CLSF Latvijas Cilvēktiesību komiteja

F.I.D.H. Latvian Human Rights Committee

МФПЧ Латвийский комитет по правам человека

Reg. No. 40008010632, Lacplesa Str. 87, Riga, LV-1011, Latvia. Phone +371 26420477 [www.lhrc.lv](http://www.lhrc.lv) e-mail: lhrc@lhrc.lvr

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To: Tenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues

minorityforum@ohchr.org

Additional contribution to the recommendations of the Forum

We kindly suggest to include the following statements in the recommendations of the forum, in the chapter on participation:

1. In case of a child being born to two persons not possessing any citizenship, the county of residence should provide the child with its citizenship “by default”, without additional procedures.
2. Voting rights in local elections should be given to all permanent residents.
3. The age threshold for allowing to run for municipal elections should not be higher than 19 years.

The underlying approach is based on our experience in Latvia:

Thousands of young people remain stateless. Almost all of them belong to ethnic and linguistic minorities. The main reason is the requirement to submit an application for obtaining Latvian citizenship for a newborn child of two stateless people (including those with the widespread status of “non-citizens of Latvia”).

Statelessness in Latvia means those young people cannot vote even in local elections in the country where they were born. Similar provisions affect many young people in numerous countries which do not apply *ius soli* for citizenship or limit it to exceptional circumstances.

The last proposal is based on the positive example of Latvia, which allows running for local elections since the age of 18.

Yours faithfully,

Aleksandrs Kuzmins, LL.M.

LHRC secretary-executive,

delegate to the Forum