special focus of the Committee's work is on the development of media policy in Latvia in terms of effective and transparent media management, independence, and public accountability. A crucial task of the Committee is the promotion of the freedom of speech, expanding broadcasting, and ensuring a protected information space.

Working format of the Committee

Committee meetings are open to the public, although the members may also decide to hold closed meetings. Such decision is usually made when a party invited to the meeting makes such a request. The Committee also holds visiting meetings and organises various gatherings and conferences.

According to the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima, the Committee is

authorised to form subcommittees to perform preparatory work or fulfil specific tasks. The Committee of the 14th Saeima has established the Latgale Region Subcommittee.

Cooperation partners

In the area of human rights, the Committee has partnered with the State Human Rights Agency, founded in 1995 and restructured as the Ombudsman's Office in 2007.

A post of a Minister for Human Rights existed in Latvia from 1993 to 1995, but in 1998, a post of the Representative of the Government of Latvia before International Human Rights Organisations was created, serving as a direct link between the government and the Committee.

The Committee works closely with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Welfare.

One of the main preconditions for developing a sound legal environment is public and NGO involvement in the legislative process. Therefore, the Committee works closely with the NGO of People with Disabilities and Their Friends *Apeiron*, *Safe House* shelter, Resource Centre for Women *Marta*, Resource Centre for People with Mental Disability *Zel-da*, *Save the Children*, Latvian Children's Fund, Latvian Child Welfare Network, Latvian Human Rights Centre, Latvian Association of SOS Children's Villages, Women's NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia, Crisis and Counselling Centre

Skalbes, and the Latvian Association of National Culture Societies.

The Committee also cooperates with the Ombudsman of Public Media, as well as professional and sectoral associations, namely the Latvian Broadcasters Association, Latvian Advertising Association, Latvian Association of Electronic Communications, association *For legal content!*, Latgalian Culture Association, as well as other organisations to address issues related to media policy. ■



Contact information:

Address: Jēkaba iela 6/8, Rīga, LV-1811

Phone: +371 6708 7246

E-mail: cilvektiesibu.komisija@saeima.lv