



CITIZENSHIP, MIGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION COMMITTEE



■ Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee.

The Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee has been working with the current name since November 2014. Prior to that, from its establishment in 1994 to April 2012, it was called the Citizenship Law Implementation Committee, and from April 2012 to October 2014 - the Social Cohesion Committee.

All the political parties elected to the 13th Saeima are represented in the Committee. Its Chair is Andrejs Judins (New Unity), the Deputy Chair is Ritvars Jansons (National Alliance "All for Latvia!" – "For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK"), and the Secretary is Armands Krauze (Union of Greens and Farmers).

The main tasks of the Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee include conducting parliamentary scrutiny of the implementation of a unified and coordinated state policy in the fields of social integration (social cohesion) and the diaspora, supervising the implementation of the Citizenship Law, and migration issues.

Within the scope of its competence, the Committee views social cohesion and social integration as relations among members of different ethnic groups or nationalities.

The Committee's activity focuses on creating a social integration governance model and ensuring measures that promote social cohesion on a common basis of all people living in Latvia notwithstanding their ethnicity and self-identification. The common basis is the Latvian language, the feeling of belonging to the State of Latvia and its democratic values, respect for Latvia's unique cultural space, development of a shared social memory, strengthening civic participation. A cohesive society is an essential and integral element of any state and society for it to function as a united system as it allows avoiding conflicts. Social cohesion is the emotional capacity of being united and proud of belonging to Latvia, the capacity of prioritising universal and patriotic values over disputes among separate groups.

OBJECTIVES

1. To facilitate the formation of inter-ethnic cohesion in the society that would form a strong basis for the development and global competitiveness of Latvia as a nation state.
2. To maintain ties with Latvians abroad and facilitate their return.
3. To oversee the implementation of the citizenship and migration policy, as well as the integration of immigrants in Latvian society.

FUNCTIONS

1. To conduct parliamentary scrutiny over social cohesion, citizenship and migration issues, as well as to define policy guidelines in these areas.
2. To propose legislative initiatives based on analysis of the actual social integration process, conclusions of studies, and dialogue between experts and the public at large.
3. To promote dialogue among stakeholders in order to balance their interests with developing a cohesive society and nation state
4. To raise awareness among MPs and society about social cohesion.

While supervising the implementation of a unified and coordinated state policy in the fields of social cohesion, the Committee monitors developments and works on legislative initiatives pertaining to the promotion of ethnic cohesion, scrutiny over improving the implementation and coordination of integration policy. The Committee gathers and analyses the information and results of studies carried out by relevant institutions and prepares and submits proposals aimed at streamlining social cohesion policy.

In order to ensure social cohesion, an important area of the Committee's work is strengthening ties with Latvian expatriates, improving policies concerning the diaspora, and supervising the implementation of measures to foster the diaspora's connection with Latvian culture and identity, economy and science, accessibility of the Latvian language, culture, and traditions to members of the diaspora, promotion of remigration. The Committee cooperates closely with representatives of the World Federation of Free Latvians, the Union of European Latvians and the relevant line ministries.

The Committee conducts parliamentary scrutiny over the implementation of the Citizenship Law and monitors whether the procedures for acquisition and loss

of citizenship comply with statutory provisions. The Committee is responsible for granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia. In the field of migration, the Committee deals with the integration of immigrants in Latvia, as well as the integration capacity of the state, namely, its ability to provide high-quality integration regardless of the number of immigrants. The Committee closely follows the implementation of the asylum policy, especially with regard to the socio-economic integration into Latvian society of refugees and persons with an alternative status.

The work of the Committee involves cooperation with public institutions such as certain line ministries (the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and

Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, etc.), the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, the Society Integration Foundation and, if necessary, with other public institutions. In order to facilitate work in the areas under the Committee's purview, it also holds meetings with international organisations, NGOs, and ethnic minority organisations to discuss topical issues. The Committee also examines and replies to submissions and complaints filed by private entities on matters within the scope of its competence.

The Committee has its own website; it contains the agenda of the Committee, information on matters considered and decisions adopted during Committee meetings, as well as working documents.



■ Pilsonības, migrācijas un sabiedrības saliedētības komisijas sēde.

INTERESTING FACTS

The Citizenship Law and the Rules of Procedure of the Saeima require the Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Committee to consider submissions and independent motions on granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia. Altogether, for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia citizenship has been granted to 175 individuals. The largest number of people were granted Latvian citizenship in 1998, prior to amendments to the Citizenship Law (in 1995 citizenship was granted to 25 individuals, in 1996 – to 30, in 1997 – to 56, in 1998 – to 62, and in 2000 – to 1 individual). Since 1999, the Saeima has granted Latvian citizenship for special meritorious service to 23 individuals on the basis of special laws; these citizens include such distinguished individuals as ballet dancer Māris Liepa, cyclist Pēteris Ugrjumovs, stage director Mihails Gruzdovs, and composer Mariss Jansons, etc. On 27 April 2017, the Saeima granted Latvian citizenship for special meritorious service to the world-renowned ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. The Committee has elaborated regulations to determine the procedure of considering submissions and independent motions on granting citizenship for special meritorious service rendered to Latvia, which are available on the website of the Committee.

CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Convocation	Name	Tenure
5 th Saeima	Jānis Kokins	23.02.1995 – 06.11.1995
6 th Saeima	Andrejs Požarnovs	16.11.1995 – 25.09.1997
	Ilga Kreituse	30.09.1997 – 02.11.1998
7 th Saeima	Jānis Lagzdiņš	12.11.1998 – 18.05.2000
	Anta Rugāte	18.05.2000 – 04.11.2002
8 th Saeima	Anta Rugāte	26.11.2002 – 06.11.2006
9 th Saeima	Pēteris Tabūns	20.11.2006 – 02.11.2010
10 th Saeima	Visvaldis Lācis	08.11.2010 – 17.10.2011
11 th Saeima	Ilmārs Latkovskis	21.10.2011 – 04.11.2014
12 th Saeima	Ilmārs Latkovskis	10.11.2014 – 01.08.2017
	Ritvars Jansons	01.08.2017 – 06.11.2018
13 th Saeima	Andrejs Judins	Since 20.11.2018

CONTACT INFORMATION

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