

Minority Protection in Latvia

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME
“THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIETY IN LATVIA.”

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The adoption of the National Programme “The Integration of Society in Latvia” (hereafter, “Integration Programme”)¹ in February 2001 is an achievement in itself, as it is the result of a broad public debate on integration and on the country’s future ethnic policy. Its aim is to enhance the integration of Latvian society as a whole. Thus, while it deals with several aspects of minority integration and states in general terms the need to protect minority rights, it does not address discrimination and proposes few measures to promote the minority identity.²

As implementation and funding mechanisms were established only recently, most activities realised to date are those which were begun by various actors before the adoption of the Integration Programme. Already, however, it is clear that the lack of coordination between various authorities and the lack of a coherent implementation strategy are likely to hinder successful implementation unless these problems are addressed. Moreover, implementation of the Integration Programme has often lacked transparency. Much will depend on the capacity of the Society Integration Foundation (SIF)³ to take up responsibility for administering EU funds as well as on greater financial commitment from the State. A more effective participation of minorities in implementation is also needed.

A monitoring system is now being elaborated, on the basis of which the new priorities of the Integration Programme will be defined. More should also be done to promote

¹ *Valsts programma “Sabiedrības integrācija Latvijā”* (National Programme “The Integration of Society in Latvia”), Riga, February 2001, <www.np.gov.lv>, (accessed 23 August 2002) (in Latvian and in English). All citations of the Integration Programme in this report are based on the official English translation.

² The Integration Programme often refers to the term “minority” (for which there is no official definition in Latvia) as well to “non-Latvians.” In this report, the term “minority” will be used in reference to non-ethnic Latvians. As of 1 July 2002, ethnic Latvians constituted 58.3 percent of the total population of 2.3 million. Russians represented 29.1 percent, Belarussians – 4.0 percent, Ukrainians – 2.6 percent, Poles – 2.5 percent, Lithuanians – 1.4 percent, Jews – 0.4 percent, Estonians – 0.1 percent, and others – 1.6 percent. 76 percent of residents were citizens of Latvia, 22 percent were non-citizens (stateless persons), and 1 percent were aliens. Data of the Board for Citizenship and Migration Affairs, <<http://www.np.gov.lv/fakti/index.htm>>, (accessed 23 August 2002). The term “minority” or “non-ethnic Latvian” does not coincide with the term “Russian-speaking population” as 36 percent of all residents aged 7 and over, including 3 percent of ethnic Latvians, consider Russian as their mother tongue. Central Statistical Office, Provisional Results of the 2000 Population Census, *Statistical biļetens (Statistical Bulletin)*, Riga, 2001, pp. 40–41.

³ This is the main body responsible for allocating funding from the State and other sources for projects under the Integration Programme.

further discussion within society, with a view to reaching a consensus on minority-related policies. Finally, there is a need for further improvements to legislation to ensure minority protection, including protection against discrimination.

Background

The Integration Programme was adopted in February 2001, on the initiative of a number of civil society organisations and the Naturalisation Board, after a three-year elaboration and adoption process. Although it is based on a considerably debated and revised Framework Document (December 1999) to which minorities also contributed, direct minority participation as authors of these two documents was low.

While it is the first comprehensive governmental programme of its kind, the Integration Programme was preceded by several initiatives which also sought to promote integration. The majority of these, which were funded primarily by foreign sources (with some State contribution), have been incorporated into the Integration Programme.⁴ In addition to these prior “A projects,” the document lists projects to be implemented as soon as funding is received (“B projects”), as well as possible future projects (“C projects”).

Administration

The Society Integration Department (SID) at the Ministry of Justice, and the SIF are the principal mechanisms for administering and funding implementation of the Integration Programme. However, as they have begun functioning only recently, it is too early to draw conclusions about their efficiency. However, the lack of effective coordination between various authorities and the lack of a clear implementation strategy are likely to hinder effective implementation. The participation of minorities in implementation has been low, although efforts have been made recently to involve minority NGOs and civil society.

Most of the activities implemented to date had been initiated before the adoption of the Programme. However, the SIF has sought to initiate increased participation by civil society organisations and to involve municipalities by allocating State funding for projects and providing training for the potential tender applicants, including NGOs. A first group of projects was approved in a closed process in November 2001 without the involvement of SIF expert commissions; it was strongly criticised by civil society organisations due to its lack of transparency and the very limited opportunities for NGO participation. By August 2002, the SIF had announced two public tenders for

⁴ These include namely the activities of State actors, such as the National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT), the Naturalisation Board and ministries, and non-State actors such as the Soros Foundation–Latvia (SFL).

State funding. While these were more transparent as they were organised according to newly-adopted SIF guidelines, a relatively small amount of funding was allocated. A tender for EU Phare-funded pilot projects has also been announced.

Few projects by minority NGOs are listed in the Integration Programme and few had received funding from the SIF as of Summer 2002. Minority representation in the SIF Council, which supervises the work of the SIF,⁵ is also viewed as insufficient.

There is a need to coordinate monitoring by various actors. The SID has begun to elaborate a general monitoring and evaluation system to review the Programme's priorities each year. However, there is a need to revise priorities for 2003 before the system is completed. Also, according to the SIF, the impact of SIF-funded projects cannot be evaluated until 2004.

EU Support

In its Regular Reports, the European Commission has recommended implementing activities to promote the integration of minorities and has positively evaluated any developments in this field, including the adoption of the Integration Programme.⁶ Through the Phare Programme, the EU has strongly supported efforts to promote integration since 1996, allocating significant funds for Latvian language training and has supported activities of the National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT) and the Naturalisation Board, in line with the priorities established in Latvia's 1999 Accession Partnership.⁷ At the same time, it has sought to encourage the Government to allocate more funds for Latvian language training.⁸

The EU has not made a link between the possible impact of the Integration Programme on the protection and promotion of minority rights, beyond viewing it as a means of supporting primarily the integration of non-citizens. It has, however, drawn attention to problems with the transition of minority schools to bilingual education within the context of educational reform, without, however, assessing the level of

⁵ The SIF Council consists of a representative of the President, five ministers, five municipal representatives, and five NGO representatives, two of which are representatives of minority NGOs.

⁶ European Commission, *2001 Regular Report on Latvia's Progress Towards Accession*, Brussels, 13 November 2001, p. 24, (hereafter, "*2001 Regular Report*").

⁷ DG Enlargement, *Latvia: 1999 Accession Partnership*, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/ap_02_00/en/ap_lv_99.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

⁸ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 25.

public support for this controversial reform.⁹ It has not explicitly evaluated NPLLT or Phare expenditures.

Recently, Phare support has focused on improving the capacity of the SIF with a view to designating it the implementing agency of Phare national projects and the ACCESS Programme. The SIF will also administer funding for Phare pilot projects.

Content and Implementation

The Integration Programme addresses the following aspects of integration: Civic Participation and Political Integration; Social and Regional Integration; Education, Language and Culture; and Information. It seeks to address issues of concern to the general population with the aim to “form a democratic, consolidated civil society founded on shared basic values.”¹⁰ One argument for developing the Programme was the need to promote overall social cohesion because of the presence of a large number of Soviet era immigrants, many of whom are not proficient in the Latvian language and feel alienated from the State and from Latvian culture.¹¹

While it addresses several aspects of minority integration, such as the promotion of naturalisation, bilingual education, Latvian language training, and support for minority culture, it does not identify and address issues of discrimination against members of minority communities.

At the same time, while the protection and promotion of minority rights is not its primary aim, it does recognise the right of minorities to preserve and develop their identity and notes in general terms the need to protect minority rights. Therefore, investigating whether and to what extent the Integration Programme has elicited minority participation, sought to address discrimination, and promoted minority identity is a legitimate exercise.

While it has encouraged a broad social dialogue on ethnic policy and facilitated integration activities at the local level, a broad consensus within civil society on the content of the Integration Programme has not been achieved. A principal obstacle to this is the fact that it is based on the existing legislative framework and governmental policies which many minority representatives have criticised, especially in the area of education. The Integration Programme, and governmental policy in general, do not pay sufficient attention to concerns of civil society and minorities in the area of minority rights, such as the need for greater access to education and the electronic media in the mother tongue, greater promotion of minority languages, the need for dialogue between minorities and the State, and the effective participation of minorities in public life.

⁹ 2001 Regular Report, p. 25.

¹⁰ Integration Programme, p. 8.

¹¹ Integration Programme, pp. 8–13.

Given the absence of a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention of discrimination and the protection and promotion of minority rights, the lack of references to international standards and documents on human rights, minority rights and non-discrimination in the Integration Programme is a gap which should be remedied in the future.

2. THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME – BACKGROUND

2.1 Background to Present Programme

The National Programme “The Integration of Society in Latvia” (hereafter, “Integration Programme”)¹² adopted in February 2001 is the first comprehensive governmental programme of its kind. However, it incorporates several programmes and projects implemented by various State and non-State actors which are also considered to promote the general aim of integration.¹³ These prior initiatives are included in the list of projects of the Integration Programme, even though they are supported primarily by foreign sources and were started before and during its elaboration.¹⁴ Their impact will also be considered in this report, together with that of projects resulting directly from implementation of the Integration Programme with State funding.

¹² *Valsts programma “Sabiedrības integrācija Latvijā”* (National Programme “The Integration of Society in Latvia”), Riga, February 2001, <www.np.gov.lv>, (accessed 23 August 2002) (in Latvian and in English).

¹³ There is no shared opinion among the institutions and experts involved about the status and significance of these projects. However, some experts believe that one possible motivation for referring to these projects was the Government’s desire to demonstrate to the international community and to Latvian society that it had made efforts in the field of integration. Interview with the Director of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (LCHRES), Riga, 4 April 2002.

¹⁴ E.g. the National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT) (1996–2006), a State non-profit organisation established with the help of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in late 1995 and funded primarily from foreign sources, with an increasing share of State funding. Various ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Education and Science) and NGOs (e.g. SFL) have also realised projects in the field of bilingual education. At the local level, initiatives supporting social integration were started in 1999 by municipalities and by the Naturalisation Board – a State body established in 1994 to implement the Law on Citizenship (1994). For more on these projects and their results, see Section 3.

2.2 The Programme – Process

The Integration Programme, an initiative of civil society and the Naturalisation Board, was adopted in February 2001, after a three-year elaboration and adoption process.¹⁵ Indeed, its development took place in a complex political environment; certain influential nationalist politicians did not support the idea of integration.¹⁶ Although it is based on a considerably debated and revised Framework Document (December 1999) to which minorities also contributed, direct minority participation as authors of these documents was low.

The need for integration of Latvian society was articulated by Latvian social scientists in the mid-1990s. The grounds for the Government's ethnic policy were laid by a research project entitled "Towards a Civil Society" initiated in 1997 by the Soros Foundation–Latvia (SFL), the National Human Rights Office (NHRO) and the Naturalisation Board.¹⁷ A main argument for the elaboration of an integration programme was the large number of non-citizens and their slow rate of naturalisation.¹⁸ The decision of Government officials to initiate its elaboration was also to a great degree influenced by the recommendations of international organisations, above all those of the OSCE and

¹⁵ For more on the process, see the Integration Programme, pp. 5–7.

¹⁶ Some feared that naturalisation would undermine their electoral base. Moreover, integration ran counter to their stated goal of preventing naturalisation and promoting the voluntary repatriation of non-citizens as it would result in an increased number of citizens of non-ethnic Latvian origin. Interview with the Director of the LCHRES, Riga, 4 April 2002. See e.g. the goals stated in the 1997 programme of one of the leading factions at the time in the Saeima (Parliament) "For Fatherland and Freedom" (LNIM) (Latvia's National Independence Movement) and a member of the ruling Government coalition, at <<http://www.tb.lv/download/programma.doc>>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

¹⁷ Baltic Data House, *Ceļā uz pilsonisku sabiedrību* (Towards a Civil Society), Results of the First and Second Stage, 1997/1998, <www.policy.lv>, (accessed 25 September 2002) (in Latvian), (hereafter, "Towards a Civil Society 1997/1998").

¹⁸ 687,486 persons (28 percent of residents) did not have Latvian citizenship in 1997. More than 98 percent of non-citizens were ethnic non-Latvians, predominantly Russians, Ukrainians and Belarussians. Around two thirds of non-citizens were born outside Latvia. Only 4 percent of non-citizens who had the right to apply for Latvian citizenship (5,000 out of around 124,000) applied and were naturalised between 1995 and mid-1997. UNDP, *Latvia Human Development Report 1997*, Riga, 1997, pp. 52–56, <http://ano.deac.lv/html_e/index_09_01.htm>, (accessed 23 August 2002). The survey *Towards a Civil Society* showed that 90 percent of non-citizens had decided to live in Latvia. The inability to pass the Latvian language and history exam, lack of information as well as the high naturalisation fee were stated as the main obstacles for naturalisation. *Towards a Civil Society 1997/1998*, pp. 38–39.

the European Union, which stressed the need to facilitate the naturalisation and integration of Russian-speaking non-citizens to strengthen domestic political stability.¹⁹

In Autumn 1998, a draft Framework Document was prepared by a group of experts, headed by the Advisor to the President on Nationality Issues and consisting of representatives of State institutions, academic establishments and NGOs (but no minority NGOs). In 1999, a Steering Committee,²⁰ headed by the Director of the Naturalisation Board, was established with the overall task of organising public debates and coordinating the further elaboration of the Integration Programme. Accordingly, the draft Framework Document was made public and debated from March to May 1999, and a broad social dialogue on ethnic policy ensued.²¹ It should be noted that this debate was largely initiated and managed by the SFL, with UNDP funding.²² The representatives of the European Commission were also consulted during the elaboration of the Integration Programme.²³

The Framework Document was significantly revised to incorporate the results of the public debate and was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on 7 December 1999.²⁴

¹⁹ See the recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, at <<http://www.riga.lv/minelres/count/latvia.htm>>, (accessed 23 August); see also the Opinion on Latvia's Application for Membership (July 1997) and the Regular Reports of the European Commission, at <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/latvia/index.htm>>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

²⁰ Decree No. 46 of the Prime Minister on the Steering Committee for the Elaboration of the National Programme "The Integration of Society in Latvia," *Latvijas Vēstnesis (Official Gazette)*, 18 February 1999, p. 2. The Steering Committee consisted of representatives of the Government, ministries and other state institutions.

²¹ Materials were also published and distributed. *Final Report. Public Discussion of the Conceptual Framework Document of the National Integration Programme*, Materials of the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board.

²² A large number of minority representatives, NGOs and municipalities, *inter alia*, took part in the seminars organised by the SFL throughout the country. A. Pabriks, *Public debates organised by the Steering Committee on the Integration of Society and the UNDP, Report on the Debates, March through May 1999*, SFL, Riga, p. 1, <<http://www.sfl.lv/seminari/seminari14.htm>>, (accessed 23 August 2002) (in Latvian). The NPLLT, the Naturalisation Board, the Ministry of Education and Science and others also organised public debates.

²³ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002. *Explanatory Note: OSI held a roundtable meeting in Latvia in June 2002 to invite critique of the present report in draft form. Experts present included representatives of the Government, the Commission Delegation, representatives of minorities, and non-governmental organisations.*

²⁴ Framework Document "The Integration of Society in Latvia," Riga, 2001, <www.np.gov.lv>, (accessed 25 September 2002) (in Latvian and in English), (hereafter, "Framework Document").

The final version of the Integration Programme was not adopted until 6 February 2001, after governmental bodies, municipalities and NGOs had been invited to submit project proposals for inclusion in the document. This last stage was managed by the Steering Committee and the authors on the basis of the revised Framework Document.²⁵

While representatives of minority NGOs were consulted during the finalisation of the Framework Document, none served on the Steering Committee, and only few were involved in the drafting of the Framework Document as authors.²⁶ Three persons with opposing views, including one minority representative, worked together to elaborate the language chapter of the Framework Document, eventually achieving a compromise.²⁷ On the other hand, the level of cooperation between minority representatives and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science who drafted the chapter on education – the Programme's most controversial component – has been evaluated by some as insufficient.²⁸

The establishment of the principal administering and funding mechanisms – the Society Integration Department (SID) (November 2000) and the Society Integration Foundation (SIF) (October 2001) – was also delayed by protracted political debates.

²⁵ The Integration Programme itself was not discussed in public fora; however, the stated objectives and directions of action in the two documents are similar. The main difference is that the Integration Programme contains lists of projects.

²⁶ A few minority representatives were invited as contributors during the finalisation of the Framework Document. Several representatives of minority NGOs, academia, media and Members of Parliament were also recruited as "consultants" on the Framework Document (around 14 out of 53 persons involved). *Composition of the Expert Group for the Elaboration of the National Programme "The Integration of Society in Latvia" after the Public Debate*, Materials of the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board. Some representatives of minority NGOs were also involved in an Advisory Council established in November 2000 at the Ministry of Justice which discussed, *inter alia*, the Integration Programme and normative acts concerning implementation mechanisms. Its 11 members were representatives of State institutions and experts, including three representatives of minority NGOs. See the composition of the Advisory Council at <http://www.integracija.gov.lv/doc_upl/min_kon.doc>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

²⁷ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

²⁸ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002. No major changes were made to the education chapter, despite sharp criticism during the public debate. However, provisions for minority participation in the elaboration of education programmes were included. Interview with the Director of the Association for the Support of Russian-Language Schools in Latvia (LASHOR), Riga, 28 March 2002. See also Section 2.3.

2.3 The Programme – Content

The Integration Programme addresses the following aspects of integration of society:

- Civic Participation and Political Integration
- Social and Regional Integration of Society
- Education, Language and Culture
- Information²⁹

Each chapter consists of stated goals, main directions for action, a list of projects which had already been launched but for which funding in 2002 has been requested (“A projects”), as well as planned projects (“B projects”) to be implemented as soon as funding is available. A list of possible future projects (“C projects”) is provided in an annex to the Programme.

The main arguments for the Integration Programme are: mistrust towards State institutions and alienation between different segments of society and the State.³⁰ More specifically, the Programme notes that “Latvia has inherited more than half a million Soviet era immigrants and their descendants, many of whom have not yet become integrated into the Latvian cultural and linguistic environment,³¹ and thus do not feel connected to the Latvian state.” It also notes that a lack of connection with the State exists to some degree also among Latvian citizens.³² Integration is therefore considered

²⁹ A final chapter is devoted to implementation mechanisms.

³⁰ See the Integration Programme, pp. 8-12. Also, Government officials stressed the need to prevent the development of two separate communities of citizens and non-citizens, “with their own language, celebrations and socio-psychological tendencies.” A. Čepanis, “*Latvijas sabiedrības integrācija – realitāte vai iespējas*” (The Integration of Latvian Society – Reality or Possibility), *Lauku Avīze (Rural Newspaper)*, 21 May 1998, p. 4.

³¹ Russian is still more widely spoken than Latvian. According to a recent survey, only 40 percent of the non-ethnic Latvian population possessed the medium or highest level of Latvian language proficiency. A majority of minorities (60 percent) still have poor or no Latvian language skills, while only 12 percent of non-ethnic Latvians claim that they do not speak any Latvian. In eight years, the number of Latvian speakers has grown by ten percent, although the data for the last three to four years has not changed. In comparison, around 83 percent of ethnic Latvians possess the medium or highest level of Russian language proficiency. The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences and the NPLLT, *Language. A sociological survey, November 2001 – January 2002*.

³² Integration Programme, p. 8.

as a process by which “[...] diverse groups within the society must reach understanding among them and learn to work together in one single country.”³³

The choice to focus the Programme on society as a whole rather than on ethnic integration issues explicitly was largely influenced by the public debate, during which many participants, including minority representatives, suggested that more attention should be paid to social, regional and other problems concerning the entire population.³⁴

The position of the Integration Programme on the issue of discrimination against minorities is contradictory. The authors of the document claim that addressing discrimination was not a primary aim and, according to Government officials and representatives of State institutions, discrimination issues and the promotion of minority rights should be dealt with outside the Integration Programme, on the grounds that its target group is Latvian society in its entirety, not minorities exclusively.³⁵ The Integration Programme therefore does not directly address issues of discrimination against members of minority communities; in fact, it does not mention discrimination at all.

It does, however, state that the protection of minority rights is one of its overall objectives,³⁶ and that “[i]ntegration is also based on a willingness to accept Latvian as the state language, and respect for Latvian as well as minority languages and cultures.”³⁷ It is expected that “Latvians also will develop an attitude of ‘receptiveness’ toward non-Latvians.”³⁸ It also emphasises that integration does not mean forced assimilation.³⁹ Yet, few measures are proposed to promote minority ethnic and cultural identities. Given the emphasis on the Latvian language and culture as necessary for the integration of

³³ It goes on to say that “[t]he foundation for integration of society is loyalty to the state and awareness that each individual’s future and personal well being are closely tied to the future stability and security of the State of Latvia.” Integration Programme, p. 8.

³⁴ Some observers, however, claim that the chapter on Social and Regional Integration was included in order to accommodate many ethnic Latvian participants who did not support integration as a minority-oriented effort only, and that its inclusion is in contradiction with the original concept of integration focussing primarily on ethnic issues. Interviews with: an Associate Professor at Vidzeme University, Riga, 5 April 2002; the Director of the LCHRES, Riga, 4 April 2002; and a Representative of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, Riga, 2 August 2002.

³⁵ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

³⁶ “In order to foster democracy, secure the rule of law and facilitate the balanced performance of civil rights institutions and protect the rights of minorities, the government should facilitate the formation of integrated society.” Integration Programme, p. 5.

³⁷ Integration Programme, p. 8.

³⁸ Integration Programme, p. 12.

³⁹ Integration Programme, p. 10.

minorities, many representatives of minority NGOs are concerned with the lack of corresponding measures to protect and promote minority rights and to promote the emergence of a multicultural society – in the Integration Programme and in general. This criticism is primarily connected to the Government's education policy, which is perceived as posing a threat to the ethnic identity of Russians and the quality of their education.⁴⁰ Some minority NGOs have asserted that the minority rights approach should be incorporated into further implementation of the Integration Programme.⁴¹

Even though a large number of minorities were consulted during the drafting process, several of them have claimed that the Integration Programme does not adequately reflect their opinions and concerns.⁴² One reason is that it is based on the existing legislative framework and governmental policies which many minority activists have criticised, especially in the area of education.⁴³ Nationalist politicians and Government officials also strongly criticised the draft Framework Document.⁴⁴ As a result of these criticisms, recommendations to ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and to adopt national legislation on minority rights, for example,

⁴⁰ Interview with the Director of the LASHOR, Riga, 28 March 2002; see also *More NGOs on integration of the society in Latvia*, 22 April 1999, <<http://racoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive/04221999-22:13:11-25909.html>>, (accessed 23 August 2002); Y. Pliner, "What form should the integration of society take?," *Panorama Latvii*, 5 April 2002, p. 2 (in Russian); and *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 25, 25 February 2001, p. 3, <<http://racoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive/02272001-06:16:11-23883.html>>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

⁴¹ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002. Interviews with: a Representative of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, Riga, 3 August 2002; and the Director of the Latvian Association of the Teachers of Russian Language and Literature, Riga, 30 July 2002.

⁴² OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002. See also Section 2.3.

⁴³ The main criticisms by minority NGOs regarding the education chapter concerned the provisions on discontinuing State financing for secondary, professional and higher education in minority languages, and the use of bilingual education as a tool for transition to Latvian as the language of instruction in minority secondary schools. These provisions, as well as the emphasis on the need to use the Latvian language and the lack of measures to promote the minority identity have been perceived as assimilatory in intent. See *More NGOs on integration of the society in Latvia*, 22 April 1999.

⁴⁴ 34 amendments were submitted by the ministers of the (ethnic Latvian) party "For Fatherland and Freedom." *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 10, p. 1, <<http://racoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive/11271999-18:57:30-21424.html>>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

were not included in the final version of the Framework Document.⁴⁵ Given the absence of a comprehensive legal framework for the prevention of discrimination and the protection and promotion of minority rights, the lack of references to international standards and documents on human rights, minority rights and non-discrimination in the Integration Programme is a gap which should be remedied in the future.⁴⁶

Overall, however, given the existence of strong political opposition, often opposing views on integration, and the lack of dialogue within society on the subject of ethnic policy prior to the public debate over the Framework Document, the authors and many civil society representatives consider the adoption of the Integration Programme as an achievement, even as they acknowledge that it needs to be updated to reflect the changing situation.⁴⁷

2.4 The Programme – Administration/Implementation/Evaluation

The main institutions for administering and funding the Integration Programme are the Society Integration Department (SID) at the Ministry of Justice, and the Society Integration Foundation (SIF). The majority of integration projects being implemented are those which were started before and during its adoption. At the end of 2001, a first group of projects (largely those of State institutions, listed in the A and B project lists) was approved for State funding in a closed process – a fact which drew strong criticism. Two public tenders for State funding were also announced in the first half of 2002 by the SIF, as well as a competition for Phare pilot projects. However, the lack of effective coordination between various authorities and the lack of a clear implementation strategy is likely to hinder successful implementation of the Integration Programme unless these problems are addressed. Minority participation in implementation has also not been sufficient.

The Ministry of Justice bears overall responsibility for implementation while the SID coordinates the activities of various actors (ministries, State institutions, municipalities,

⁴⁵ *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 12, pp. 1–2, <<http://racoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive//02172000-19:46:56-14688.html>>, (accessed 23 August 2002). Minority organisations also suggested harmonising the Framework Document with international human rights documents. The draft Framework Document included some references but these were excluded in the final version. Summary of the Public Debate, pp. 4–5, <<http://www.sfl.lv/seminari/seminari1.htm>>, (accessed 23 August 2002) (in Latvian).

⁴⁶ Latvia does not possess comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to comply with the EU Race Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC). Latvia has not yet ratified the FCNM or the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; nor has it adopted a comprehensive minority law.

⁴⁷ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

NGOs, international organisations, etc). In addition, the SID elaborates the criteria for evaluating and monitoring the integration policy and process, manages this evaluation (see below), and is responsible for the communications strategy (see Section 2.5).⁴⁸

The SIF manages the allocation of State as well as donor funding.⁴⁹ Seven expert SIF commissions evaluate projects submitted in different subject areas. The SIF is funded by the Government as well as by the EU (Phare funding represented over 35 percent of its overall budget in 2002).⁵⁰

A Council supervises the work of the SIF.⁵¹ The composition⁵² of this Council has been criticised by many, including minority representatives, for the following reasons:

- Lack of transparency of the selection process for NGO representatives;⁵³
- The possibility of political interference in the work of the SIF (several of its members are ministers and some of the NGO representatives also belong to

⁴⁸ For a full description of the responsibilities of the SID, see Bylaw of the Society Integration Department, 12 December 2000, § 2, para. 2, p. 1, <http://www.integracija.gov.lv/doc_upl/SID_nol.3.piel.doc>, (accessed 23 August 2002). LVL 16,000 (€27,923) was allocated from the 2002 State budget for its functioning. Government Contribution to Social Integration in Latvia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 August 2002, p. 2, <www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=804>, (accessed 25 September 2002). The exchange rate is calculated at LVL 0.573 (Latvian Lats) = €1.

⁴⁹ See the Law on the Society Integration Foundation, 5 July 2001 (Art. 3), at <http://www.integracija.gov.lv/doc_upl/SIF_Likums.doc>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

⁵⁰ The total SIF budget in 2002, including project money, consisted of LVL 447,000 (€780,105), of which LVL 282,000 (€492,147) was allocated by the Government, and LVL 165,000 (€287,958) by the EU (Phare 2000). Interview with the Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 15 May 2002.

⁵¹ Decree No. 515 of the Cabinet of Ministers "On the Council of the Society Integration Foundation," 24 October 2001, <http://www.integracija.gov.lv/doc_upl/NEW_SIF_Padome.doc>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

⁵² The SIF Council is elected for three years and consists of a representative of the President, five ministers (Education and Science; Culture; Welfare; Justice; Environmental Protection and Regional Development), five municipal representatives and five NGO representatives. Law on the Society Integration Foundation, Art. 9.

⁵³ Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, *Human Rights in Latvia in 2001*, Riga, March 2002, p. 17, <http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/LCHRES2001en.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002). Some have assumed the existence of a criterion of "loyalty" of NGOs towards State policies for membership. *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 35, p. 3, <<http://raccoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive/09012001-11:21:50-22362.html>>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

political parties), and of changes in the ruling coalition which would result in major changes to the Council which could negatively affect its work;⁵⁴

- There are too few representatives of minority NGOs (two out of 16 members).

A Secretariat supports the work of the SIF and its Council.⁵⁵ It is also responsible for overseeing expenditures, requesting reports from the implementing authorities and monitoring the implementation of projects supported through the SIF (see below).

Funding

In November 2001, the SIF Council approved funding for 21 of the 60 project proposals included in the Programme's A and B project lists.⁵⁶ The approval procedure was strongly criticised by representatives of civil society and minorities as well as by international organisations due to the fact that the SIF commissions of experts were not involved and because the funding decisions were made before rules for open competitions had been prepared.⁵⁷ They also criticised the fact that about half of the projects supported⁵⁸ concerned social rather than ethnic integration, and did not correspond to the "original concept of integration."⁵⁹

In a first tender announced in January 2002 (deadline end May 2002), LVL 120,000 (€209,424) was to be allocated as follows: 50 percent for projects in the field of ethnic

⁵⁴ See A. Pabriks, "*Integrācijas fonds krustceļš*" (The Integration Foundation at a Crossroads), <<http://www.politika.lv/index.php?id=102179&lang=lv&print=;>>, (accessed 26 September 2002); and also N. Lebedeva, "Who Needs the Great Fiction of Integration?," *Chas*, 26 March 2002 (in Russian). Some observers believe that the ministers' competence in budget matters and political authority are assets. OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

⁵⁵ Law on the Society Integration Foundation, Art. 11(1).

⁵⁶ A total of LVL 126,845 (€221,370) was allocated from the 2001 State budget; LVL 20,000 (€34,904) had been earmarked for projects to provide language training for naturalisation applicants.

⁵⁷ SIF representatives explained that implementation needed to start in 2001 already and that tenders take a lot of time to organise. Interview with the Deputy Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 28 March 2002.

⁵⁸ R. Belousova, "*Par Sabiedrības integrācijas fondu*" (About the Society Integration Foundation), *Latvijas Vēstnesis (Official Gazette)*, 19 December 2001.

⁵⁹ LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia in 2001*, p. 17.

integration;⁶⁰ 30 percent in the field of social integration, including at the municipal level; and 20 percent in the field of regional integration.⁶¹ Ten information seminars organised by the SIF to explain the application rules were attended by about 600 participants.⁶² In June 2002, the SIF approved 64 projects for a total of LVL 96,549 (€168,497).⁶³

In July 2002, the SIF announced a second tender (deadline 16 September 2002) for a total of LVL 62,000 (€108,202) from the State budget, with an emphasis on the theme of ethnic integration (nearly 70 percent of the funding). It also announced the first Phare pilot project tender in the field of ethnic integration in the amount of €140,000, including €40,000 of State co-financing. Again, seminars were organised by the SIF in several cities on how to prepare Phare proposals.⁶⁴

The following two main priorities for funding from the State budget for 2003 were defined by the SIF Council in March 2002:

- Latvian language training for naturalisation applicants (LVL 200,000, €349,040);
- State co-financing for Phare-funded projects in 2003 (LVL 320,000, €558,464).

As of August 2002, funding was expected for the second priority while none was forthcoming for the first one.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ The six themes of ethnic integration projects are: Latvian language training for naturalisation applicants (LVL 12,000, €20,942; funding is also available in the amount of LVL 20,000, €34,904, from a reserve in the 2001 State budget); research on the integration process (LVL 3,000, €5,236); programmes of assistance to NGO projects in the field of ethnic integration (LVL 10,000, €17,452); exchange of pupils and cooperation programmes (LVL 10,000, €17,452); assistance to minority cultural organisations (LVL 15,000, €26,178); and media programmes to promote the consolidation of society (LVL 10,000, €17,452).

⁶¹ Information provided by the Deputy Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 28 March 2002.

⁶² *Integration of Society in Latvia: from Plans to Implementation. March–April 2002*, p. 5 <<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=2683>>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

⁶³ 390 project proposals were submitted to the SIF. The largest number of them were in the area of social integration and from representatives of the regions. 68 percent of the approved projects will be implemented outside Riga. M. Līdaka, “*Par SIF projektu konkursu*” (About the SIF Project Tender), *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 28 June 2002, pp. 1, 5.

⁶⁴ *Integration of Society in Latvia: From Plans to Implementation, June–July 2002*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pp. 2–3, <<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=2950>>, (accessed 27 August 2002).

⁶⁵ Interview with the Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 12 August 2002.

Participation of minorities and NGOs

Few minority NGOs are participating in the implementation of projects under the Integration Programme, although allegedly all of the projects submitted by minority NGOs were included.⁶⁶ The majority of projects in the A and B categories are being implemented by State institutions. In February 2000, the Naturalisation Board organised a tender to solicit ideas from civil society. However, these project proposals, including some submitted by minority NGOs (these are the C projects), have not been funded through this tender.

According to some observers, minority NGOs submitted few projects due to insufficient skills in project proposal writing, capacity and experience; a sense of alienation from the State; lack of information; and lack of resources. Another explanation is that project information for inclusion in the A and B categories was gathered primarily from the ministries.⁶⁷ Participation continues to be low, even though several minority NGOs (predominantly dealing with culture) participated in the 2002 project tenders.⁶⁸ The limited funding – a maximum of LVL 1,000 (€1,745) per project from the SIF – seems to have also been a factor hindering participation.⁶⁹

Monitoring and evaluation

As the mechanisms for administering and funding implementation of the Integration Programme have only recently been established, and in the absence of a monitoring system (in the process of elaboration as of Summer 2002), an assessment of the overall impact of the Integration Programme or the effectiveness of its projects cannot yet be

⁶⁶ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002. Only one minority NGO – “*Zelta Kamoliņš*” (Golden Ball) (see Section 3.4.5) and a few projects by minority schools were supported by the SIF in November 2001.

⁶⁷ Interviews with: the Director of the LCHRES, Riga, 4 April 2002; the Director of the Latvian Association of Teachers of the Russian Language and Literature, Riga, 30 July 2002; the Director of the SID, Riga, 1 August 2002; and the Head of the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board, Riga, 31 July 2002.

⁶⁸ The SIF has pointed out that many project proposals (e.g. 58 percent of projects in the field of ethnic integration) were incomplete or did not comply with the tender’s guidelines, showing insufficient skills or experience in project proposal writing, especially among NGOs, including many minority organisations. Interviews with: the Deputy Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 2 August 2002; and the Project Coordinator of the festival “Golden Ball,” Riga, 7 August 2002. On the other hand, some minority representatives are concerned about the SIF’s insufficient trust in the capacity of NGOs, and of minority NGOs specifically. Interview with a Representative of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, Riga 3 August 2002.

⁶⁹ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002. Interview with the Project Coordinator of the festival “Golden Ball,” Riga, 7 August 2002.

made. No public reports on expenditures under the Integration Programme are available.⁷⁰

Already, there appears to be a general lack of coordination between different authorities in the field of integration policy and a lack of clearly defined responsibilities for each institution.⁷¹ Civil society and minority representatives have also pointed to the lack of a clear implementation strategy, as well as the lack of clear divisions of responsibilities and expected results.⁷² It should also be noted in this context that Latvia's framework for minority-related policy in general is fragmented and decentralised. There is no body specialising in monitoring or combating ethnic/racial discrimination explicitly or dealing with minority issues comprehensively. This might result in additional coordination problems.⁷³

In order to improve the situation, the SID is working on the elaboration of a monitoring mechanism which will also serve to define the new priorities of the Integration Programme.⁷⁴ This monitoring aims to evaluate integration policy and the integration process in general, rather than implementation of the Programme and projects specifically.⁷⁵ There is no formal obligation of the SID to monitor or evaluate specific projects.⁷⁶ The SIF in its turn, will monitor the projects funded by the SIF

⁷⁰ Some of the prior projects incorporated in the Integration Programme were evaluated upon the initiative of the implementing authority or of the funding institution. See e.g. A. Pabriks, *The National Programme for Latvian Language Training. Promotion of the Integration of Society 1996–2000. Impact Report*.

⁷¹ Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 14 May 2002.

⁷² EU Accession Monitoring Program, *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, September 2001, pp. 302–307, (hereafter, “*Minority Protection 2001*”). Interviews with: the Project Coordinator of the festival “Golden Ball,” Riga, 7 August 2002; the Director of the SFL Programme “Changes in Education,” Riga, 28 March 2002; and a Representative of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, Riga, 3 August 2002.

⁷³ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

⁷⁴ In June 2002, a task force coordinated by the SID and consisting of representatives of ministries, State institutions and municipalities was established with the purpose of coordinating implementation of the Integration Programme and to define new priorities. An expert group recruited in May 2002 is currently elaborating a monitoring system of the integration policy and process. Independent research institutes will be asked to carry out the research on the basis of which the analysis will be made. These activities are funded by the UNDP. The State has not invested in the elaboration of monitoring system. It has been suggested that the SIF could provide additional funding. Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 3 August 2002.

⁷⁵ Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 1 August 2002.

⁷⁶ Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 1 August 2002.

only.⁷⁷ Thus, it will be important to coordinate the various monitoring activities foreseen in order to obtain a comprehensive picture. Complementary independent monitoring would also be advisable.

The priorities of the Integration Programme are to be revised every year, based on the results of the monitoring system.⁷⁸ However, the 2003 priorities will have to be defined already by Autumn 2002, before the results of the first round of monitoring are available. It is not clear how the new priorities are to be defined. Also, the impact of the SIF-financed projects (project tenders) on integration will be evaluated in 2004, only then will it be possible to assess impact in each integration area.⁷⁹

2.5 The Programme and the Public

The Framework Document, the Integration Programme and related information materials have been widely distributed at seminars, conferences, and on the websites of various State institutions and NGOs as well as through the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of publicly available information on implementation, especially concerning on-going activities of the Ministry of Justice, the SIF (except for information about project tenders)⁸⁰ and the status of implementation of projects – both prior projects as well as those supported through the SIF. Several steps have been taken recently by the SID to remedy this situation: it is creating a database on institutions and projects in the field of integration.⁸¹ It is also developing a communication strategy with UNDP funding, including a new website launched in August 2002 to provide information on key activities in the field of integration, as well as relevant institutions and research.⁸² The aim of the communication strategy is to promote understanding and support for the Programme's objectives and results as well as to encourage participation in implementation.⁸³

⁷⁷ It is planned that monitoring will consist of an assessment of individual projects, financial control, as well an assessment of progress made in specific areas (to be carried out at the end of 2003 for projects started in 2001). OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

⁷⁸ Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 14 May 2002.

⁷⁹ Interview with the Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 12 August 2002.

⁸⁰ The new SIF website (in Latvian, Russian and English) provides information on the 2002 project tenders, <www.lsif.lv>, (accessed 23 August 2002).

⁸¹ Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 1 August 2002.

⁸² <www.integracija.gov.lv>, in Latvian only as of Summer 2002.

⁸³ Interview with the Director of the SID, Riga, 8 April 2002.

The domestic media periodically publishes information and opinions about activities of the Integration Programme but comprehensive and analytical articles on the Programme and on integration in general are rare, in both the Latvian- and the Russian-language press.⁸⁴

The public debate and social surveys organised around the draft Framework Document showed that civil society, including minority representatives, generally welcomed the idea of integration, viewing this as “a change in attitudes towards national minorities.”⁸⁵ Survey data from 2000 (“Towards a Civil Society”) showed that Latvian residents in most cases perceived integration as a feeling of belonging to the State and collaboration between the State and individuals, rather than the integration of minorities into Latvian society specifically.⁸⁶ Also, the “two-way process” approach of the Integration Programme, i.e. the promotion of the integration of ethnic Latvians as well as of minorities, and of collaboration between different groups, is generally seen as a positive aspect.⁸⁷ Indeed, 44 percent of citizens and 56 percent of non-citizens considered a society open to different cultures as the preferable model (against 38 percent of citizens and 13 percent of non-citizens who preferred a single-community society).⁸⁸ According to another survey from 1999, the most important issues in the opinion of residents were the resolution of social problems affecting the quality of life, education, corruption, and crime. At the same time, considerably more minority respondents (59 percent) than ethnic Latvians (34 percent), considered the promotion of minority rights as a “very important” task for integration.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ I. Apine, L. Dribins, A. Jansons, *et al.*, *Etnopolitika Latvija (Ethnopolitics in Latvia)*, Elpa, Riga, 2001, p. 88.

⁸⁵ *More NGOs on integration of the society in Latvia*, 22 April 1999.

⁸⁶ The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences and the Naturalisation Board, *Towards a Civil Society, Public Survey 2000/2001*, p. 81, <http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/uzpilssab2001.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002) (in Latvian), (hereafter, “*Towards a Civil Society 2000/2001*”). According to the survey data, 38 percent of citizens and 46 percent of non-citizens had heard about the Framework Document. Among them, 70 percent of citizens and 63 percent of non-citizens positively evaluated its contents. In general, they (71 percent of citizens and 67 percent of non-citizens) supported the need for such a Programme and accepted the State’s role as coordinator of the integration process.

⁸⁷ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

⁸⁸ *Towards a Civil Society 2000/2001*, p. 10.

⁸⁹ *Latvijas fakti (Facts of Latvia), Survey of Public opinion. Report of the Research*. Riga, July 1999, p. 90.

A concern expressed by minority representatives is the lack of dialogue between the State and minorities in the integration process.⁹⁰ It has also been noted that there is a shortage of persons who could initiate dialogue between ethnic Latvians and minorities, a lack of consensus among State institutions on the concept of integration and an insufficient will of Government officials to popularise the idea of integration.⁹¹

2.6 The Programme and the EU

The European Commission in its Regular Reports has recommended implementing activities to promote the integration of minorities and has positively evaluated developments in this field, including the adoption of the Integration Programme.⁹² It has also welcomed measures to simplify naturalisation procedures. Accordingly, through its Phare Programme, the EU has strongly supported efforts to promote integration since 1996, allocating significant funds to support Latvian language training and naturalisation. This is in line with its assessment that these are key instruments for integration.⁹³

Latvian language training for various categories of the population (through the NPLLT) is one main area of EU support.⁹⁴ The work of the NPLLT has been positively evaluated, as has been the fact that, in 2001, the Government allocated funding to it for the first time; however, the significant shortage of Latvian language

⁹⁰ An MP from "For Human Rights in United Latvia" (FHRUL) has noted that: "[t]he Integration Programme should be started with dialogue with the opposition and different organisations representing the rights and interests of minorities in Latvia." A. Elkin, "Integration as the breadwinner of functionaries," *Vesti Sevodnya (News Today)*, 6 December 2001 (in Russian).

⁹¹ Interview with a Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Riga, 4 April 2002.

⁹² European Commission, *2001 Regular Report on Latvia's Progress Towards Accession*, Brussels, 13 November 2001, p. 24, (hereafter, "2001 Regular Report").

⁹³ See the medium-term priority in Latvia's 1999 Accession Partnership to "pursue integration of non-citizens in particular by extending language training programmes for non-Latvian speakers." DG Enlargement, *Latvia: 1999 Accession Partnership*, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/dwn/ap_02_00/en/ap_lv_99.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002). Indeed, the 2001 Regular Report states that: "[t]he ongoing efforts to support the integration of non-citizens need to be sustained through the implementation of the comprehensive Society Integration Programme in all its aspects, including activities to encourage naturalisation and the expansion of Latvian language training." *2001 Regular Report*, p. 27.

⁹⁴ In 2000, Phare funding represented 16 percent of the NPLLT's overall budget and the EU has annually invested €500,000 in its activities since 1996. A. Pabriks, *The National Programme for Latvian Language Training*, p. 23; see also <<http://www.lvavp.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

teachers was noted, as well as the need for more Government funding.⁹⁵ The EU has not explicitly evaluated NPLLT and Phare expenditures, mainly due to the difficulty of evaluating the implementation of projects which are in different stages.⁹⁶

Promotion of naturalisation is a second priority area. In 1998, €500,000 was allocated to a project of the Naturalisation Board entitled "Promotion of Integration through Information and Education." Its objectives were to strengthen the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board and to implement pilot projects.⁹⁷

The EU has not assessed the impact of the Integration Programme on the degree to which minority rights are protected and promoted in Latvia, beyond viewing it as a means of supporting primarily the integration of non-citizens. The European Commission has, however, drawn attention to problems with the transition of minority schools to bilingual education within the context of educational reform, noting the lack of sufficient training for teachers from minority language schools and teaching materials.⁹⁸ It has also emphasised the need to maintain the use of minority languages at all minority schools as far as possible. Yet, while the 2001 Regular Report states that "[i]n continuing with the educational reform, it will be important to ensure that the confidence in the process is maintained [...],"⁹⁹ it does not assess the level of popular support for this controversial reform.

Phare 2000 funding was allocated to increase the capacity and transparency of the SIF with a view to its becoming the implementing agency of Phare national projects and the administrator of Phare-funded pilot projects.¹⁰⁰ EU experts will provide assistance starting in Autumn 2002 by evaluating the normative acts concerning the SIF and presenting recommendations for improving its funding, evaluation and administrative procedures.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Information provided by the Delegation of the European Commission to Latvia, Riga, 28 March 2002.

⁹⁷ E.g. partial financing of sociological research, conferences, a student contest "Towards a Civil Society." Information provided by the Delegation of the European Commission to Latvia, Riga, 28 March 2002.

⁹⁸ The European Commission welcomed the increased allocation of State funds for the reform. *2001 Regular Report*, p. 25.

⁹⁹ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ €500,000 was allocated for institutional strengthening and to improve the capacity of the SIF, and €100,000 was allocated for pilot projects. OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

¹⁰¹ Standard Summary Project Fiche LE00.07.00, Promotion of Integration of Society in Latvia 2000 (Sector: Social Integration), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, pp. 7–11.

A further €1,283,850 is to be granted to the SIF under Phare 2001 for the implementation in 2003 and 2004 of projects approved through tenders based on EU grant procedures; State co-financing is required (see Section 2.4).¹⁰² It is expected that a further €1,500,000 will be allocated to the SIF under Phare 2002 for 2004 and 2005.¹⁰³ The EU Phare programme will support projects in the field of ethnic integration only.¹⁰⁴

Starting in 2003, the SIF also plans to administer the ACCESS programme, consisting of an additional € one million for NGO activities.¹⁰⁵

Latvia was deemed to have fulfilled its short-term priorities concerning the 1999 Language Law¹⁰⁶ and Latvian language training “to a considerable extent,”¹⁰⁷ but to have only “partially met” its medium-term priorities (pursing the integration of non-citizens especially by extending Latvian language training) through the adoption of the Integration Programme and the establishment of the SIF.¹⁰⁸ Latvia’s Accession Partnership has been revised on the basis of the conclusions of the 2001 Regular Report.¹⁰⁹

3. THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME – IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Stated Objectives of the Programme

The main goal of the Integration Programme, as stated in its introduction, is to “form a democratic, consolidated civil society, founded on shared basic values. An

¹⁰² Standard Summary Project Fiche LE01.01.01, Promotion of Integration of Society in Latvia 2001 (Sector: Political Criteria), Ministry of Justice, pp. 4–8. The overall 2001 Phare Programme consists of an allocation of €31.4 million, of which €2 million is to be allocated to “Priority 1: Political Criteria, including Promotion of Integration of Society in Latvia.” *2001 Regular Report*, p. 9.

¹⁰³ Interview with the SIF Project Manager, Riga, 2 August 2002.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with the Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 12 August 2002.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with the Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 12 August 2002.

¹⁰⁶ The Law on the State Language entered into force on 1 September 2000. See Section 3.4.2.

¹⁰⁷ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁸ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 118. It is explained that “[t]here is still a significant shortage of language teachers, and it will be important that the Government’s supported for the Latvian Language Training Programme be maintained and increased in the coming years.”

¹⁰⁹ Latvia’s new Accession Partnership is at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2001/aplv_en.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

independent and democratic Latvian state is one of these values.”¹¹⁰ More specific goals are outlined in individual chapters (see below).

3.2 Government Programme and Discrimination

While the Integration Programme does not directly address issues of discrimination against minorities, it often refers to disadvantages experienced by residents of Latvia in general, including minorities, such as problems in the area of social and regional integration (unemployment, poverty, regional differences) and the lack of funding for cultural activities. It also mentions lack of citizenship and proficiency in the Latvian language as well as alienation from the Latvian State and culture. It acknowledges specific disadvantages experienced by minorities, including: obstacles to applying for citizenship, limited contacts between minorities and ethnic Latvians, lack of contact between Latvian-language and minority schools, insufficient means to pay for Latvian lessons, the development of two separate information spaces, and inadequate legislation in the area of minority culture.

Views about discrimination in Latvian society are polarised. There is no shared understanding between State institutions, NGOs and broader society of what constitutes discrimination. This situation prevents a constructive dialogue between ethnic Latvians and minorities, as well as between the State and minorities. Many representatives of State institutions and officials involved in the elaboration and implementation of the Integration Programme do not consider discrimination to be a problem concerning minorities specifically, stressing rather the disadvantages experienced by both ethnic Latvians and minorities (such as access to education, employment issues, discrimination on the basis of gender, etc.)¹¹¹ At the same time, minorities, significantly more often than ethnic Latvians, claim to experience discrimination, predominantly on grounds of language or ethnicity.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Integration Programme, p. 8.

¹¹¹ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

¹¹² According to a 2000 survey, 24 percent of respondents (31 percent of non-ethnic Latvians and 33 percent of non-citizens) had experienced discrimination in the previous three years; 37 percent of non-citizens and 36 percent of non-ethnic Latvians cited language as the grounds of human rights violations; and 43 percent of non-citizens and 40 percent of non-ethnic Latvians mentioned ethnic origin. Baltic Data House, *Cilvēktiesības (Human Rights)*, Unpublished survey commissioned by the NHRO, 2000.

Latvia does not possess comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to comply with the EU Race Equality Directive.¹¹³ The Constitution contains a general equality clause, as do a number of other laws.¹¹⁴ Latvia has not ratified Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).¹¹⁵ However, the new Labour Law prohibits direct and indirect discrimination and provides for reversal of the burden of proof in certain cases; in fact, the EU Race Equality Directive is considered complied with only in the field of the new Labour Law.¹¹⁶ A work group under the Ministry of Welfare has begun work on implementation of the EU Race Equality Directive.¹¹⁷

There is a need to raise public awareness of discrimination and of procedures for seeking redress as well as for training of public authorities dealing with the application of legal norms.¹¹⁸ The need to establish a specialised body to deal with issues of discrimination, including racial and ethnic discrimination, has been stressed by several

¹¹³ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recently noted that “[t]here is no comprehensive body of anti-discrimination legislation covering all fields of life [...] and providing for effective mechanisms of enforcement and redress.” Council of Europe, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. *Second report on Latvia adopted on 14 December 2001 and made public on 23 July 2002*, p. 8, <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Ecri/1-ECRI/2-Country-by-country_approach/Latvia/Latvia_CBC_2.asp#TopOfPage>, (accessed 26 August 2002), (hereafter, “2002 ECRI Report”).

¹¹⁴ The Constitution (*Satversme*) is at <http://www.saeima.lv/Lapas/Satversme_Visa.htm>, (accessed 26 September 2002). Other laws containing anti-discrimination clauses are: the Labour Law, the Education Law, the Criminal Code, the Law “On the Unrestricted Development of National and Ethnic Groups of Latvia and the Rights to Cultural Autonomy,” and the Sentence Execution Code. *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 279–280.

¹¹⁵ The ECHR was signed in November 2000. Protocol No. 12 broadens the scope of Article 14 on non-discrimination.

¹¹⁶ The Labour Law (entered into force 1 June 2002) is at <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26019>>, (accessed 26 August 2002). See also G. Feldhūne and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation. A comparison of the EU Racial Equality Directive & Protocol No. 12 with anti-discrimination legislation in Latvia*, European Roma Rights Center/Interights/Migration Policy Group, Budapest/London/Brussels, September 2001, p. 25, <<http://www.migpolgroup.com/uploadstore/Latvia%20electronic.pdf>>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

¹¹⁷ Information provided by the Director of the LCHRES, Riga, 21 August 2002.

¹¹⁸ G. Feldhūne and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 28.

experts.¹¹⁹ The NHRO¹²⁰ acknowledges the need for such a body but points to a lack of resources.¹²¹

There have been no successful court cases concerning discrimination on the basis of language or ethnicity.¹²² However, following amendments to the Law on the Constitutional Court, it may also hear individual appeals.¹²³ A larger number of complaints of discrimination on the grounds of (lack of) citizenship or language can therefore be expected in the near future.¹²⁴

3.2.1 Education

The lack of contact between Latvian- and Russian-language schools has been identified as a major problem in the field of education, encouraging ethnic prejudices and stereotypes.¹²⁵ The Integration Programme stresses the need to create a “unified educational system” in order to ensure “the development of Latvian society as a civic society with common values and responsibilities.”¹²⁶ In particular, it stresses the importance of a “common language” for successful integration and therefore the need for Latvian language training, “especially so that the younger generation is able to use it freely as a means of communication.” At the same time, it states the need to preserve the identity of minorities.¹²⁷

¹¹⁹ G. Feldhūne and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 33. ECRI has also stressed the need for a specialised body to supervise the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, either as a separate entity or within the NHRO. *2002 ECRI Report*, pp. 8–9.

¹²⁰ The NHRO is an independent, ombudsman-like institution established in 1995 to promote the observance of human rights. Its competencies include examining complaints regarding discrimination on racial, ethnic and linguistic grounds (although there have been few such complaints); it also analyses the situation in these fields. For more, see *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 302–303.

¹²¹ NHRO, *Topical Human Rights Issues in Latvia in the Second Quarter of 2002*, pp. 13–14, <http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/2002g2cet.pdf>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹²² See *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 281.

¹²³ The amendments entered into force on 1 July 2001. See the Law on the Constitutional Court (14 June 1996), Art.17, <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=63354>>, (accessed 26 September 2002).

¹²⁴ G. Feldhūne and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 19.

¹²⁵ Framework Document, p. 29.

¹²⁶ Integration Programme, p. 60.

¹²⁷ Integration Programme, p. 60.

The goals of the Integration Programme in the area of education are, *inter alia*:

- The development and implementation of minority education programmes (bilingual education);¹²⁸
- The promotion of collaboration between Latvian and minority schools.¹²⁹

The measures proposed by the Integration Programme in the area of education are viewed as the most controversial by many minority and civil society representatives, as they are based on the 1998 Education Law. While the officially stated aim of the education reform is to promote the integration of minorities and to increase their competitiveness in entering higher education establishments as well as on the labour market through the promotion of Latvian language training,¹³⁰ many civil society representatives and minority parents view elements of the reform as discriminatory and as producing disadvantages. Some experts have highlighted a lack of preparation in many schools as well as insufficient State funding, and have recommended that it be implemented only in those schools which are ready.

Most of the projects implemented in this area were those started by the NPLLT and the SFL prior to the adoption of the Integration Programme (mostly with foreign funding) and have registered success. The SIF has also recently approved a series of small projects connected with education. More governmental efforts and resources are needed for the training of teachers, policy monitoring, promotion of information about the education reform and more effective participation of minorities in the further planning and implementation of the reform.

Education reform

The aims of the Integration Programme in the area of education are in line with the 1998 Education Law which proposes the transition of all public secondary schools to

¹²⁸ The implementation of minority primary education programmes is also referred to by officials as “bilingual education” since two languages of instruction are used. Programme for the Gradual Transition of Secondary Education to the State Language and Increase in the Number of Subjects Taught in the State Language in Primary School Education Programmes until 2005, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Other objectives include: the development of a methodology for bilingual education; “intercultural education;” the promotion of cooperation between Latvian-language and minority-language schools; the training of teachers in the social sciences; the development of a civic education programme; ensuring the participation of minorities in the elaboration of education programmes and in the implementation of educational policy, etc. Integration Programme, Chapter on “Education, Language and Culture,” pp. 60–72.

¹³⁰ Programme for the Gradual Transition of Secondary Education to the State Language and Increase in the Number of Subjects Taught in the State Language in Primary School Education Programmes until 2005, p. 16.

Latvian as the language of instruction and the implementation of education programmes for national minorities (bilingual education) in primary schools. Thus, from 1 September 1999, all State and municipal general educational institutions with languages of instruction other than Latvian had to either start implementing minority education programmes (see below) or to proceed with the transition to education in the State language. On 1 September 2004, all tenth grades¹³¹ of State and municipal general education institutions and first year classes of State and municipal vocational education institutions are to begin teaching in Latvian only.¹³²

Bilingual education is not precisely defined in Latvia's normative acts.¹³³ In Spring 1999, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced four models for minority education programmes for the primary level, defining the proportions of use of Latvian and minority languages (instruction in Latvian only, bilingually, in the minority language only). State-funded minority schools may also elaborate their own model, according to standards developed by the Ministry. Some schools began implementing minority education programmes before September 1999 on a voluntary basis.¹³⁴

Education reform is one of the most controversial issues in the context of integration as well as in the area of minority rights.¹³⁵ Views about education reform and bilingual education are split. In general, the majority of residents, including minorities, support the bilingual education approach.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, while approximately half of minority

¹³¹ Beginning of the secondary level.

¹³² Education Law, Transitional Provisions (17 November 1998), Art. 9(3), <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759>>, (accessed 26 September 2002), (hereafter, "1998 Education Law"). These provisions will be referred to as "education reform." See also *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 289–293.

¹³³ Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

¹³⁴ In the 2000/2001 academic year, there were 732 schools with Latvian as the language of instruction, 173 – with Russian as the language of instruction, and 149 – with two languages of instruction (Latvian and Russian). There were also a few Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian and Belarussian schools, as well as Romani language classes in two schools. The number of students being taught in Latvian increased from 66 percent in 1999/2000 to 72.3 percent in 2001/2002, <<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=800>>, (accessed 26 August 2002). Apart from the growing interest of minority parents in sending their children to Latvian schools, other reasons for a decreasing number of students in Russian-language schools are emigration and the decreasing birth rate of ethnic Russians. *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 291.

¹³⁵ In this section dealing with issues of discrimination and equal access to education, the focus will be on Latvian language training and on the quality of education. Issues related to the language of instruction and the promotion of the minority identity will be further discussed in Section 3.4.1 on minority rights in education.

¹³⁶ *Towards a Civil Society 2000/2001*, p. 104. According to the survey, 81 percent of citizens and 74 percent of non-citizens support bilingual education.

school students, teachers and principals generally support an equal number of subjects being taught in the mother tongue and in Latvian (as proposed in minority primary education programmes), many respondents (41 percent of students, 37 percent of teachers, 34 percent of principals and 31 percent of parents) prefer education mostly in the minority language.¹³⁷ Regarding the transition to Latvian as the language of instruction in 2004 at the secondary level, around half of minority parents, school directors and teachers are opposed, while the other half are in favour.¹³⁸

Despite the considerable amounts invested,¹³⁹ experts are concerned that State financial support for minority education reform is insufficient and that the reform has been insufficiently prepared and poorly managed.¹⁴⁰ The lack of preparedness of teachers for bilingual education is a major problem. Although in a 2002 survey minority school teachers evaluated their own readiness for bilingual teaching at the middle or the highest level, insufficient Latvian language skills as well as insufficient training and access to methodology and materials about bilingual education represent serious

¹³⁷ See Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Canadian International Development Agency, OSCE, SFL, *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, Riga, 2002, p. 20, <http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/bilingv_en.pdf>, (accessed 26 September 2002), (hereafter, “*Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*”). This survey covered minority school (i.e. with Russian as the language of instruction) teachers at the primary and secondary level, principals, and students in grades 2 to 3, 6 to 7, and their parents. The number of respondents in each survey group varied; survey methodology also differed.

¹³⁸ 58 percent of students, 52 percent of teachers, 48 percent of parents and 46 percent of principals “rather don’t” or “absolutely don’t” support teaching mainly in the Latvian language starting in 2004. *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, p. 20. According to another survey, 86 percent of ethnic Latvian citizens, 55 percent of Russian citizens and 47 percent of non-citizens support the switch to Latvian as the language of instruction in secondary schools; 42 percent of non-citizens are against it. *Towards a Civil Society 2000/2001*, p. 102.

¹³⁹ See E. Papule, “State measures in bilingual education: Characterisation of minority education policy,” *Bulletin Tagad*, <<http://www.lvap.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁴⁰ They also noted that more attention was devoted to training bilingual teachers only after the launch of the reform in 2000. E. Vēbers, “Reform of Bilingual Education,” in *A Passport to Social Cohesion and Economic Prosperity. Report on Education in Latvia 2000*, SFL, Riga, 2001, pp. 77–87; A. Pabriks, E. Vēbers and R. Ābolīņš, *Atsvešinātības pārvēršana. Sabiedrības integrācija (Overcoming Alienation. Integration of Society)*, Nims, Nipo NT, Riga, 2001; B. Lulle, “*Butiskākās problēmas mazākumtautību izglītības reformas īstenošanā Latvijā*” (Important Problems in the Implementation of Minority Education Reform in Latvia), *Politikas zinātnes jautājumi (Issues in Political Science)*, University of Latvia, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science, Riga, 2002, pp. 205–238; interview with the Director of the SFL Programme “Change in Education,” Riga, 22 March 2002.

problems.¹⁴¹ Some critics also feel that bilingual education is presented in the education reform and in the Integration Programme not as a modern teaching method to improve the quality of education, Latvian language proficiency and the preservation of the minority identity, but simply as the means for transition to Latvian-only education.¹⁴²

Many representatives of minority NGOs, experts, and parents have expressed concern that opportunities and guarantees for primary and secondary education in the minority language are increasingly limited, and that the choices of minority parents and of schools participating in the reform are also limited. While the Latvian language proficiency of minority students is better compared to that of other groups of respondents (e.g. parents, teachers), and is increasing,¹⁴³ a significant percentage of principals and teachers are concerned that bilingual education will result in a lower quality of education and knowledge of subjects for students.¹⁴⁴ Teachers are also concerned that the Latvian language skills of students are insufficient for participating in bilingual education. Also, students in Russian-language schools appear to be at a disadvantage in contests conducted in Latvian.¹⁴⁵ At the same time, according to the

¹⁴¹ According to a 2002 survey, more than one third of minority school teachers evaluated their Latvian language skills at the lowest level, and only ten percent at the highest level, even though teachers in public schools are required to speak Latvian at the highest level of proficiency. *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, pp. 22, 34, 19.

¹⁴² Interviews with: the Director of the SFL Programme "Change in Education," Riga, 22 March 2002; and the Director of LASHOR, Riga, 28 March 2002. There is also concern about the interference of ruling parties, often ignoring the quality of education and other social, economic and political aspects of education reform.

¹⁴³ In grades 6 and 7, 68 percent can speak Latvian fluently or without major difficulties, 30 percent can discuss simple subjects only, while 2 percent cannot speak at all (as evaluated by students themselves). The majority of principals (86 percent) and teachers (78 percent) stated that bilingual education had resulted in better Latvian language skills among students. *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, pp. 25, 39.

¹⁴⁴ For example, 51 percent of teachers and more than half of minority school principals believe that students' knowledge in specific subject areas decreases as a result of bilingual teaching; 42 percent of teachers and 54 percent of principals concluded that the understanding of issues discussed by teachers decreases; and around one third of teachers and principals were concerned with a decrease in students' attention and interest in subjects. *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁵ B. Zelčermans and N. Rogāleja, "Minority Education Policies in Latvia: Who Determines Them and How?", in *On the Way to Social Cohesion and Welfare Education in Latvia, Report 2000*, SFL, Riga, 2001, pp. 90–91.

Ministry of Education and Science, there has been no decrease in the level of knowledge of students in minority schools.¹⁴⁶

Thus, though the Ministry of Education and Science claims that the majority of minority secondary schools are prepared for the transition to Latvian in 2004, it is an abiding concern that many are not.¹⁴⁷ There have been some initiatives to determine the level of demand for education in the mother tongue among parents, and to influence State policy accordingly.¹⁴⁸ Experts have also suggested extending the deadline for the transition, stressing the need for the State to invest more resources in the implementation of education reform.¹⁴⁹ It has also been recommended that the switch to Latvian should be made only in schools which are demonstrably ready for it.¹⁵⁰

The main actors currently providing free in-service training for bilingual teachers and elaborating teaching materials are the NPLLT and the SFL (with foreign funds mostly).¹⁵¹ Some of the projects supported by the SIF in November 2001 will also be analysed below.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

¹⁴⁷ The Ministry estimates that 60 percent of minority secondary schools are prepared to teach in Latvian as they already teach in two languages; 10 percent already teach in Latvian; 25 to 35 percent already teach three subjects in Latvian (but it is noted that they still have about three years to prepare). E. Papule, "State Measures in Bilingual Education: Characterisation of Minority Education Policy," *Bulletin Tagad*, <<http://www.lvavp.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002). According to a survey, among the 50 schools investigated, it was estimated that 16 percent were ready for the transition, and that 40 percent could manage with some difficulties, while 44 were not ready. See *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, p. 46.

¹⁴⁸ E.g. the widely-attended conferences "For Education in the Mother Tongue" organised in 2000 and 2001 by LASHOR; a follow-up is planned for September 2002. A letter signed by nearly 6,000 persons was also addressed to the Parliament, Government officials and the OSCE in 2001–2002. Information provided by LASHOR, Riga, 2 August 2002; see also <<http://www.lashor.lv>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁴⁹ E. Vēbers, "Reform of Bilingual Education," pp. 77–87; A. Pabriks, E. Vēbers, and R. Āboltiņš, *Overcoming Alienation. Integration of Society*, pp. 133–147.

¹⁵⁰ *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Other initiatives include: bilingual education centres in four cities which inform people about bilingual education and integration issues and offer Latvian language and bilingual education courses with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science; a Teacher Training Support Centre; the Riga Teachers' Education Centre; the Multicultural Education Centre at the University of Latvia; school councils; etc.

NPLLT activities

Since 1997, in response to increasing demand, the NPLLT has provided Latvian language courses for teachers (Latvian as a second language – LSL – courses) in order to meet the level of knowledge required for their job. 15,413 teachers had received Latvian language training by 2001. The annual NPLLT evaluation surveys indicate that the LSL course is positively evaluated by participants.¹⁵² Courses on bilingual methodologies were also launched in October 2000 and are planned until 2006; approximately 1,500 teachers have already received such training.¹⁵³

The NPLLT has developed teaching materials in several areas: LSL teaching materials for schools (grades 1 to 9); methodological teaching literature for teachers and different professional groups; and LSL teaching materials for a broader audience. In 2001, the book “Bilingual Education – A Handbook for Teachers” was published.¹⁵⁴ In 2002, slides for the bilingual teaching of history, biology and geography in the seventh and eighth grades were being prepared.¹⁵⁵

However, the main burden for implementing bilingual education appears to be on teachers themselves. Often, they do not have enough time or technical and material resources to develop their own methodologies and teaching aids, even when they have the knowledge to do so.¹⁵⁶ The weakest point in the training of bilingual teachers is the lack of a unified methodology for bilingual education.¹⁵⁷

An independent evaluation of the NPLLT’s activities concluded that they have played a major role in establishing a dialogue with minorities and in involving

¹⁵² See <<http://www.lvavp.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁵³ Interview with the NPLLT Project Coordinator for bilingual education, Riga, 28 March 2002.

¹⁵⁴ It is available free of charge to teachers attending training courses on bilingual education; others can buy it. I. Ieviņa and S. Eisaka, “Implementation of Bilingual Education: The Contribution of the NPLLT,” *Bulletin Tagad* 2002, <<http://www.lvavp.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁵⁵ Interview with the NPLLT Project Coordinator for bilingual education, Riga, 28 March 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with the NPLLT Project Coordinator for bilingual education, Riga, 28 March 2002.

¹⁵⁷ “Many teachers suppose that we will offer them certain work methods for their classes. But we do not have a united system of methods for bilingual education. We can only offer possible solutions.” I. Ieviņa, “A teacher in bilingual education,” 2001.

them in bilingual education reform.¹⁵⁸ Still, the NPLLT is perceived by some minority NGOs as a tool for the State's assimilatory policies in the field of education.¹⁵⁹ The future of such initiatives after the NPLLT ceases to exist (in 2006) will have to be ascertained.

Project "Open School" of the SFL

The project "Open school" was started by the SFL in 1999 and was due to last until 2003. Its aim is to support the creation of an educational system that fosters the ethnic integration of society by developing common values and goals, promoting tolerance of diversity, and encouraging cooperation between Latvian and non-Latvian speakers. It consists mainly of the implementation of four models of bilingual education in pilot schools.¹⁶⁰ An evaluation of the project carried out in 2000 concluded that it was positively received by its beneficiaries; recommendations for further improvement were also made.¹⁶¹

SIF-supported projects

Several projects supported by the SIF in November 2001 are connected with the transition to instruction in Latvian. Many represent the continuation of projects realised before the adoption of the Integration Programme. The Ministry of Education and Science as well as minority schools are the main implementing authorities.

As an example, LVL 2,160 (€3,770) was allocated to the Ministry of Education and Science and the NPLLT for the project "Involvement of National Minority Teachers and Parents in the Integration Process" which aims to facilitate the understanding of bilingual education reform by teachers and parents. Altogether, eight seminars for parents and teachers were held in the cities of Riga, Daugavpils and Liepāja. These showed that parents had very little information about the

¹⁵⁸ A. Pabriks, *The National Programme for Latvian Language Training. Promotion of the Integration of Society 1996–2000*. Impact Report, pp. 15–18.

¹⁵⁹ I. Pimenov, "Who is politicising school reform?," *Bizness & Baltia*, 19 November 2001 (in Russian).

¹⁶⁰ The project involves 20 Russian schools, 17 Latvian schools (with minority children), 14 kindergartens and seven pedagogical universities. Other activities include: conferences and seminars on bilingual education, the development of bilingual education materials, summer camps for teachers, integration camps and cooperation between schools, an information campaign, etc. Information materials prepared by the coordinators of the SFL "Open School" Project; interview with the Project Coordinator, Riga, 25 March 2002.

¹⁶¹ E. Nadirova and E. M. Stallman, *An Evaluation of Implementation. "Open School" Project. The Soros Foundation – Latvia*. Teachers College, Columbia University, Spring 2000, <http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/Open_school.pdf>, (accessed 13 April 2002).

reform and a poor understanding of bilingual education; teachers were better informed. It was stressed that more information about bilingual education was needed.¹⁶² Accordingly, 40 more seminars are planned.¹⁶³

Collaboration between schools

Several activities promoting collaboration between minority and Latvian schools – either between teachers or between students – have been realised, primarily by the NPLLT and the SFL.¹⁶⁴ These aim to promote cross-cultural communication, to increase students' knowledge of other cultures, to increase proficiency in Latvian of students and teachers, to increase their interest in Latvia, and to promote the social participation of students.

NPLLT activities

Since 1998, the NPLLT has been organising informal language training projects such as integration camps, youth clubs, and cooperation between schools.¹⁶⁵ The State contributed for the first time in 2001. About 1,000 students and teachers have benefited from these initiatives. NPLLT experts have evaluated almost all of the projects in progress and have concluded that the integration camps have been useful in promoting increased interaction between different cultures as well as Latvian language practice.¹⁶⁶ However, some criticisms have been expressed regarding the unclear, unrealistic and unmanageable goals of the camps. Independent experts also positively evaluated the camps, noting an increase of both minority and ethnic Latvian children's awareness of each other's cultures and better communication skills; they also concluded that the NPLLT had contributed to increasing the readiness of Latvian schools to collaborate with

¹⁶² Interview with the NPLLT Project Coordinator for Bilingual Education, Riga, 28 March 2002.

¹⁶³ Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

¹⁶⁴ The SFL also organises integration camps for students and for teachers and is implementing a project to publish a magazine (*Tilts*) through joint efforts of ethnic Latvian and minority children.

¹⁶⁵ In 2001, the NPLLT allocated funding to 14 camps, 12 clubs and nine school collaboration projects. Each camp received LVL 1,700 (€2,967), each youth club – LVL 700 (€1,222), and each school cooperation project – LVL 800 (€1,396) from the State. 80 percent of the funding comes from the NPLLT, the rest from other sources, such as municipalities, parents, etc. The data on the share of State funding in 2001 was not available.

¹⁶⁶ S. Vigule, J. Sniķeris, S. Kucina *et al.*, *Evaluative reports of integration camps*. Evaluation materials prepared by experts of the NPLLT, Riga, 2001.

minority schools.¹⁶⁷ These projects will continue to receive support from the NPLLT in 2002, which has already received Phare funding for the organisation of 15 camps.¹⁶⁸

SIF-supported projects

The SIF has put an emphasis in the 2002 tender themes on “exchange and collaboration between students” (see Section 2.4). In June 2002, six projects in this area were approved, and additional projects are expected to be approved in the second tender.

Given that the SIF has only recently begun functioning, and given its broad overall objectives and limited funds, its initiatives can be considered as only partly complementary to other measures in the area of education reform. Nevertheless, its activities to date have served to disseminate information about bilingual education and to promote collaboration between schools. Additional activity in this area seems warranted.

From the viewpoint of social integration, it is extremely important that the State promote more effective participation from minorities in the further planning and implementation of education reform, taking into consideration the capacity and demands of schools and parents. There is also a strong need to invest more resources in the training of teachers as well as in policy monitoring.

3.2.2 Employment

The Integration Programme focuses on Latvian language training as a means of promoting employment, since poor language skills are considered an obstacle to finding a job for non-Latvian speakers. Initiatives to promote employment for the whole population were implemented by the Government before the adoption of the Integration Programme. Latvian language training has also been provided by the NPLLT. However, there seems to be a greater demand for Latvian language training than can currently be met due to the shortage of qualified teachers and funds.

¹⁶⁷ I. Apine, L. Dribins, A. Jansons, *et al.*, *Etnopolitika Latvijā (Ethnopolitics in Latvia)*, Elpa, Riga, 2001, pp. 12–13.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with the NPLLT Director, in “*Neformālie latviešu valodas apguves projekti*” (Informal Latvian Language Training Projects), *Izglītība un Kultūra (Education and Culture)*, 21 December 2001, p. 11.

The Integration Programme states the need to promote employment as one of its objectives in the chapter on “Social and Regional Integration of Society.”¹⁶⁹ It identifies insufficient proficiency in the Latvian language and a low level of education as hindering the competitiveness of unemployed non-Latvians (understood as non-ethnic Latvians) in the labour market.¹⁷⁰ It also notes that many people are not able to take advantage of possibilities to learn the Latvian language because of insufficient financial means.¹⁷¹ Indeed, studies show that Latvian language proficiency is lower among unemployed persons compared to other population groups. Many unemployed persons, especially in the Latgale region and in Riga, do not possess a State language proficiency certificate and their knowledge of Latvian is often weak.¹⁷² This clearly constitutes an obstacle to finding a job, including through the State Employment Service (SES), as in certain cases (job proposals) require that applicants possess such a certificate or a certain level of proficiency in the Latvian language.¹⁷³

The Integration Programme does not address issues of ethnic discrimination in employment and there is also a lack of information about such cases. Some problems with the legal framework have been highlighted. Thus, the new Labour Law does not apply to access to employment in the civil service, where minorities are under-

¹⁶⁹ Integration Programme, p. 44.

¹⁷⁰ Integration Programme, p. 48. Only 43 percent of citizens whose native language is not Latvian and 23 percent of non-citizens would be able to perform a job that requires knowledge of Latvian; 30 percent and 28 percent could do so with difficulty only; 22 percent and 38 percent could not at all because they do not know the language. *Towards a Civil Society 2000/2001*, p. 99.

¹⁷¹ Framework Document, p. 35.

¹⁷² As of October 2001, around 12 percent of the total number of persons registered as unemployed did not possess a document on their Latvian language proficiency. Information provided by the Division of Active Market Measures of the State Employment Service, Riga, 25 October 2001. By self-evaluation, 58 percent of unemployed persons looking for a job and whose native language is not Latvian have the lowest level of Latvian language proficiency, and 9.6 percent do not know Latvian at all. The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences and the NPLLT, *Language. A sociological survey, November 2001 – January 2002*.

¹⁷³ See Regulations on the Proficiency Degree in the State Language Required for the Performance of the Professional and Positional Duties and on the Procedure of Language Proficiency Tests (adopted in 2000), § 1, para. 8, at http://www.riga.lv/minelres/NationalLegislation/Latvia/Latvia_LangRegProficiency_English.htm, (accessed 26 August 2002). The June 2001 amendments to the Administrative Violations Code stipulate fines for employers who hire persons lacking sufficient Latvian language proficiency.

represented.¹⁷⁴ There are also several questionable restrictions on the employment of non-citizens in the private sector, preventing them from working as legal assistants, heads of private detective agencies,¹⁷⁵ aeroplane pilots, and security guards.¹⁷⁶

Some survey data suggest that minorities face disadvantages in the job market. For example, according to a 2000 survey, ten percent of ethnic Latvians but 17 percent of persons of other ethnic origins stated that they were unemployed and did not receive benefits.¹⁷⁷ The share of officially registered unemployed ethnic Latvians decreased from 53.7 percent of all unemployed in 1997 to 49.8 percent in 2000; the share of unemployed persons of minority origin has therefore increased.¹⁷⁸ Minorities report experiencing a greater sense of social and economic insecurity than ethnic Latvians.¹⁷⁹

There is also an imbalance between the share of minorities in the public and private sectors. Minorities are less represented in the public sector and are under-represented in decision-making bodies (see Section 3.4.3).¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, minorities are better represented in private enterprises.¹⁸¹ Minorities are proportionally represented or even over-represented in some State institutions, e.g. in the police, prison administration and several State enterprises (a legacy of the Soviet period).¹⁸²

The efforts of the Government to develop employment opportunities for the whole population were started before the adoption of the Integration Programme. Initiatives

¹⁷⁴ The Civil Service Law does not contain an equality clause, and the Labour Law's anti-discrimination provisions concerning the hiring of civil servants does not apply. State Civil Service Law, 22 September 2000, <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=10944>>, (accessed 23 August 2002); see also *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 287–288.

¹⁷⁵ Law on Detective Activity (1 November 2001), Art. 4, <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26311>>, (accessed 1 October 2002).

¹⁷⁶ *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 288. According to Article 3 of the Law on Firearms and the Special Means for Self-defence, only Latvian citizens have a right to obtain firearms, <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=63056>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁷⁷ R. Rose, *New Baltic Barometer IV: A Survey Study. Studies in Public Policy*, No. 284, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 2000, p. 5; see also *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 288.

¹⁷⁸ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, *Statistical Yearbook of Latvia*, Riga, 2001, p. 58.

¹⁷⁹ See R. Rose, *New Baltic Barometer IV*, pp. 7, 9, 11, 13.

¹⁸⁰ See A. Pabriks, *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia*, LCHRES, SFL, Nordik Publishing House, Riga, 2002, p. 50.

¹⁸¹ According to a 2000 survey, 35 percent of ethnic Latvians and 21 percent of minorities were employed in State budgetary institutions, compared to 29 percent and 37 percent respectively in new private businesses. R. Rose, *New Baltic Barometer IV*, p. 5.

¹⁸² A. Pabriks, *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia*, pp. 26–36.

to promote employment through Latvian language training have been implemented by the NPLLT.

NPLLT activities

Since 1997, approximately 30 percent of NPLLT funds for training have been invested in Latvian language training for adults; overall, 42,630 representatives of various professional and social groups attended courses organised by the NPLLT between 1996 and 2001.¹⁸³ The NPLLT also produces study materials, audio and video materials, study programmes for the radio, television and Internet, etc. Language training for unemployed persons has been organised by the NPLLT with support from Phare 2000 and Phare 2001. Finally, the NPLLT has cooperated with the SES to support language training for persons who are undergoing professional retraining as well as for young people.

Minorities generally evaluate the NPLLT positively; however, the demand for Latvian language training is much greater than the supply. A shortage of qualified teachers is preventing the expansion of NPLLT activities in this area.¹⁸⁴ Thus, statistics show that the number of unemployed persons who had attended NPLLT activities up to the year 2001 (476 persons)¹⁸⁵ represents only a small share of those interested. Currently, at least 10,000 registered unemployed persons do not have a State language proficiency certificate.¹⁸⁶

Possible future projects

The Integration Programme mentions the possibility of developing language training for unemployed minorities. The SEC has offered some Latvian language training but its capacity is weak due to limited funding.¹⁸⁷ Some NGOs and municipalities (e.g. Liepāja City Council) have also offered free Latvian language training.

¹⁸³ <<http://www.lvavp.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁸⁴ Interview with the Director of the NPLLT, Riga, 15 February 2002.

¹⁸⁵ <<http://www.lvavp.lv/eng/frameset.php?PHPSESSID=7eac25821853ca264a5348de81ac4036>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁸⁶ Information provided by the Division of Active Market Measures of the State Employment Service, Riga, 25 October 2001.

¹⁸⁷ In 2001, the SEC submitted the project "Integration of Unemployed Non-Latvians in the Labour Market" to the SIF but it was not approved, mainly due to the large amount of funding required: LVL 70,500 (€123,037). Interview with the Deputy Director of the SIF Secretariat, 28 March 2002.

While demand is likely to remain high,¹⁸⁸ the future of State-supported Latvian language training for adults remains uncertain, especially after 2006 when the work of the NPLLT is due to end. Future projects will largely depend on the Government's priorities. A positive step in this direction was the announcement by the SIF of a project tender for the second half of 2002 to elaborate a model for the organisation of Latvian language training for adults, with a possibility of funding through the SIF.¹⁸⁹ While some experts believe that the way forward is through the expansion of State-funded language training,¹⁹⁰ others think that the best way to promote Latvian language use is by widening language regulation in private sector¹⁹¹ and other means, for example, by promotion of a positive attitude to Latvian language use¹⁹² and strengthening of the Latvian language environment.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ Survey data show that 69 percent of respondents whose native language is not Latvian would like to improve their Latvian skills, and 36 percent of minority representatives would like to attend Latvian courses. The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences and the NPLLT, *Language. A sociological survey, November 2001 – January 2002*.

¹⁸⁹ SIF, Ethnic Integration Programme "Latvian Language Training for Adults," Guidelines for Applicants in the Tender, 2002, pp. 5–6, <http://www.lsif.lv/docs/vl_2/ei_latvval.doc>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁹⁰ A. Pabriks, E. Vēbers, R. Ābolītiņš, *Atsvešinātības pārvarēšana. Sabiedrības integrācija* (Overcoming Alienation. The Integration of Society), Riga, 2001, pp. 133–154; I. Apine, L. Dribins, A. Jansons, *et al.*, *Ethnopolitics in Latvia*, p. 38; I. Indāns and V. Kalniņš, *Sabiedrības integrācijas institucionālās politikas analīze (Institutional Policy Analysis of Social Integration)*, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, 2001.

¹⁹¹ An attempt by the State Language Centre to broaden its authority to regulate language use in the private sector through the elaboration of amendments to the State Language Law stipulating a new list of professions in local governments and private sector has been unsuccessful due to the intervention by the Minister of Foreign Affairs who argued that this would cause a negative international reaction. LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia, 1 January 2002 – 30 June 2002*, p. 3.

¹⁹² For example, the Commission on the State Language established in early 2002 (see Section 3.2) issued a recommendation to officials in the city of Daugavpils (inhabited predominantly by minorities) to consider implementing a campaign to promote Latvian language use; it also recommended moving some governmental institutions to Daugavpils. *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 46, 8 March 2002, p. 4, <<http://racoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive//03182002-19:44:34-4063.html>>, (accessed 30 September 2002).

¹⁹³ I. Kuzmina, "Neliesim ūdeni tukšā mūcā" (Let's not pour water into an empty barrel), *Elections Newspaper*, Appendix to *Lauku Avīze*, No. 8, 13 September 2002, pp. 12–13. Some experts argue that one obstacle to Latvian language use is the fact that many ethnic Latvians speak Russian with minorities.

3.2.3 Housing and other goods and services

There are no provisions concerning equal access to housing or other goods and services in the Integration Programme. Available data do not indicate significant disparities on ethnic grounds in these areas.¹⁹⁴

3.2.4 Healthcare and other forms of social protection

The Integration Programme refers to measures implemented by the Ministry of Welfare in the field of healthcare and social protection.¹⁹⁵ The SIF has also supported several projects for disadvantaged and disabled groups. However, these do not concern minorities specifically.

3.2.5 The criminal justice system

The Integration Programme does not address the issue of equal access to the criminal justice system. In this context, a provision of the Law on the State Language, according to which State, municipal and judicial institutions are obliged to accept written documents from private persons in Latvian only or with an attached notarised translation is considered by human rights experts to be in contradiction with international human rights standards (ECHR, FCNM) in the case of persons who do not know Latvian and cannot afford to pay for notarised translation (e.g. prisoners and persons under investigation).¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ E.g. A. Aasland, *Ethnicity and Poverty in Latvia*, Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, <http://ano.deac.lv/html_e/index_09.htm>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

¹⁹⁵ Integration Programme, pp. 44–50.

¹⁹⁶ G. Feldhune and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 39. The NHRO recently recommended establishing a State institution dealing with this type of translation services and also suggested that State and municipal bodies accept documents regarding violations of the law or civil offences, including requests and applications to the courts, in a foreign language if there are objective reasons why the applicant cannot provide a translation. NHRO, *Topical Human Rights Issues in Latvia in the Second Quarter of 2002*, pp. 13–14.

3.3 Protection from Racially Motivated Violence

Racially motivated violence is not an acute problem in Latvia, and the Integration Programme does not directly address the issue of racially motivated violence. It does, however, reject extremism, intolerance and national hatred,¹⁹⁷ and some activities to promote tolerance have received funding.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, projects of the Integration Programme to promote intercultural communication, such as language camps, collaboration between schools, and cultural activities, are partly aimed also at coping with ethnic stereotypes and intolerance.

There have been no recorded instances of racially motivated crime.¹⁹⁹ Provisions prohibiting incitement and/or propagation of hate speech are included in several laws.²⁰⁰ However, there appear to be some problems in applying existing legislation. Thus, the formulation of Article 78 of the Criminal Code requires the demonstration of an intent to promote national or racial hatred;²⁰¹ this is considered as one reason why very few cases have been proven.²⁰² Law enforcement authorities have also received little training on issues relating to racism, xenophobia or extremism.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ Integration Programme, p. 10.

¹⁹⁸ These include projects implemented by the Museum and Documentation Centre "Jews in Latvia" to address issues of anti-Semitism. Support was also received from the SIF in 2001 in the amount of LVL 2,585 (€4,511). Information provided by the Deputy Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 28 March 2002.

¹⁹⁹ N. Muiznieks, *Extremism in Latvia*, LCHRES, Riga, 2002, pp. 10–11, <<http://www.policy.lv/index.php?id=102443&clang=en>>, (accessed 27 September 2002).

²⁰⁰ See *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 300–301.

²⁰¹ Criminal Code (17 June 1998), Art. 78(1), <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=25829>>, (accessed 28 August 2002).

²⁰² This provision is also in contradiction with Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) to which Latvia is a party. G. Feldhune and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 36. As regards the Criminal Code, ECRI notes that its Article 78 does not contain a provision "explicitly prohibiting acts aimed at degrading the national dignity of a person." ECRI has also expressed concern that, while Article 156 prohibits offending the honour of a person, "this Article does not appear to be suited to cover expressions targeting groups of persons, nor has it ever been tested for offensive behaviour committed on ethnic or national grounds." *2002 ECRI Report*, pp. 7–8.

²⁰³ N. Muiznieks, *Extremism in Latvia*, pp. 10–11.

3.4 Promotion of Minority Rights

The Integration Programme emphasises that integration does not mean either forced assimilation or the limitation of minority rights.²⁰⁴ It also states the aim to promote the “the right of minorities to cultural autonomy and the assurance of the fulfilment of cultural autonomy.”²⁰⁵ However, the focus is on the right of minorities “to preserve their native language and culture” and “to maintain their ethnic identity,” rather than on the need to protect other internationally recognised minority rights, such as the right to use one’s mother tongue in various spheres of life, the right to mass media in the minority language, or the right to participation in public life.

Some Government officials and experts have questioned whether the promotion of certain minority rights would contribute to achieving the goals of the Integration Programme – to promote Latvian language use and overall social cohesion. They also stress that the protection of minority rights is not the primary aim of the Integration Programme, and that one should therefore not analyse minority protection based on this document.²⁰⁶

Not much progress has occurred in the area of minority rights since 2001. No steps have been taken to ratify the FCNM (signed on 11 May 1995) or to adopt the Law on the Rights of National Minorities (drafted in 2000).²⁰⁷ Positive developments can, however, be reported regarding the Latvian proficiency requirements in elections (see Section 3.4.3).

3.4.1 Education

As noted above, one of the proposed measures of the Integration Programme in the area of education is the elaboration and implementation of minority educational programmes (in the context of education reform) in order to promote Latvian language learning and the development of a unified educational system (see Section 3.2.1). At the same time, minority education programmes are viewed also as a means of promoting the preservation of identity among minorities and their integration into Latvian society.²⁰⁸ Yet, while the impact of these programmes on minority identity is uncertain (see below), no projects to specifically protect or promote minority identities in education are proposed in the

²⁰⁴ Integration Programme, p. 88.

²⁰⁵ A purely declarative Law on Unrestricted Development of National and Ethnic Groups of Latvia and the Right to Cultural Autonomy was adopted on 19 March 1991, *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 279–280.

²⁰⁶ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

²⁰⁷ *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 280.

²⁰⁸ Integration Programme, p. 60.

Integration Programme.²⁰⁹ There are few State initiatives to promote the minority identity in education or to increase the interest of ethnic Latvian children in minority cultures and history. There is a need for a greater participation of minorities in developing minority education programmes and for more research on the impact of these programmes on the minority identity and mother tongue knowledge. More efforts are also needed to make the education system “intercultural.”²¹⁰

The State has supported education in the mother tongue for Russians and seven other minority groups. Still, there is concern among civil society representatives about the lack of guarantees in domestic legislation concerning primary and secondary education in the mother tongue. Education reform based on the 1998 Education Law has been criticised by minorities who want State-funded secondary schools with instruction predominantly in the minority language to be maintained beyond 2004.

The legislative framework guaranteeing opportunities for education in minority languages and minority language teaching is not comprehensive.²¹¹ The 1999 General Education Law allows for primary and general secondary programmes to be combined with “minority education programmes, including teaching minority languages and subjects related to the identity of the minority and the integration of the society of Latvia.”²¹² However, according to the 1998 Education Law, on 1 September 2004, teaching will be only in the Latvian language in all tenth grades of State and municipal general education institutions and in the first year classes of State and municipal vocational education institutions.²¹³ According to the same law, a minority language can be used as the language of instruction in private schools and in State and municipal schools which are implementing minority education programmes.²¹⁴ However, State funding may only be allocated to private schools where State-accredited education programmes in the State language are being implemented.²¹⁵

²⁰⁹ In 2001, the SIF allocated LVL 1,500 (€2,618) to the project “National Minority Children in Latvian Language Schools” initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science. However, this project does not seek to promote the identity of minority children; rather, its goals are to ascertain the number of minority children studying in Latvian-language schools (in grades 1 to 3), and to develop methodological recommendations for teaching in linguistically heterogeneous classes. SIF materials, Riga, 2002.

²¹⁰ Integration Programme, p. 61.

²¹¹ For a more detailed analysis, see *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 289–290.

²¹² General Education Law (11 June 1999), Art. 30(5) and Art. 42(2), <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

²¹³ 1998 Education Law, Art. 9(3).

²¹⁴ 1998 Education Law, Art. 9(2).

²¹⁵ 1998 Education Law, Art. 59(2). The Education Law also does not require local governments to establish or maintain minority schools/classes on minority parents’ request.

The 1998 Education Law also does not require local governments to establish or maintain minority schools/classes on the request of minority parents.

Surveys and observations show that many minority representatives are concerned that education reform and bilingual education may have a negative impact on the ethnic identity of students as well as their language skills in the mother tongue.²¹⁶ There is a lack of research to determine the role of minority education programmes in the preservation and development of the ethnic and cultural identity of minority students.²¹⁷

Again, State-funded minority schools can elaborate their own educational models at the primary level, according to State standards. However, the fact that only the Ministry of Education and Science is authorised to determine the subjects within minority education programmes to be taught in the State language has been criticised.²¹⁸ Several (predominantly non-Russian) minority schools have indeed elaborated such models which promote the ethnic identity of students.²¹⁹ The Association for the Support of Russian Language Schools in Latvia (LASHOR) stresses the importance of education in the mother tongue for the child's intellectual development and has elaborated an alternative minority education programme for minority primary and secondary schools.²²⁰ Another NGO, the Latvian Association of the Teachers of Russian Language and Literature, has asserted that more attention should be paid to the teaching of Russian as a mother tongue.²²¹ Many civil society representatives believe that greater and more effective participation of parents, schools

²¹⁶ According to one study, around one-third of teachers and almost half of school principals think that students' Russian language skills decrease as a result of bilingual teaching; many respondents are also concerned about a possible negative impact of education reform on the development of Russian culture. See *Analysis of the Implementation of Bilingual Education*, p. 56.

²¹⁷ Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

²¹⁸ See *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 289.

²¹⁹ These are Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, and Belarussian schools, and, rarely, Russian schools. Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

²²⁰ See the programmes at <www.lashor.lv>, (accessed 27 September 2002).

²²¹ There is an opinion that the bilingual education models proposed by the Ministry of Education and Science promote the marginalisation of Latvian and minority students because students are not familiar with both the Latvian and the Russian culture. Observations show that students' knowledge of Russian as the mother tongue is insufficient. E. Chuyanova, "There is not enough bravery of the state for the action," *Vesti Sevodnya*, 10 November 2001 (in Russian).

and civil society in general is necessary to design effective minority educational programmes, at both the primary and secondary levels.²²²

A positive step in this direction was the establishment in March 2001 of an Advisory Council on Education Issues at the Ministry of Education and Science. In early 2002, based on consultations with the Council, the Ministry of Education and Science started to elaborate minority education programmes for secondary schools as well. These programmes will define the proportions for use of Latvian and minority languages, and are to be implemented in 2004, once minority schools have switched to Latvian. As of August 2002, information on these programmes was not yet available to the broader public.²²³ Three minority NGOs will also organise a public debate on expected changes in the system of secondary education for parents, with the support of the Baltic-American Partnership Programme.²²⁴ Despite the initiation of dialogue, some minority representatives in the Advisory Council are concerned that their participation is rather formal and that predominantly persons who already support the State's education policy were recruited (representatives of State institutions, municipalities and minority schools).²²⁵ There is also a concern that the work of the Advisory Council is not transparent enough.²²⁶

One of the directions in which further action has been requested is the promotion of "intercultural education" not only for minorities but in the general education system.

²²² Interviews with: the Director of the SFL Programme "Changes in Education", Riga, 28 March 2002; and a Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Riga, 4 April 2002. European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy 1999–2004, *Draft Report on the State of Enlargement Negotiations*, p. 13.

²²³ A model for a minority secondary education programme is currently being developed by a working group of the Ministry of Education, including 14 minority school directors. The main issue is the proportion of teaching in Latvian and in the minority languages. It was discussed with the directors of minority schools in eight regional conferences in April 2002. At present, it is foreseen that 30 percent of study time could be taught in the minority language (not including the teaching of the minority language). The working group has also recommended that the school environment be bilingual and that it be allowed that explanations be given to students in their native language. Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 23 April 2002.

²²⁴ Interview with the Director of LASHOR, Riga, 16 July 2002.

²²⁵ Interviews with: the Director of LASHOR, Riga, 28 March 2002; and the Director of the Latvian Association of the Teachers of Russian Language and Literature, Riga, 30 July 2002.

²²⁶ Observations at the conference "The Switch to a United Education System in Latvia," organised by Liepāja Secondary School No. 8 and the Centre for Social and National Integration on 12 April 2002.

Already around half of students in Latvian schools study Russian as a foreign language.²²⁷ A few initiatives have been supported by the State to increase the awareness and interest of ethnic Latvian children regarding minority cultures and history but more efforts are needed. For example, a textbook on the “History of Ethnic Relations in Latvia” was distributed to all schools; there is no information on how many students use it nor on the opinions of minority representatives.²²⁸ The SFL has recommended implementing bilingual and multicultural education also in Latvian language schools.²²⁹

3.4.2 Language

The section devoted to “Language” states the goal to “establish a stable society which shares a common official language – the Latvian language – and to ensure opportunities to use the language in the public sphere throughout the country while at the same time supporting minorities in the cultivation of their languages in harmony with the law.”²³⁰ The main directions for action are the need to improve legal guarantees for the use of languages and to improve “legislation in the field of language and the right to cultural autonomy of minorities.”²³¹ Yet, apart from these rather vague statements, no concrete implementation mechanisms are proposed.

²²⁷ Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

²²⁸ L. Dribins (ed.), *Etnisko attiecību vēsture Latvijā (The History of Ethnic Relations in Latvia), Methodological Literature for History Teachers*, Riga, Puse Plus, 2000. Interview with the Director of the Society Integration Section of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Riga, 5 August 2002.

²²⁹ SFL, *A Passport to Social Cohesion and Economic Prosperity. Report on Education in Latvia*, Executive Summary, Riga, 2001, p. 5.

²³⁰ Integration Programme, p. 73.

²³¹ The Integration Programme states (p. 73) that: “Legislation should ensure opportunities for use of the state language in the public sphere [...] while at the same time guaranteeing the opportunities for minorities to cultivate their language in harmony with the law [...]. Legislation on language should help to establish a balance [...] between the state and minority languages. If a balance is found, the feeling of insecurity will disappear and mutual distrust will decrease.”

Latvian language legislation and recent initiatives aim to strengthen the position of Latvian as the State language.²³² Human rights experts as well as the European Commission have noted the disadvantages derived from the provisions of the 1999 State Language Law for concrete segments of the population. Thus, the European Commission has noted that “[...] the requirement to submit documents to [the] state and municipalities in the state language only or else accompanied by a notarised translation has been reported to pose certain difficulties for some groups of the population [...] given the cost of official translations.”²³³ It has called for a less restrictive application of the State Language Law.²³⁴ The European Commission has also called for revisions to the Administrative Violations Code which imposes fines for violating the State Language Law in various circumstances, for example in the case of “disrespect towards the state language.”²³⁵

The EU has not suggested in its Regular Reports the adoption of provisions to allow for the use of minority languages at the State or local level, although there are currently no such provisions. In practice, however, Russian is often used in contacts with public officials.²³⁶ Some municipalities (e.g. Daugavpils) have hired a translator with their own resources.

Another problem connected with the State Language Law concerns the spelling of personal names and surnames in identification documents which must be done according to the rules of Latvian grammar, while the original spelling in Latin transliteration can be added

²³² Article 4 of the Constitution, amended on 15 October 1998, states that “the Latvian language is the State language in the Republic of Latvia.” Article 5 of the State Language Law states that any languages used in Latvia other than Latvian with the exception of the Liv language, are considered as foreign languages. For more on Latvian language legislation, see e.g. *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 283–287; see also Sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4. A recent initiative has been the establishment of a Commission on the State Language on 16 January 2002, following an initiative of the Latvian President.

²³³ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 26. It also states (p. 25) that “[...] the Language Law (of 1999) and the implementing regulations are essentially in conformity with Latvia’s international obligations [...]. However, some of the provisions are worded in such a way that they could give rise to different interpretations.”

²³⁴ *2001 Regular Report*, p. 25.

²³⁵ *2001 Regular Report*, pp. 25–27.

²³⁶ 36 percent of citizens and 42 percent of non-citizens speak Russian only in State institutions. *Towards a Civil Society 2000/2001*, p. 97.

on request.²³⁷ Some experts consider that the “Latvianisation” of personal names and surnames is in contradiction with international human rights standards.²³⁸

To summarise, there has been a general lack of measures to guarantee the use of minority language use in different fields. The status of minority languages in national legislation is currently under discussion in the context of possible ratification of the FCNM.²³⁹ It will be important to provide more guarantees for the protection and promotion of minority languages in order to achieve the Programme’s goals of establishing a balance between the State and minority languages and promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between individuals.

3.4.3 Participation in public life

The approach of the Integration Programme in the chapter on “Civic Participation and Political Integration” is to promote the participation of all inhabitants of Latvia, independently of ethnicity.²⁴⁰ It is argued that the strengthening of civic participation fosters political integration – understood as “bringing together socio-political values, interests and goals of people.”²⁴¹ Many of the objectives of this chapter are also relevant for minorities, for example the objectives to increase political integration and the active participation of residents at all levels of the parliamentary process; to promote dialogue between the individual and the State through information; and to promote the development of and participation in NGOs. An important issue related to the participation in public life of minorities is also addressed: the need to promote naturalisation. However, another important area for achieving the general aim of this

²³⁷ Individuals may have their name in Latin transliteration added in their passport, but on another page. Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 245, 18 June 2002, Riga, para 5, at <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=63930>>, (accessed 1 October 2002).

²³⁸ See the views of experts at <<http://www.pctvl.lv/surnames/index.php?cat=00080&lan=lv>>, (accessed 1 October 2002). There are currently two cases connected with the “Latvianisation” of personal names and surnames registered at the European Court of Human Rights. See *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 54, 31 August 2002, p. 3, <<http://lists.delfi.lv/pipermail/minelres/2002-August/002262.html>>, (accessed 30 September 2002).

²³⁹ Ratification would entail amending several laws or making reservations primarily on the use of minority languages in the mass media, in place names, and in contacts with public administration. However, according to an expert, “it is entirely possible that the eighth Saeima will ratify the [FCNM], while making a number of reservations.” N. Muiznieks, “Social Integration Issues and the Eighth Saeima,” 3 September 2002, <<http://www.policy.lv/index.php?id=102473&lang=en>>, (accessed 27 September 2002).

²⁴⁰ Integration Programme, pp. 14–26.

²⁴¹ Integration Programme, p. 14.

chapter – promoting the participation of minorities in several State institutions and decision-making bodies – has not been addressed in the framework of the Integration Programme or by other means. The promotion of dialogue between minorities specifically and the State has also not been addressed.

The main actor in the area of projects to support naturalisation has been the Naturalisation Board. While its initiatives have succeeded in stemming the decrease in naturalisation rates, more funding for measures to promote naturalisation, including Latvian language training for naturalisation applicants, are needed as the demand for language training remains high.

There is also a need for additional mechanisms to promote dialogue between minorities and the State and increased participation of minorities in public life. Positive initiatives include State support through the SIF for NGOs as well as for initiatives of municipalities to facilitate the participation of minorities, including non-citizens, in local public affairs. There is a need to ensure that these local initiatives are coordinated with the work of bodies implementing the Integration Programme at the national level.

Promotion of naturalisation

The Integration Programme stresses the need to “promote the prestige of citizenship in order to achieve a positive change in the psychological attitude concerning issues related to Latvia’s citizenship and its acquiring through the naturalisation procedure.”²⁴²

The process of naturalisation has been slow.²⁴³ As of 31 December 2001, there were 523,095 non-citizens (22 percent of residents); the monthly average for naturalisation applications in 2001 was 723, down from 891 in 2000, and 1,265 in 1999.²⁴⁴ However, since late 2001, the number of applications has marginally increased, possibly due to some measures to facilitate naturalisation, such as the reduction of the naturalisation fee,²⁴⁵ information campaigns and the organisation of language training. In 2001 the measure allowing secondary school students to combine the centralised Latvian examination at graduation with the language examination required for

²⁴² Integration Programme, pp. 15–16.

²⁴³ See the analysis of requirements for and obstacles to naturalisation in: *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 273–275.

²⁴⁴ LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia in 2001*, p. 17.

²⁴⁵ On 5 June 2001, the naturalisation fee was reduced from LVL 30 (€52) to LVL 20 (€35). It is lower for certain categories of the population: LVL 10 (€17) – for pensioners, partly disabled persons, and students; LVL 3 (€5) for the unemployed, families with more than three children, and those whose income is under the subsistence level. “Politically repressed” persons, first-category disabled, orphans and recipients of State or municipal social care are exempt.

naturalisation was also introduced.²⁴⁶ However, significant obstacles remain, including a sense of alienation from the State, lack of information and insufficient Latvian language skills, especially among middle-aged persons and the older generation. At the same time, there have also been delays in the naturalisation process.²⁴⁷

The main actor in this area has been the Naturalisation Board. Most of its funding to date has come from international donors. The activities of the Naturalisation Board, which have been included in the Integration Programme, have consisted of promoting information about citizenship as well as Latvian language training for non-citizens.

Information

For example, the project “Promotion of Integration through Information and Education” was implemented in 2000 with Phare 1998 support. In November 2001, a Naturalisation Information Campaign was initiated by the OSCE Mission to Latvia, in cooperation with the Naturalisation Board, the UNDP and international donors. USD 275,000 (€297,556) were invested.²⁴⁸ The campaign ended in February 2002. According to an independent evaluation, the Information Campaign together with other measures of the Naturalisation Board to promote naturalisation succeeded in reversing the decrease of naturalisation applications, at least temporarily.²⁴⁹

Latvian language training

In 2000–2002, the Naturalisation Board, in collaboration with the Latvian Folk School (a non-governmental entity) and foreign donors, organised Latvian language training for naturalisation applicants.²⁵⁰ Since May 2002, the Latvian

²⁴⁶ LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia in 2001*, p. 18.

²⁴⁷ The process of naturalisation was suspended in February 2002 due to an investigation into alleged bribery within the Naturalisation Board. Some minority observers claimed that this was part of a deliberate attempt to delay naturalisation. After nearly four months, the process was resumed and about 1,800 persons who had passed the naturalisation test were granted citizenship. *Minority Issues in Latvia*, No. 49, 1 May 2002, p. 3, <<http://racoon.riga.lv/minelres/archive//05022002-20:49:44-27893.html>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

²⁴⁸ LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia in 2001*, p. 18.

²⁴⁹ I. Brands Kehris, “Public Awareness and Promotion Campaign for Latvian Citizenship. Evaluation,” pp. 6–7, <http://www.politika.lv/polit_real/files/lv/campaign_en.pdf>, (accessed 27 September 2002).

²⁵⁰ This initiative was launched as a pilot project in January 2000 by the Naturalisation Board, in cooperation with the US-based NGO Freedom House and the Latvian Folk School. The free courses helped 78 percent of the overall number of participants pass the Latvian language exam. Interview with the Director of the Latvian Folk School, Riga, 11 April 2002.

Folk School has been providing such courses with State funding through the SIF. Approximately 3,100 adults have attended courses for naturalisation applicants over three years.²⁵¹ The main problems that have been identified by participants during evaluations have been lack of time to attend courses and to study, as well as the lack of an environment in which to use Latvian.²⁵²

Additional State (SIF) and municipal financial support for the continuation of these courses has been promised;²⁵³ the project was also included in the “B” category and presented to the SIF in November 2001. However, it was not approved, mainly due to its large budget as well as to the opinion that instruction should not be provided by the same organisation that is testing language knowledge, i.e. the Naturalisation Board.²⁵⁴ In January 2002, therefore, the SIF announced an open competition for language instruction organisations. Altogether LVL 32,000 (€55,846) has been allocated for the instruction of 250 persons without any prior knowledge of Latvian to the level of knowledge required by the Naturalisation Board for passing the naturalisation examination.²⁵⁵ The competition was won by the Latvian Folk School and courses will take place from May to December 2002 for about 250 persons. However, demand is higher than supply.²⁵⁶

The SIF and the Naturalisation Board have prepared a new project for 2002–2006, anticipating an increase in the number of participants from 1,200 in 2001, to 5,000 in 2006.²⁵⁷ From January 2003, the NPLLT will be the implementing institution.

²⁵¹ This is the overall number of participants in courses funded by the Naturalisation Board as well as through the SIF from January 2000 to May 2002. The total amount of foreign and State funding has been LVL 215,520 (€376,126).

²⁵² Summary of questionnaires completed by course attendants, Riga, 2001.

²⁵³ During the project presentation, Prime Minister Andris Bērziņš promised financial assistance through the SIF. Liepāja and Daugavpils municipalities also offered LVL 1,000 (€1,745) each. Interview with the Director of the Latvian Folk School, Riga, 11 April 2002.

²⁵⁴ Interview with the Deputy Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 28 March 2002.

²⁵⁵ The SIF Council reserved LVL 20,000 (€34,904) from its 2001 budget and also received LVL 12,000 (€20,942) from the 2002 State budget. SIF papers, Project Competition Guidelines “Latvian language instruction for persons wanting to naturalise,” Riga, January 2002.

²⁵⁶ Interview with the Director of the Latvian Folk School, Riga, 11 April 2002.

²⁵⁷ Project “Ensuring State Language Training for Persons Wishing to Obtain Latvian Citizenship,” SIF working papers.

However, funding has not yet been secured,²⁵⁸ and sufficient funding from the State is not likely to be forthcoming.²⁵⁹

Promotion of dialogue between the individual and the State

The promotion of dialogue between individuals and the State is a priority of the Integration Programme which emphasises the need for better information about the work of State institutions and local authorities, the substance of Government decisions before they are adopted, and political events, *inter alia*.²⁶⁰ There is no specific focus on the creation of a dialogue with minorities.

At the same time, the lack of a constructive dialogue between minorities and State institutions as well as with political parties representing mostly ethnic Latvians has been identified as an important obstacle to integration. Minority NGOs also point to the difficulty of influencing policies concerning them, especially in the field of education. At the same time, some observers note that minority NGOs do not always have sufficient skills or capacity to influence State policy.²⁶¹

Civil society representatives believe that existing mechanisms to promote dialogue with different ethnic groups at the national level are insufficient.²⁶² For example, the President's Advisory Council on Nationality has not been convened since 1999 and the Department on National Affairs at the Ministry of Justice was closed in 1999. Since 2000, the Department of National Minority Affairs at the Naturalisation Board has been responsible for dealing with minority culture issues and promoting dialogue; however, its capacity in this field is low due to lack of funds and insufficient staff.²⁶³ Officials as well as minority representatives have also called for improved coordination of minority-related policies at the national level, e.g. through the appointment of a

²⁵⁸ A total of LVL 600,000 (€1,047,120) is needed from the State budget. As the SIF cannot provide such funding, a model for the inclusion of subsidies from different sources of funding as well as from the State budget specifically has been worked out.

²⁵⁹ The requirement from the 2003 State budget (LVL 200,000, €349,040) was opposed by the Ministry of Defence which argued that it was not a priority. The SIF emphasises that foreign donor funding is also necessary for the implementation of this project. The solicitation of funds from the EU is also being considered. Interview with the Director of the SIF Secretariat, Riga, 12 August 2002.

²⁶⁰ Integration Programme, pp. 14–15.

²⁶¹ Interviews with: the Director of the SID, Riga, 1 August 2002; and the Director of LASHOR, Riga, 28 March 2002.

²⁶² OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

²⁶³ Interview with a Senior Expert of the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board, Riga, 31 July 2002. See also Section 3.4.5.

Minister of Integration and the establishment of a Department on National Minority Affairs at the Ministry of Justice.²⁶⁴

Minorities continue to be under-represented in State bodies. According to recent data, only eight percent of employees in ten ministries surveyed were minorities (minorities constitute 23.7 percent of Latvian citizens).²⁶⁵ Minorities are also insufficiently and unevenly represented in municipal councils and administration,²⁶⁶ and are under-represented in the judiciary.²⁶⁷ Yet no measures to promote minority representation in the public sphere and in decision-making bodies have been proposed.

Some minority representatives are concerned with the lack of legal guarantees and other mechanisms to promote minority representation.²⁶⁸ An expert has noted that “the lack of parity at State and local government institutions promotes an increased distrust in State institutions among less-represented groups,” and has recommended monitoring representation and potential discrimination as well as encouraging the involvement of minorities in the work of State institutions and informing potential employers and civil servants about discrimination.²⁶⁹

On 9 May 2002, the Saeima (Parliament) abolished the requirement of the highest degree of proficiency in the Latvian language for candidates in parliamentary and municipal elections.²⁷⁰ These amendments were initiated in light of two important

²⁶⁴ OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

²⁶⁵ A. Pabriks, *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia*, pp. 25–26. For example, there are only 5.7 percent of minorities at the Ministry of Education and Science; 14 percent – in the Ministry of Economy; however, the share of minorities at the Ministry of Interior is larger: 28 percent.

²⁶⁶ According to research data, the share of minority representatives is 12.3 percent in city councils, 6 percent in district councils; 11 percent in municipal administration, and 12 percent in district administration. A. Pabriks, *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia*, pp. 15–24.

²⁶⁷ Minority judges made up 7.5 percent of all judges in the 35 courts investigated. A. Pabriks, *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia*, p. 26.

²⁶⁸ *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 297–300. Interviews with: the Director of the Latvian Association of the Teachers of Russian Language and Literature, Riga, 30 July, 2002; and the Project Coordinator of the festival “Golden Ball,” Riga, 7 August 2002.

²⁶⁹ A. Pabriks, *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia*, pp. 25–26.

²⁷⁰ These were contained in the Saeima Election Law, and the Election Laws on City Council, District Council and Parish Council Elections. According to the cancelled provisions of these laws, candidates had to submit proof of proficiency in the state language at the third (highest) level in order to be registered. They will now evaluate their proficiency themselves and cannot be excluded on this basis. LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia, 1 January 2002 – 30 June 2002*.

decisions by international bodies.²⁷¹ However, prior to this measure, on 30 April 2002, several amendments to the Constitution were adopted, strengthening the position of the Latvian language in order to “compensate” for the soon-to-be-enacted amendments to elections laws; it is suggested that the implementation of these amendments may impinge further on the political participation rights of minorities.²⁷²

Several of the projects incorporated into the Integration Programme seek in some way to promote minority participation and dialogue between individuals and the State by providing information about citizenship, human rights, and State policy, conducting research on integration issues, etc. (e.g. projects by the Naturalisation Board, the NPLLT, the SFL). Given that the mechanisms for dialogue between minorities and the State are insufficient, additional measures to promote the political participation of minorities should be considered.

Support to NGOs

The need to support NGOs and to promote participation in NGOs is one of the Integration Programme’s objectives.²⁷³ The chapter on “Culture” also deals with some aspects of support to NGOs, primarily cultural associations. State support for NGOs is evaluated as insufficient at present.²⁷⁴ However, two of the selected themes for the SIF’s

²⁷¹ See the 25 July 2001 ruling of the UN Human Rights Committee concerning Antonina Ignatane, a candidate to the municipal elections in 1997 whose Latvian language proficiency was re-examined; as a result, she was struck off the electoral lists. The text of the decision is at <http://www.un/cases/UNHRC_Ignatane_2001.html>, (accessed 26 August 2002). See also the 9 April 2002 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights regarding Ingrida Podkolzina’s rights to free and genuine elections, <<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/Hudoc2doc2/HFJUD/200208/podkolzina%20-%2046726jv.chb4%2009042002f.doc>>, (accessed 26 August 2002).

²⁷² See LCHRES, *Human Rights in Latvia, 1 January 2002 – 30 June 2002*, p. 6. Art. 18 of the Constitution now stipulates that an elected MP must take an oath in Latvian, swearing “to be loyal to Latvia, to strengthen its sovereignty and the Latvian language as the only official language, to defend Latvia as an independent and democratic State.” Problems could arise if this provision is interpreted in such a way that minority deputies cannot submit proposals to strengthen the status of minority languages. Art. 21 states that “the working language of the Saeima is the Latvian language.” Art. 101 establishes the exclusive right of Latvian citizens to stand for election in local government (this norm will have to be amended when Latvia acceded to the EU to extend voting rights to EU citizens in Latvia; it also places an additional barrier for granting voting rights to non-citizens at the municipal level) and that the working language of local government is Latvian. Art. 104 of the Constitution stipulates the right to receive answers from State and municipal bodies in the State language. It is unclear whether this means that answers can be issued in Latvian only.

²⁷³ Integration Programme, p. 119.

²⁷⁴ *Minority Protection 2001*, pp. 307–308; OSI Roundtable, Riga, June 2002.

2002 project competitions are connected with supporting NGOs.²⁷⁵ There is also a theme of assistance to cultural associations of national minorities and for strengthening their role in the development of minority culture, education and languages. The total budget for the project theme in the project tender organised in the first half of 2002 was LVL 15,000 (€26,178), with a maximum of LVL 1,000 (€1,745) per project.²⁷⁶ As already mentioned, criticism has been expressed by minority representatives who find that the budget for individual NGOs projects is too small.

Initiatives of municipalities in the field of integration

The elaboration and implementation of the Integration Programme has promoted discussions on ethnic issues and initiatives also at the municipal level. The Integration Programme calls for the involvement of local governments and the establishment of social integration councils to “provide opportunities allowing people to participate in social life and to influence decision-making [...]”.²⁷⁷

Municipalities are participating in implementation of the Integration Programme in two main ways:

- A first group of municipalities (typically small ones, e.g. Gulbene²⁷⁸ and Pededze²⁷⁹) is trying to implement the Integration Programme without any revisions, with an emphasis on the involvement of their municipality in SIF project competitions. These municipalities either do not have the necessary resources or do not see the need for their own integration programme.²⁸⁰ Their priority is to determine which of the integration issues mentioned in the Integration Programme are the most important for them, to develop projects in these areas, and to obtain funding from the SIF.
- A second group of municipalities, due to their specific situation, have worked out their own integration programme or are currently working on one, drawing upon parts of the Integration Programme or asking the SIF for financial assistance to

²⁷⁵ One of them is the programme of financial assistance to NGO projects in the area of ethnic integration, based on the assumption of a decrease in foreign funding for NGOs. The project tender for the first half of 2002 ensured an allocation of LVL 10,000 (€17,452), with a maximum of LVL 1,000 (€1,745) per project. SIF working papers.

²⁷⁶ SIF working papers.

²⁷⁷ Integration Programme, p. 123.

²⁷⁸ M. Ilgaža, “Integrācijas darba grupa izstrādās četrus projektus” (The integration work group will work out four projects), *Dzirkstele (Spark)*, 7 October 2000.

²⁷⁹ L. Zara, “Piesaista finansējumu” (Search for Financing), *Aluksnes ziņas (Aluksne News)*, 14 March 2002.

²⁸⁰ Telephone interviews with: a Representative of the Latgale Integration Programme in Rēzekne region and a Representative of Krāslava region, 25 March 2002.

develop a local programme. Big cities and regions dominate in this group (e.g., Latgale region, Zemgale region, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Liepāja, Tukums, Rēzekne, Rēzekne region, Ventspils, Alūksne region, etc.).²⁸¹

Since 1999, integration working groups, councils or committees consisting of representatives from local municipalities, educational institutions, governmental institutions, and NGOs, have also been established in several municipalities.²⁸² As of May 2002, there were 17 such municipal integration councils or working groups.²⁸³ In 2000, Ventspils became the first city to adopt an integration programme, upon an initiative of the head of the Ventspils City Council and the Mayor, and with local funds.²⁸⁴ The programme is to be renewed every three years. An Advisory Board on non-citizen affairs, whose members include non-citizens and newly-naturalised citizens, was formed in Spring 2000 and was granted the status of a local government commission. It can therefore delegate members to other local government commissions.²⁸⁵ It has played an active role in the decision-making process of the municipality. However, a lack of financial and human

²⁸¹ Sometimes, the integration programme of a municipality is part of the development programme of a bigger city or region (e.g. in Latgale, Zemgale and the city of Rēzekne).

²⁸² In some regions or cities, there is a special person responsible for the coordination of integration issues.

²⁸³ Information provided by the Information Centre of the Naturalisation Board, Riga, 31 July 2002. The common aims of these municipal integration bodies are: to facilitate and promote implementation of the Integration Programme; to provide information and suggestions to the mass media, NGOs, local government institutions and to cooperate with them; to take part in informational and educational activities; to conduct public opinion research and to analyse data on integration and naturalisation issues. Statutes of the Society Integration Process Coordinating Council in Rēzekne region; Statutes of the Society Integration Committee of Jelgava; Statutes of the Rēzekne City Integration Promotion Committee.

²⁸⁴ Interview with the Head of the Ventspils Advisory Board on Non-citizen Affairs, Ventspils, 3 August 2002.

²⁸⁵ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2000/2001*, Riga, 2001, pp. 91–92. The main aim of the Advisory Board is to compensate the lack of voting rights of about one third of all adult inhabitants in Ventspils. The Advisory Board works as a consultative office for Ventspils inhabitants – mostly minorities and non-citizens. It also develops and helps implement projects, e.g. the project “Towards a Civil Society” – special courses for high school students and adults in order to get naturalised; it also helped with the “Golden Ball” and “Ventspils Vainags” festivals – a multiethnic festival which took place in November 2001 and was funded by Ventspils City Council in the amount of LVL 3,085 (€5,384); the SIF will be asked to support it in 2003. Interview with the Head of the Ventspils Advisory Board on Non-citizen Affairs, Ventspils, 3 August 2002.

resources, as well as lack of time and experience in elaborating and administering large projects have constituted obstacles to implementation.²⁸⁶

Jelgava and Jūrmala have tried to follow the example of Ventspils by creating non-citizens' advisory councils, but these initiatives are still at an early phase.²⁸⁷ Liepāja has developed its own integration programme and has established a special fund where minority organisations, *inter alia*, can submit projects.²⁸⁸

The SIF has already started to support the elaboration of local integration programmes. One of the themes for the first 2002 SIF project competition was supporting the elaboration of society integration programmes at the municipal level for a total amount of LVL 8,000 (€13,962), or a maximum of LVL 300 to 800 (€524 to 1,396) per project.²⁸⁹ Ten projects were already approved in June 2002 for a total of LVL 11,748 (including co-funding).

Support for activities at the municipal level should be continued and extended on the basis of an evaluation of achievements and areas in need of improvement. There is a need for greater collaboration between municipal bodies and the bodies responsible for implementing the Integration Programme at the national level.

3.4.4 Media

The existence of two information spaces “corresponding to those people who commonly speak Latvian and those who speak Russian” is an important obstacle to integration and is particularly stressed in the Integration Programme.²⁹⁰ Ensuring access to information, the creation of a unified information space as well as the use of new information technologies are the main directions for action in the chapter devoted

²⁸⁶ Interview with the Head of the Ventspils Advisory Board on Non-citizen Affairs, Ventspils, 3 August 2002.

²⁸⁷ A. Šabanovs, “Non-citizens have finally been noticed,” *Chas (The Hour)*, 17 July 2001 (in Russian); J. Novika, “The board on non-citizen affairs: the experience of Ventspils exists only on paper still in Riga,” *Chas (The Hour)*, 13 September 2001 (in Russian).

²⁸⁸ Telephone interview with the Coordinator of the Liepāja Integration Project, 25 March 2002.

²⁸⁹ SIF working materials.

²⁹⁰ Framework Document, p. 46. The problems mentioned include: the fact that a segment of the population is influenced by Russia's media; the sceptical and ironic tone of many materials in several Russian-language newspapers; and often different approaches in Latvian and Russian newspapers, e.g. regarding foreign policy.

to “Information.”²⁹¹ The need for the State to promote information about minority cultural activities in the Latvian language (as well as about Latvian culture in the Russian language) on national television as well as cultural programmes on television and radio devoted to minorities is also highlighted in the chapter on Culture.²⁹²

Accordingly, one of the themes for the 2002 SIF project tenders was the promotion of Latvia as a multicultural State.²⁹³ Projects are to be implemented by public relations companies with the aim of promoting collaboration between Latvian- and minority-language media. Two projects have already received support. In July 2002, the SIF also announced a project tender for television programmes on integration issues with the aim to promote public debate.²⁹⁴

State support to projects encouraging collaboration between Russian- and Latvian-language media should be continued in order to promote discussions and exchanges of ideas between different segments of the population. Discussion of minority issues on public television should also be encouraged. Finally, existing restrictions on the use of minority languages in private electronic media²⁹⁵ should be reviewed, as they are

²⁹¹ Integration Programme, pp. 100–105. It emphasises that “[t]he time devoted to transmissions in Latvian and other languages on the radio should be implemented with flexibility by taking into account the situation with respect to language usage in each particular region.” It also calls for the elaboration of regional integration programmes for the mass media; encouraging press services reflecting a variety of viewpoints; dissemination of information about events uniting society; the promotion of patriotic feelings with the assistance of the mass media; the promotion of joint media projects in different languages, etc.

²⁹² Integration Programme, p. 80.

²⁹³ The overall budget for this theme in the first half of 2002 was LVL 10,000 (€17,452), with a maximum of LVL 5,000 (€8,726) per project. SIF working papers.

²⁹⁴ The overall budget for this theme from the State budget is LVL 16,000 (€27,923). *Integration of Society in Latvia: From Plans to Implementation, June–July 2002* (26), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, p. 2, <<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=2950>>, (accessed 27 August 2002).

²⁹⁵ Latvian legislation does not regulate language use in print media. However, according to the Law on Radio and Television, one of the two public radio and television channels must broadcast only in the State language, while the other can allocate up to 20 percent of its airtime to broadcasts in minority languages, Art. 62(2) and (3). No more than 25 percent of the programming of private entities can be in a foreign language, Art. 19(5). The Law on Radio and Television (24 August 1995) is at <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=36673>>, (accessed 26 August 2002); see also Amendments to the Law on Radio and Television (29 October 1998), § 7, at <<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50688>>, (accessed 26 August 2002); see also *Minority Protection 2001*, p. 293.

considered to be in contradiction with international human rights standards.²⁹⁶

3.4.5 Culture

The Integration Programme devotes a separate chapter to the issue of culture.²⁹⁷ The uneven distribution of cultural values, insufficient development of a common information space, and insufficient development of cultural policy in general have also been stressed as significant problems.²⁹⁸ Although some funding has been allocated to support minority culture, State support in this area is still generally considered insufficient by some experts,²⁹⁹ and additional support for strengthening the capacity of minority NGOs is necessary. There is a need for a comprehensive strategy towards the promotion of minority culture, including improved legislation on the right of minorities to cultural autonomy.³⁰⁰ The Integration Programme thus proposes to articulate the content and scope of cultural rights, increase funding for cultural activities, and enhance cultural dialogue, *inter alia*.³⁰¹

To date, there has been no progress in achieving the Programme's aim to "improve legislation on the rights of minorities to cultural autonomy."³⁰²

Several Government and municipal institutions support minority cultural activities through project tenders or donations. These include: the Ministry of Culture and institutions under its supervision (with State funding) (such as the Cultural Capital Foundation and the National Centre of Folk Art), the Department of National

²⁹⁶ Such as the ECHR, FCNM. See: G. Feldhüne and M. Mits, *Legal analysis of national and European anti-discrimination legislation*, p. 39; L. Raihmans, "Vai katram sava – televizija?" (Should Everybody Have Their Own TV?), *Jaunā Avīze* (New Newspaper), 1 February 2002, p. 7.

²⁹⁷ Integration Programme, pp. 79-99.

²⁹⁸ Framework Document, pp. 38-39.

²⁹⁹ I. Apine, L. Dribins, A. Jansons, *et al.*, *Ethnopolitics in Latvia*, pp. 30–31. LVL 14,500 (€25,305) has been distributed annually from the State budget since 1995 for projects of national cultural societies. Funding has also been allocated since 2000 to the Association of National Cultural Societies (consisting of 20 minority associations). LVL 45,000 (€78,534) was allocated in 2002 from the State budget for the Latvian Roma National Culture Society (compared to LVL 15,000, €26,178, in 2001),

<<http://www.am.gov.lv/en/?id=46&page=804&printer=on>>, (accessed 27 September 2002).

³⁰⁰ "No mechanism was developed to suit the cultural autonomy of the Latvian nation which could widely influence minority cultural life. Non-Latvian participation in culturally related legislation and its implementation has so far been inconsistent." Framework Document, p. 38.

³⁰¹ Integration Programme, p. 79.

³⁰² Integration Programme, p. 79.

Minority Affairs at the Naturalisation Board,³⁰³ as well as minority schools and municipalities. Some NGOs and international organisations (e.g. the SFL) have also supported minority cultural activities. However, the demand for State support for minority cultural activities is increasing and exceeds funding possibilities. In 2001, the Department of National Minority Affairs received funding requests from minority NGOs for a total of LVL 157,277 (€274,480) – eleven times more than the amount of funds earmarked from the State budget and an increase of about 35 percent over the previous year.³⁰⁴ Reportedly, insufficient skills and experience in writing project proposals and poor Latvian language skills also hinder the participation of minority cultural associations and NGOs in project tenders.³⁰⁵

In 2000, the Ministry of Culture elaborated the National Programme “Culture” which states the objectives of supporting the activities of national cultural associations and their collaboration and elaborating a concept for the development of multiculturalism, *inter alia*.³⁰⁶ According to some minority activists, however, minorities have benefited little from the “Culture” programme until now; for example, no minority cultural centres have received State support.³⁰⁷ Some observers also claim that minority culture is not a priority for the Ministry of Culture, and that State institutions which have supported some minority cultural activities believe that the SIF should fund these activities.³⁰⁸

³⁰³ The Department of National Minority Affairs gathers information about minority organisations and collaborates with them; analyses and elaborates minority-related legislation; elaborates and, in collaboration with other State and municipal bodies, implements policies in the sphere of minority integration; identifies the necessary funds for minority organisations; monitors the implementation of domestic and international minority-related legislation, etc. Bylaw of the Department of National Minority Affairs at the Naturalisation Board, Riga, 18 July 2001.

³⁰⁴ LVL 116,117 (€202,647) had been requested in 2000. *2001 Annual Report*, Department of National Minority Affairs at the Naturalisation Board, p. 8 (in Latvian). See also I. Apine, L. Dribins, A. Jansons, *et al.*, *Ethnopolitics in Latvia*, pp. 30–31.

³⁰⁵ For example, only five out of the 28 minority cultural associations and NGOs which participated in a seminar funded by the Baltic American Partnership Programme wrote project proposals and received funding; seven did not write any; others wrote applications (not project proposals) for State funding to the Department of National Minority Affairs only. Six organisations have no computer or Internet access. Information provided by the Lecturer of the seminar, Riga, 8 August 2002.

³⁰⁶ K. Pētersone, National Programme “Culture” 2000–2001, Ministry of Culture, Republic of Latvia (short version), Riga, 2000, p. 28, <<http://www.km.gov.lv/UI/ImageBinary.asp?imageid=306>>, (accessed 27 September 2002) (in Latvian).

³⁰⁷ I. Vinnik, *Minority Cultural Programmes, Theses for Presentation*, 2001.

³⁰⁸ Interview with the Project Coordinator of the festival “Golden Ball,” Riga, 7 August 2002.

Several projects to promote minority cultures and cultural dialogue are listed in the Integration Programme, including projects traditionally implemented by the Ministry of Culture and State institutions under its supervision (see above). A few projects by minority NGOs are also included. However, many of these projects have not been implemented.³⁰⁹

Some projects in the area of minority culture were supported by the SIF in November 2001. Also, a priority theme in the 2002 project tenders was support for minority cultural associations (see Section 2.4). A first group of 15 projects of national cultural associations, schools and cultural establishments was approved in June 2002.

Minority Children and Youth Festival “Zelta Kamoliņš” (Golden Ball)

The youth festival “Zelta Kamoliņš” (Golden Ball) is an example of a successful project in the area of minority culture. It has been organised since 1994 with the participation of about 5,000 different national minority children and young people from all over the country.³¹⁰ This is one of the few projects by minority NGOs to be included in the Integration Programme and has received SIF support twice.³¹¹ The participants – leaders of cultural groups (“collectives”) from schools – tend to positively evaluate the festivals. However, the future of the festival is unclear as neither the Government nor the Ministry of Culture have indicated the intent to fund it; however, some funding was allocated by the SIF in November 2001, and again in June 2002.³¹²

4. EVALUATION

Although the Integration Programme targets society as a whole rather than minorities in particular, it nevertheless states the need to protect minority rights and addresses a number of issues of relevance to minorities such as Latvian language training, bilingual

³⁰⁹ Primarily those submitted by NGOs, either because they not did receive funding through the SIF or other sources, or were not submitted to the SIF project tender.

³¹⁰ Until 2001, these festivals were funded by the SFL, municipalities, the Cultural Capital Foundation and the Department of National Minority Affairs.

³¹¹ At the end of 2001, the SIF approved the project for Jelgava (Zemgale region). The budget of the project was LVL 3,532 (€6,164) and was financed solely by the SIF. About 13 associations (290 participants) took part in the festival in Zemgale in 2002. Feedback on the project submitted to the SIF, 5 April 2002.

³¹² LVL 989 (€1,726), about 50 percent of the budget. SIF working papers.

education, collaboration between schools, naturalisation, promotion of minority cultures, intercultural dialogue, and access to media.

Latvian society generally supports the need for integration and for such a programme, although many people, both from the majority and minority communities, consider social integration problems to be more pressing than ethnic integration. Views on how minorities should integrate, however, still tend to differ between ethnic Latvians and minorities; opinions also vary among ethnic Latvians.

Many representatives of minorities are particularly concerned by the lack of a comprehensive legal framework and other policy measures for the protection and promotion of minority rights. This concern is accentuated by the fact that several minority rights claimed by civil society and minorities (such as greater access to education in the mother tongue, mass media, greater promotion of a dialogue between minorities and the State, public participation of minorities, and the promotion of minority languages) are not addressed or are insufficiently addressed in the Integration Programme. The link between integration policy and minority rights should therefore be strengthened in the future, especially in light of the need to ratify and implement the FCNM, but also in the interest of social cohesion and effective minority participation.

The Government should also seek to further develop social dialogue on integration and ethnic policy within the context of implementation of the Integration Programme. The outcome of these debates should be taken into account when revising and reformulating the priorities of the Integration Programme. In addition, ethnic integration should be prioritised within the framework of the Integration Programme in order to minimise overlap with other governmental initiatives to resolve social integration problems. Increased governmental and political support for minority integration and the promotion of minority rights are prerequisites for the success of the Integration Programme in the long term.

In general, protracted delays and low levels of financial support from the State have hindered the rapid adoption and implementation of the Integration Programme. As the mechanisms for administering the Programme and for allocating funds have only recently begun to function, it is too early to draw any conclusions about their efficiency. Yet, already, several potential problem areas related to the activities of the SIF and the SID can be noted:

- There is a lack of coordination between different institutions (State bodies, municipalities and NGOs) and a risk of overlap between the work of the SIF and that of other institutions active in the field of integration of society;
- The implementation of the Integration Programme and the integration process have not yet been evaluated and there is no comprehensive information on the various projects being realised;

- The involvement of minorities in implementation has been low thus far. Minority NGOs are under-represented in the SIF Council, and few projects by minority NGOs have been included in the Programme or have received funding from the SIF thus far;
- Despite the establishment of several websites and newsletters, there is a lack of information available to the broader public concerning activities related to implementation of the Integration Programme, especially concerning on-going activities of the Ministry of Justice, SIF activities (except information about project tenders) and various projects. Analysis of integration issues is rarely on the agenda of most Latvian- and Russian-language mass media;
- The composition of the SIF Council has led to concerns within civil society and experts of political interference;
- The SIF's budget has been too small to achieve the objectives of the Programme. Implementation will depend to a large extent on the SIF's administrative capacity to oversee Phare funds starting in 2003 and increased State funding for integration projects, as well as on the capacity of NGOs to manage Phare funding.

The most significant and effective initiatives to date in the field of integration of minorities have been in the field of Latvian language training and promotion of naturalisation. These were launched before the adoption of the Integration Programme and have been funded mostly by foreign donors, including the EU (with some State contribution). In 2002, with limited funding, the SIF sought to increase the participation of civil society and municipalities and provided training to representatives of municipalities, educational and cultural establishments and NGOs through the organisation of project tenders addressing several topical issues in the field of ethnic integration.

While education reform has improved the Latvian language skills of minority students, many minority representatives and parents remain concerned about its impact on the quality of teaching and assert that many secondary schools are not ready for the transition to Latvian in 2004. Despite recent efforts to improve the situation, many teachers still need Latvian language and bilingual methodology training; there is also a lack of adequate study materials, a lack of public information about the reform, and low levels of support from many minority representatives.

There is still a lack of sufficient activity to address several problems identified in the Integration Programme. For example, initiatives to address unemployment through the promotion of Latvian language training have posted modest success, but demand far outstrips supply. No steps have been taken to improve the legal framework in the sphere of cultural autonomy and to clarify minority rights. Programmes on minority

issues in the State media are also needed. There are few State-supported measures either within or beyond the scope of the Integration Programme to promote minority languages.³¹³

Taking into consideration the inconsistent implementation of the Integration Programme, the low level of participation of minorities, and limited financial support by the State, it must be concluded that the role of the Integration Programme in improving minority protection and the integration of minorities in Latvia has thus far been limited.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government

- Strengthen the mechanisms for dialogue between minorities and the State. Consider, *inter alia*, the establishment of a Department on Minority Affairs at the Ministry of Justice, a Minority Culture Department at the Ministry of Culture, and a Minister for Integration; re-establish the President's Advisory Council; promote effective minority participation in the work of these bodies.
- Review the legal framework in the field of minority rights and discrimination and:
 - Ratify the FCNM and take steps to adapt domestic legislation accordingly, including through the easing of language restrictions in the electronic mass media, guaranteeing the use of minority languages in official contacts, and guaranteeing and expanding opportunities for education in the minority language;
 - Adopt a comprehensive Minority Law;
 - Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to comply with the EU Race Equality Directive.
- Support the establishment of a specialised section dealing with discrimination issues at the NHRO.

³¹³ There are no provisions allowing for the use of minority languages in official contacts at the State or local level; minority language use in education is also insufficiently guaranteed in legislation.

- Adopt new priorities on the basis of the results of monitoring, with the involvement of civil society and minorities; prioritise ethnic integration issues. Consider the following priorities and possible themes for project tenders:
 - Training and support to NGOs;
 - Support for municipal initiatives promoting minority participation and integration;
 - Promotion of discussions on integration and minority issues in the media and mutual collaboration between Latvian- and Russian-language media;
 - Expansion of Latvian language training for naturalisation applicants and information campaigns to promote naturalisation;
 - Promotion of the participation of civil society and minorities in public life, especially in decision-making at the national and municipal levels;
 - Promotion of greater representation of minorities in public administration;
 - Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of minority education reform, including on the quality of education and on the minority identity, and promotion of public participation in the reform;
 - Support for Latvian language training for unemployed and socially-excluded persons;
 - Support for projects to promote the minority language, culture and identity;
 - Promotion of multicultural awareness, including awareness among ethnic Latvians of minority rights, languages and cultures.
- Increase support for the training of bilingual teachers and the development of materials for bilingual schools.
- Increase the budget of the SIF.
- Review the composition of the SIF Council to ensure a more effective representation of minorities.
- Support the efforts of the SID to coordinate and monitor implementation of the Integration Programme.

To the Society Integration Department

- Improve coordination between institutions implementing projects in the field of integration; develop general guidelines for the work of implementing bodies.

- Make the implementation of the Integration Programme more transparent by implementing a comprehensive communications strategy in both Latvian and Russian, including the publication of reports on implementation for the mass media and the promotion of public discussions concerning its implementation.
- Revise the priorities of the Programme, taking into consideration the following:
 - Involvement of civil society, minorities and municipalities in the modification of the priorities and organisation of public discussions;
 - Analysis of the measures implemented by various bodies and their efficiency, including in the field of minority rights;
 - Development of an implementation strategy, including a clear division of responsibilities between various State bodies and NGOs involved.
- In collaboration with other bodies dealing with minority issues and with NGOs, promote the revision and adoption of new minority-related legislation.

To the Society Integration Foundation

- Develop a mechanism for evaluating the results of the projects implemented and draw upon lessons learned when selecting new funding priorities.
- Contribute to making implementation of the Integration Programme more transparent by preparing public reports on SIF expenditures and implemented projects.

To the European Commission

- Conduct a critical analysis of the implementation of the Integration Programme and its impact on the situation of minorities, integrating the opinions of civil society representatives and minorities.