

**Report from the Seminar on**  
**"Minority Rights and Mechanisms**  
**Facilitating Government-Minority Dialogue"**

**Riga, Latvia, 16 May 1996**

**Organized by**

**Latvian Center for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies  
National Human Rights Office  
Latvia University Faculty of Law Institute of Human Rights  
Ministry of Justice Section on Nationality Affairs**

**in cooperation with**

**Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, The Netherlands  
Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Sweden**

**The organizers are extremely grateful to the Council of Europe for its support  
under its Confidence Building Measures Programme.**

## Seminar on

# "Minority Rights and Mechanisms Facilitating Government-Minority Dialogue"

Riga, 16 May 1996

### *Program*

- 9:30 Opening: Nils Muižnieks, Director, Latvian Center for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies
- 9:40 Address by President Ulmanis
- 9:50 Address by Max van der Stoep, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

### *Minority Rights and Topical Minority Issues in Latvia*

- 10:00-10:05 Introduction: Ruta Marjaša, Latvia's Representative to the Council of Europe's Standing Commission Against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance
- 10:05-10:20 Minority Rights - An Overview of International Standards: Gudmundur Alfredsson, Raoul Wallenberg Institute
- 10:20-10:35 Minority Rights in the Latvian Legal System: Ineta Ziemele, Director, Institute of Human Rights, Faculty of Law, Latvia University
- 10:35-11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00-11:15 Topical Minority Issues in Latvia - Overview: Raffi Haradžanjan, Chairman, Association of National Cultural Societies
- 11:15-11:30 Topical Minority Issues in Latvia - The Changing Status of the Russian Language: Tatjana Liguta, Chair, Department of Russian Language, Latvia University
- 11:30-11:45 Topical Minority Issues in Latvia - The Changing Status of the Latvian Language: Ina Druviete, Chair, Latvian Language Commission, State Language Center, Head, Section of Sociolinguistics, Latvian Language Institute, Academy of Sciences

- 11:45-12:00 Topical Minority Issues in Latvia - Education: Regina Muraškina, Head of the Teaching Department, Riga Polish Experimental School
- 12:00-13:30 Discussion
- 13:30-14:45 Lunch

*Strengthening Government-Minority Dialogue*

- 14:45-14:50 Introduction: Nils Muižnieks, Director, Latvian Center for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies
- 14:50-15:05 Examples of Government-Minority Dialogue Institutions: Arie Bloed, Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations
- 15:05-15:20 The Presidential Roundtable in Estonia: Priit Järve and Aleksei Semjonov, Roundtable Participants
- 15:20-15:35 The Justice Ministry's Section on Nationality Affairs- Mandate and Options: Ilmars Geige, Director, Section on Nationality Affairs, Ministry of Justice
- 15:35-15:50 The National Human Rights Office and Minority Rights: Kaija Gertnere, Acting Director, National Human Rights Office
- 15:50-16:10 Coffee Break
- 16:10-18:30 Discussion
- 18:30-19:00 Press Conference
- 19:00-21:00 Dinner