

ROR 2

Right of Reply, ESTONIA, HDIM 2018

WS: Tolerance and non-discrimination, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, and preventive, aggressive nationalism, racism and chauvinism.

14.09.2018 (1 min)

Mr Moderator,

I would like to exercise the right of reply and address the strongly misleading accusations made by the NGO Russian School of Estonia and the Delegation of the Russian Federation concerning Russian language education in Estonia.

Allow me to start by getting some incorrect numbers and percentages, presented here, right:

Firstly, the number of Russian speaking population in Estonia has been continuously decreasing and as of today, accounts for 25% of the total population in Estonia.

Secondly, when speaking of Estonia, it is politically manipulative to refer to massive statelessness, as the number of persons with undetermined citizenship comprises the fraction of only 6 % of the population.

Mr Moderator,

Estonia is one of the few countries where one can receive education in the Russian language at all levels from primary school to university. The language of instruction is regulated only at the levels of the upper secondary education, which is non-compulsory in Estonia.

The transfer to partial instruction in Estonian only concerns the upper secondary level of public schools, where 60% of the curricula has to be taught in Estonian since 2011. In private schools the language of instruction can be determined by the school itself – it can be any language, also at the upper secondary level.

According to the recent OECD's PISA tests, the gap between the Estonian - language and Russian – language schools in Estonia has begun to decrease. This refutes the opinion that partial instruction in the Estonian language impairs learning for the Estonian Russian – speaking students.

Estonian authorities continue to invest considerable attention and resources to enhance the quality of the Estonian language education in Russian schools.

To conclude and illustrate the best the progress made in the field of education in my country, allow me to refer the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr Lamberto Zannier's positive assessment of the progress made in Estonia. Mr Zannier visited Estonia in June and his report to the Permanent Council stated the following.

I quote:

„ ... I took note of the significant progress made in the integration of the Estonian Society during the last two decades, especially among the younger generations.

Positive results have been achieved, particularly in the field of education, where the knowledge of the state language among national minorities has improved, while the preservation of minority identities is ensured through the continued provisions of education in minority languages.“

End of the quote.

Thank you.