

LATVIA

[Back to Latvia](#)

LATVIA 2016/2017

The Council of Europe and the UN raised serious concerns about the situation of children with disabilities. Over 247,000 people remained stateless. Individuals continued to be at risk of *refoulement*.

Discrimination

Stateless persons

The number of stateless persons continued to be high – over 247,000 as of July, the latest published government data. Stateless people, the vast majority ethnic Russians, were excluded from enjoying political rights.

Rights of people with disabilities

Following a five-day visit to Latvia in September, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights raised concerns about the situation of persons with disabilities in institutions, in particular that of children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. His comments echoed the concerns of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child which, in March, called for the government to set up comprehensive measures to ensure that inclusive education is given priority over the placement of children with disabilities in specialized institutions.

Refugees and asylum-seekers

The number of asylum applications remained low, with about 350 received during the year.

The European Commission criticized the government for rejecting relocation requests of asylum-seekers from other European countries without providing substantiated reasons or for rejecting requests on unjustified grounds. By the end of the year, Latvia had relocated 148 asylum-seekers under the EU relocation and resettlement scheme. Concerns remained about the non-suspensive effect of appeals against negative decisions under the accelerated asylum procedure. The procedure increases the risk of individuals being returned to countries where they could face serious human rights violations.

In March, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child raised concerns about the detention of asylum-seeking children during the asylum-seeking procedure and called on the government to end the practice.

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16/17