



July - August 2022 Newsletter

Prime Minister declares readiness to implement supported decision-making

On July 7, in a letter to the Prime Minister, the Ombudsman called for an urgent implementation of supported decision-making for people with mental disabilities – a service where decision-making is facilitated through the help of assistants. Without such a system, many of these people still cannot fully exercise their capacity to act. On August 10, the Ombudsman received a reply from Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš, in which the government confirmed its readiness to implement supported decision-making.

The Ombudsman calls on people to be vigilant when choosing a workplace and be aware of the human trafficking risks

The Ombudsman calls on people to be very careful when choosing a workplace, as trafficking in human beings is as prevalent as ever. Tempting job offers are often hiding unfair conditions and even criminal acts. In 2021, 61 cases of trafficking in human beings were detected in Latvia. Of these, 53 were cases of labour exploitation, in which 49 of the victims were men and 4 were women. 7 women were subjected to sexual exploitation, 1 - to a forced marriage.

The Ombudsman criticises statements by Amnesty International on the situation on the Latvian-Belarusian border ([article available English](#))

On August 9, the Ombudsman sent a letter to the Amnesty International (AI) Director of the Europe Regional Office Nils Muižnieks regarding the organisation's statements on the situation on the Latvian-Belarusian border. According to the Ombudsman, these statements lack factual evidence and do not accurately reflect the situation on the Latvian-Belarusian border in summer 2021 - winter 2022. In his letter, the Ombudsman asked AI to avoid the publication of biased, incorrect and defamatory statements.

Representatives of the Ombudsman's Office visit border control posts in Terehova and Grebņeva ([article available in English](#))

On July 19, Deputy Ombudsman Ineta Piļāne, together with other representatives of the Ombudsman's Office, visited the border control posts in Terehova and Grebņeva. The visit was carried out in response to information received about a growing number of people from Ukraine who are entering Latvia from Russia, with the aim to transit through Latvia to reach other destinations in Europe.

During the visit, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office paid special attention to reducing the risks of trafficking in human beings and made recommendations on improving the availability of information on assistance/aid.

Launch of the new website of the Ombudsman's Office - now more accessible and user-friendly ([article available in English](#))

On July 20, after an extensive period of research and development, the new version of the Ombudsman's Office website www.tiesibsargs.lv was launched. The new website is more accessible to people with disabilities and more user-friendly for every visitor of the website. It was developed in cooperation with accessibility experts and users.

Announcement of the winners of the competition "Let Human Rights Speak!"

In August, the article contest "Let Human Rights Speak!" took place for the first time. It was organised by the Baltic Human Rights Society (platform Cilvektiesibas.info) and the Ombudsman. To be able to submit an article, the contestant had to be a student of an accredited bachelor's, master's or doctoral level law study programme, or a legal practitioner born after 1 January 1990. The Ombudsman's award was received by Valērija Ruta Hartmane who wrote an article "Palliative Care in Latvia in the Context of International and National Obligations".