

The Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia

May 2022 News Summary

The Ombudsman has concluded the study “Availability of local governments and public administration during the COVID-19 emergency”

In the study “Availability of local governments and public administration during the COVID-19 emergency”, the Ombudsman paid particular attention to whether, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, citizens were able to reach local governments and public authorities and to receive consultations or services. It was concluded that, despite the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the institutions were generally reachable and available to customers. However, the Ombudsman still stresses the need to provide clear and understandable information at all times and in all circumstances.

There is no uniform solution in Latvian local governments regarding the adaptation of housing for people with disabilities

At the end of February, the Ombudsman asked all local governments to provide information on what support is available for people with disabilities for adapting their home to their needs. The Ombudsman has received replies from all Latvian local governments. It was concluded that local governments do not have a uniform solution for adapting housing for people with disabilities — 23 out of 43 local governments have a regulatory framework, 18 do not, and two local governments are currently developing such a regulation.

The Ombudsman points out that Latvian and international legal norms provide that respect for and enforcement of the rights of persons with disabilities is not voluntary for local governments, but rather an obligation.

Mobile network operators respond to the Ombudsman's call to inform children's parents about content filters

In early March, the Ombudsman pointed out the importance of filtering what information is available to children and adolescents. The Ombudsman has received positive and eager responses from the leading mobile network operators in Latvia in relation to informing customers about available content filters, which restrict access to materials that promote cruel behaviour, violence, eroticism, pornography and pose a threat to the mental development of the child. The Ombudsman welcomes the involvement of service providers in ensuring the best interests of the child.