

Moscow Appeals to OSCE Over Latvia's 'Genocidal' Language Reforms

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Russia has asked Europe's leading security body to condemn neighboring Latvia's restrictions on foreign-language education in schools.

The measure that [entered](#) into force on April 2 phases in Latvian-language instruction among 10th through 12th graders by 2021 and retains a half-Russian, half-Latvian curriculum among primary schoolchildren. Around one-third of Latvia's population of 1.9 million consider Russian to be their native language, raising fears in the country of a Moscow-backed "information war" that suggests the Baltic state is persecuting its Russian minority.

Related article: [Latvia Worried 'Information War' Will Incite Russian Minorities](#)

"We call on Latvia to comply with its human rights commitments and urge the OSCE [...] to give an objective assessment in this regard," Russia's representative to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Alexander Lukashevich, [said](#) Thursday.

At the OSCE's weekly meeting, Lukashevich said Latvian language reforms violate the rights of minorities and "might lead to increase in ethnic tensions."

"In Latvia itself, there is an outcry branding the ongoing 'reform' of education as a 'linguistic genocide'," he added.

In 2011, nationalist politicians moved to put an end to teaching in Russian, but their initiative failed to collect enough signatures. The following year, Latvian voters rejected a proposal to give the Russian language official status.

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