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11 urgent issues for the Parliament to consider

The Ombudsman sent a letter to the Parliament (Saeima) drawing attention to the lack of the previous Parliament's progress in the field of human rights and good governance. The letter mentions 11 urgent issues that should be taken into account when deciding on the national budget priorities for 2023. In particular, the Ombudsman has highlighted tasks related to social security and health care: children's mental health care, minimum income levels, minimum social security contributions and the early retirement pension system. [Read more about the letter to Saeima on urgent issues to consider.](#)

The State must protect all families; the Ombudsman urges MPs to employ respectful rhetoric

The Ombudsman sent a letter to the Parliament (Saeima) urging the MPs to comply with the judgments of the Constitutional Court and to implement a policy that protects families of same-sex partners. He also asked members of the Parliament not to propagate statements that are untrue, promote intolerance or stigmatise certain representatives of society. Once again, the Ombudsman stresses - judgments of the Constitutional Court and the interpretation of the relevant legal norms provided therein are mandatory for all State and local government institutions (also courts) and officials, as well as for physical and legal persons. Human rights are not something that can be limited depending on the attitude of society. The legislator must be able to take decisions that are not supported by the majority of society, but the adoption of which is necessary to ensure the fundamental rights of every human being and the fulfilment of the international obligations of the country. [Read more about the letter to Saeima on the protection of all families.](#)

Good practice examples are welcome, but accessibility of banks needs to be improved

The Ombudsman has concluded his study "Accessibility of Banking Services". In the study, he found that while examples of good practice do exist, the accessibility of banks for people with physical, sensory, and mental impairments must be improved. For the banking services to be fully accessible, it is necessary to ensure an accessible physical, information and digital environment. The Ombudsman emphasises the need for banks to consult with organisations of people with disabilities. It is important that mobile banking applications, internet banking and other digital tools also meet accessibility requirements. Educating bank staff also plays an important role. [Read more about the study on the accessibility of banks.](#)

Informational material on the risks of trafficking in human beings in the digital environment

The Ombudsman's Office has developed an informational material on the risks of trafficking in human beings in the digital environment. The material summarises the campaign "Ne viss ir zelts, kas spīd!" (Eng.: All That Glitters is Not Gold!). The aim of the campaign is to draw attention to how vulnerable a person can really be, by way of examples. Although the stories are not based on real-life individuals' experiences, they draw on the experience of Latvia and the world in general, in various areas of human trafficking. In the campaign, the Ombudsman paid particular attention to the digital environment, where people often see tempting job offers or dating ads, but are not careful enough, make mistakes and find themselves in terrible, life-threatening situations, or even disappear not to be heard from again. The informational material could be useful to anyone, especially people who use social media and various internet portals to communicate with others, including strangers. [See the informational material here.](#)

The Ombudsman calls for a review of the amount of child maintenance paid by the State

The Ombudsman will request the Prime Minister to review the amount of child maintenance paid by the State by linking it to the minimum wage or by establishing regular indexation. The Maintenance Guarantee Fund is an integral part of the national social security system. Since maintenance is paid out of the State's general budget resources, it is the State's right to determine the amount that shall be paid. The State is not obliged to pay child maintenance to the same extent as it is done by parents, for the maintenance of their children. However, the social security system must be sustainable, effective, and fair. The Ombudsman stresses that, if a child is provided for by only one parent, it would be fair for the State to pay child maintenance in the place of the other parent - in the amount equivalent to minimum maintenance specified by the Cabinet. [Find more information on State-funded child maintenance here.](#)

Changes in customer service working hours in the Ombudsman's Office

Pre-scheduled in-person consultations and document reception in person will be available from Monday until Thursday. On Fridays, the office will be closed for visitors. However, consultations by phone (+ 371 67686768 or + 371 25576154) or email (tiesibsargs@tiesibsargs.lv) will remain available Monday through Friday. These working hours will be in place until the end of the heating season (approx. May).