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NEWS REPORT

Country:	Latvia
Title:	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends Latvia to improve measures to combat discrimination of vulnerable groups of children
Date:	26 April 2016
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Issue at stake:	On 14 March, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) published Concluding Observations on reports of Latvia. The observations pay special attention to children with disabilities, children belonging to minorities, including Roma children, children in rural areas, LGBTI children
Ground of discrimination:	Race/ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation
Source:	Legislative development
Field:	Education, health care, other
Applicable law:	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Content

Law:

The UN CRC welcomed the amendments to various laws concerning non-discrimination during the reporting period (the Criminal Law, the Education Law, the Medical Treatment Law and the Law on the Rights of Patients). It expressed concern about continuing discrimination against children with disabilities, children belonging to minorities, including Roma children, and children living in rural areas, with regard to their access to adequate health and education facilities. It also expressed concern about the lack of data on discrimination faced by LGBTI children and on reported incidents of bullying against those children in schools.

The CRC urged Latvia to pay particular attention to these groups. It recommended Latvia to ensure the application, in practice, of the different laws prohibiting discrimination, conduct awareness-raising programmes on non-discrimination, studies on discrimination against LGBTI children and strengthen its efforts to combat negative attitudes and eliminate discrimination against children on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.

The CRC welcomed the adoption of the guidelines to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the measures taken to improve accessibility in public infrastructure, improve living conditions and promote inclusive education for children with disabilities.¹

¹ Latvia, Ministry of Welfare (2013). Basic Guidelines on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020 (*Apvienoto Nāciju Organizācijas Konvencijas par personu ar invaliditāti tiesībām īstenošanas pamatnostādnes 2014-2020.gadam*), available in Latvian at http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/2013junijs/lmpamn_040613_inv.pdf.

However, the Committee expressed concern about the lack of specific legislation to protect the rights of children with disabilities; the lack of detailed information on the number of children in inclusive education; the stigma and prejudice still endured by children with disabilities.

CRC again urged Latvia to adopt a human rights-based approach to disability. It recommended Latvia to adopt specific legislation to protect the rights of children with disabilities, set up comprehensive measures to develop inclusive education and ensure that inclusive education is given priority over the placement of children in specialized institutions and classes, and train and assign specialized teachers and professionals in integrated classes to provide individual support and attention to children with learning difficulties; organize data collection on children with disabilities and develop an efficient system for diagnosing disabilities, necessary for putting in place appropriate policies and programmes for children with disabilities. It also urged Latvia to conduct awareness-raising campaigns targeting government officials, the public and families to combat the stigmatization of and prejudice against children with disabilities, and promote a positive image of such children.

Key points of analysis:

The observations by CRC highlight concerns about discrimination of vulnerable groups of children, lack of data, including on discrimination, and urge Latvia take different measures in combatting discrimination, stigmatization and prejudice (campaigns, studies, etc.), and foster inclusive education of children with disabilities.

Internet link source:

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations on the third to fifth periodic reports of Latvia

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/049/25/PDF/G1604925.pdf?OpenElement>

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f3-5&Lang=en

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