

Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia issues historic opinion regarding recognition of same sex partnership

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On 29 October 2018, the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia issued an opinion calling the Ministry of Justice and the Saeima (parliament) of the Republic of Latvia to introduce a framework for the recognition and protection of same-sex families.

The opinion recognises that in the 21st century marriage cannot be seen as the only basis for the formation of a family, as **families take many different forms**, including between partners of the same sex. Furthermore, Ombudsman writes:

“The legislator must be able to make decisions that may not enjoy the support of the majority of society, but the adoption of which is necessary to ensure the fundamental rights of different groups within society and the fulfilment of international obligations of the state.”

This opinion sends **a strong signal to the Ministry of Justice and the Saeima** (parliament) of the Republic of Latvia that same-sex families are also entitled to protection from the state, and marks an important step towards ensuring equality for LGBTI people in Latvia.

Kaspars Zalitis, board member of the [Association of LGBT and their friends Mozaika](#) comments: “This is a historic occasion, as this is first such positive message for the human rights of LGBT people since the establishment of the Ombudsman institution in Latvia. It is **a game-changer**, and we look forward to working together with authorities to ensure the Ombudsman’s recommendations are met”.

- In 2018, Latvia ranked in 40th place, last among EU member states, on ILGA-Europe’s [Rainbow Map](#).
- Earlier this year the Mandate, Ethics and Submissions Committee of the Saeima of Latvia, [rejected a petition](#) for introduction of partnership legislation which would recognise all unmarried couples, including same-sex couples for the second time.
- The Ombudsman’s opinion in Latvian can be found [here](#), and in English [here](#).