

News from the Ombudsman's Office

November 2022

[Anti Human Trafficking Campaign: “Ne viss ir zelts, kas spīd!” \(Eng.: “All That Glitters is Not Gold!”\)](#)

In November, the Ombudsman carried out a social media campaign “Ne viss ir zelts, kas spīd!” (Eng.: All That Glitters is Not Gold!) to raise awareness about human trafficking in Latvia. 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 aim of the campaign was to use examples and draw attention to how vulnerable a person can truly be in the digital environment.

[Ombudsman: All Students from Multi-Children Families Should be Able to Apply for the Scholarship “Studēt gods” \(Eng.: Honour to Study\)](#)

The current rules provide that only students from multi-children families who started their studies on or after 1 September 2021 are eligible to apply for the social scholarship “Studēt gods” (Eng: Honour to Study). The Ombudsman has asked the government to ensure the right for students of all study years to apply for the scholarship.

[Ombudsman Calls on Government to Review State Social Benefits](#)

Several of the state social benefits have not been changed for many years. In the Ombudsman's view, the government should act according to the criteria they have set for themselves and review the benefits as a matter of urgency. The Ombudsman has called on the government to set criteria based on socio-economic indicators for determining and reviewing the amount of state social benefits. This is particularly important at a time when the prices of goods and services are rising.

[Sexual Abuse is the Most Common Form of Violence Against Children in Latvia](#)

On 23 November, Latvia marked the Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. Unfortunately, for several years already, the most common form of violence that children in Latvia suffer from has been sexual violence. The Ombudsman stressed that to eliminate sexual abuse against children, they need to be taught about their safety, including in the virtual environment. It is also important to educate parents on child protection, including on ways to protect children from harmful content online. The Ombudsman once again urged parents to install content

filters on the phones, tablets, computers, and other devices used by their children, thereby eliminating their exposure to harmful content.

[Due to the Involvement of the Ombudsman and the Media, the Ministry of Welfare Finds Ways to Accelerate the Procedure for Extending Disability Status](#)

Information in the media signaled that people have trouble receiving an extension to their disability status due to the slow decision-making of the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability. The decisions of the Commission are very important, as without them a person cannot receive disability benefits or other forms of support, which is particularly unacceptable in the current economic circumstances.

Due to the involvement of the Ombudsman and the media, the Ministry of Welfare and the Commission have found a way to accelerate the process. A new temporary procedure has been introduced, which provides for the possibility to extend disability status quicker for those people who have submitted an application requesting an extension.

LEARNING CORNER!

Brochure on Civic Participation “Tavās rokās – pasauli kustināt!” (Eng: It is in Your Hands to Make the World Go Round!)

The Ombudsman’s Office have developed an informative brochure “Tavās rokās – pasauli kustināt!” (Eng: It is in Your Hands to Make the World Go Round) about different forms of civic participation in a user-friendly and understandable way. The informational material contains both theory and examples, helping to understand how each of us can lend our hand for the common good and be an active part of society.

The brochure is available here: <https://www.tiesibsargs.lv/news/tavas-rokas-pasauli-kustinat-tiesibsargs-izglitojosa-materiala-skaidro-kas-ir-pilsoniska-lidzdaliba/>

Video Tutorial on How to Write an Application

The Ombudsman’s Office has published a short video tutorial “Kā rakstīt iesniegumu?” (Eng: How to Write an Application?) to increase the ability of the public to communicate successfully with different types of institutions and organisations. The video will be useful both for those who tend to forget what exactly to write in an official application and for those who are writing it for the first time.

The video with subtitles in Latvian and English is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fimUrOaMzy4>

Find out how to submit an application to the Ombudsman’s Office here:

<https://www.tiesibsargs.lv/en/contacts/application/>