

RIGHTS OF THE ENTIRETY OF CITIZENS IN LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN LATVIA

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ABSTRACT: *Already since adoption of the Constitution of Latvia – Satversme (1922) several mechanisms were secured therein that set forth the way how the electors may participate in the legislative process. One of the principal mechanisms secured in the constitution as well is the right of legislative initiative granted to the electors. Pursuant to the legal regulation 1/10 of the electors in Latvia may file a completely elaborated draft law with the parliament, the Saeima. The Saeima must discuss such draft law at the following session and in the event the parliament not adopting such or adopting with amendments to contents the draft law shall be delivered for deciding in a referendum. Similarly, also the most essential sections of the Satversme that set forth the conceptual basis of the country (Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 77 of the constitution) may be amended only by the nation in the referendum.*

In due course of time, by the democracy developing, the possibilities of electors to participate in legislative process have increased, because new mechanisms have been introduced how the electors may get involved in the work of the parliament. Latvia joining the European Union has also expanded the range of issues that should be decided by national vote in relation to the EU issues.

Though legal acts do not expressis verbis set forth the issues regarding which the electors are not allowed to initiate draft laws, the Constitutional Law Commission and the competent governmental institutions have concluded that such rights are not entirely absolute: the draft law fled by the electors as well cannot be aimed against the values and general legal principles of the country. A theory has developed in the constitutional law science regarding the so-called non-amendable core of the Satversme: the values of the Latvian state which cannot be amended.

KEY WORDS: *Constitution of Latvia, citizens, legislative process, the national referendum.*

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