The Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia
June 2022 News Summary

A discussion on children's right to be heard — "Listen to children and young people. They HAVE an opinion!"

On the International Day for Protection of Children, June 1, the Ombudsman in cooperation with the Latvian Children's Welfare Network (LBLT) organised an online discussion on the importance of child participation "Listen to children and young people. They HAVE an opinion!".

The aim of the discussion was to highlight child participation - the right to express their opinion and to be heard. Children's right to be heard is fundamental to ensuring their rights and best interests in any field. Promoting participation helps young people develop conflict resolution skills and connect with their peers and adults.

The discussion was attended by representatives from the Ombudsman's Office and the Latvian Childen's Welfare Network, as well as from the Centre "Dardedze", Cēsis New School, Youth International Programme Agency and the Youth Organisation "Protests".

The information campaign on children's rights has concluded. Ombudsman: Children are not an object of care, but individuals with dignity and rights

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Latvia's accession to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In order to highlight the importance of children's rights, an information campaign throughout June explored various topics related to children's rights, such as access rights, child neglect and out-of-family care. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness of children as fully-fledged members of society, as well as to highlight the role of society in the development and protection of children's rights. Campaign materials are available here.

Ombudsman Juris Jansons: "Children are not an object of care, but rather developing individuals with dignity and human rights. They just need help to exercise their rights, as well as care and protection. Children mirror our society. It is our duty to ensure every child's right to live in a family, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, to grow in a safe environment and to develop their abilities, knowledge and personality."

The "Ready for Life" lectures read by the Ombudsman's Office reached almost 1000 students

In the last academic year, the specialists of the Ombudsman's Office have given 38 guest lectures as part of the school programme "Ready for Life". A total of 911 pupils from different regions of Latvia participated. Students from 9th to 12th grades were educated on topics that can be useful both in everyday situations and in future professional development.

The Ombudsman offered lessons on electoral literacy, during which students learned about the importance of elections in a democratic society. In the course of the legal text literacy class, students got an idea of the laws and regulations, where to look for them and how to apply them to everyday situations, developing their legal literacy. During the sessions on data protection, students learned the basic principles of personal data protection and learned how to protect their data.

Typical discrimination in job advertisements: "Too young to be a ..."

The Ombudsman has observed that, in social media, people often share information about requirements for potential employees in job advertisements. The Ombudsman stresses that there are aspects that must not be mentioned in job advertisements. The Labour Law provides that discrimination on the grounds of age, gender or lack of knowledge of a foreign language is prohibited. It is allowed to indicate the desired gender, age or knowledge of foreign language only in cases where this is a fundamental prerequisite for the performance of the work duties.

Ombudsman Juris Jansons: "Employer! Before placing a vacancy advertisement, make sure that its content does not contradict the law. Let's reduce the stigma together and create an open and accessible working environment for everyone who approaches their chosen profession with enthusiasm, knowledge and abilities."