

ESTONIA REVIEW

IV. Other institutional issues related to checks and balances

A. The process for preparing and enacting laws

Framework, policy and use of impact assessments and evidence based policy-making, stakeholders'/public consultations (including consultation of judiciary and other relevant stakeholders on judicial reforms), and transparency and quality of the legislative process both in the preparatory and the parliamentary phase

On 19 July 2023, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and Special Rapporteur on the right to education, expressed grave concern about new legislative amendments severely limiting education in minority languages in Estonia through the mandatory transition of all pre-school and school institutions, including those operating in a minority language or bilingual institutions, to Estonian-language instruction. On 12 December 2022, the Parliament of Estonia adopted the Act on Amendments to the Basic School and Gymnasium Act and Other Acts (Transition to Estonian-Language Education). This Act appears to introduce retrogressive provisions limiting the rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities in education. Experts expressed particular concern about how the new provisions could affect members of the Russian linguistic minority, who make up a significant proportion of the country's population. Despite protests from Russian-speaking parents and children, a number of Russian-language schools have reportedly been closed in recent years. They expressed further concern that, at least in several cases, the views of the Russian-language minority on school reorganization were not taken into consideration, and this practice appears to violate the state obligation of ensuring effective and meaningful participation of minorities in decisions affecting them ([AL EST 1/2023](#)).