





DELNA MEETS WITH ACTIVE CITIZENS IN THE REGIONS

In September, Delna had a busy schedule of regional trips. We conducted seminars and regional workshops in Sigulda, Daugavpils, Liepāja, and Valmiera.

During the anti-corruption seminar in Sigulda, we discussed examples and signs of suspicious activities, behavior, and financial transactions that could indicate possible corruption, together with the seminar participants and the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau.

In the regional workshops in Daugavpils, Liepāja, and Valmiera, we explained various citizen participation tools mentioned in the new Local Government Law – collective submissions, civic councils, participatory budgeting, and public consultations.

Around 60 participants attended the events in September, including active citizens, entrepreneurs, civil society organizations, as well as officials and employees from state and municipal institutions.

Full text available in Latvian.

[Read more](#)



DELNA ON THE ELECTION OF DAIGA MIERIŅA AS THE SPEAKER OF THE SAEIMA

On September 20, 2023, during an extraordinary session of the Saeima, Daiga Mieriņa (ZZS) was elected as the Speaker of the Saeima with 55 votes in favor and 34 votes against, following Gunārs Kūtris (ZZS) failing to gain political support. Prior to the elections, Delna expressed concerns about the confirmation process for the Speaker of the Saeima and urged deputies not to vote for Gunārs Kūtris's candidacy, citing his proposal to involve oligarchs in national economic matters regardless of their criminal records.

Delna also criticized the rushed confirmation process for the Speaker and called for broader

discussions on the qualifications and suitability of candidates for the position. Additionally, Delna voiced concerns about the new Speaker of the Saeima's stance on Aivars Lembergs, who is subject to international sanctions.

Overall, Delna emphasizes the importance of democratic principles and calls for political decisions to involve a broader segment of society. Delna also encourages an assessment of the statements made by deputies G. Kūtris and D. Mieriņa in the media in accordance to the Saeima Deputies' Code of Ethics.

Full text available in Latvian.

[Read more](#)



RIGA MAINTAINS ITS SUPPORT AT THE THRESHOLD OF 20,000 SIGNATURES FOR INITIATING PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

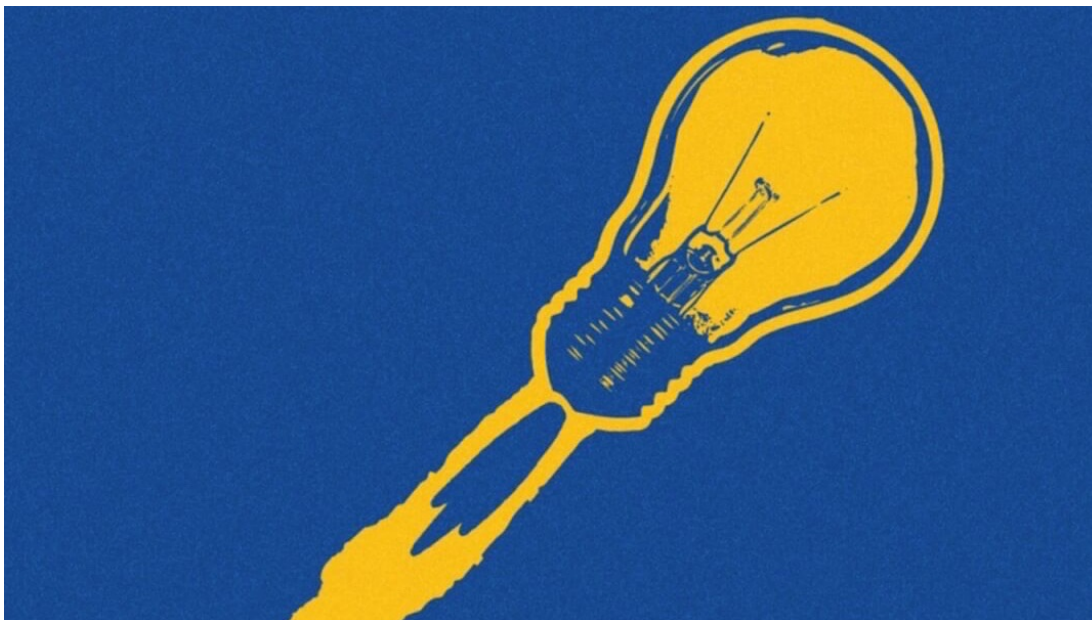
The Riga City Council's regulation, which set the threshold for initiating public discussions at 20,000 resident signatures, was adopted with 33 votes FOR, 12 votes AGAINST, and 1 ABSTENTION.

Delna criticized these amendments and pointed out that the Riga City Council has an incomplete understanding of the essence of public participation. Council members expressed the view that public discussions should only be used for addressing "major issues," but Delna believes this is not supported by the law. Concerns were also raised that the working group responsible for drafting the regulation did not explain what public discussion is and why it is important.

Mayor of Riga, Vilnis Ķirsis, promised to discuss this issue with the Non-Governmental Sector Memorandum Council.

Full text available in Latvian.

[Read more](#)



YOUTH CIVIC PARTICIPATION – SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Delna and the British Council have initiated a project with the aim of increasing youth understanding of civic participation in Latvia. Civic participation forms the foundation of democracy and human rights, but Latvia's indicators are low – 74% of young people express a desire to engage in civic activities, but they do not know how to do that.

The project's goal is to educate youth about civic participation and promote it in schools, local communities, and municipalities. Fourteen schools from across Latvia are participating in the project.

The project includes various activities and will keep updates on Delna's social media platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [website](#).

Full text available in Latvian.

[Read more](#)



HOW TO USE PUBLIC DATA TO DETECT CORRUPTION

What data is available to uncover misconduct and corruption, and where to find it? What are the "red flags," how to locate, verify, and use them in further research?

In September, Delna's researcher and anti-corruption expert Olafs Grigus visited Daugavpils University and Liepaja University to give a lecture on using data to uncover corruption.

He introduced universities staff and students to Delna's experience in anti-corruption work and the tools created so far, which provide data-based information on public procurement, political party financing, declared interests of deputies, and reveal possible "red flags" in the actions of officials and in decisions made.

In October, we will also visit Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences with a similar lecture.

Full text available in Latvian.

[Read more](#)



ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGULATION OF VIRTUAL ASSETS

In 2022, Delna implemented a project titled *"Enhancing Anti-Money Laundering Standards for Cryptocurrencies in Latvia."*

Within the framework of the project, Delna organized several seminars on topics related to cryptocurrencies and virtual assets. Additionally, Delna collaborated with the Ministry of Finance, engaging in consultations and participating in an exchange of experiences during the trip to the Netherlands. The Ministry of Finance informed Delna about ongoing projects related to the regulation of virtual assets.

Upon concluding the project, Delna has prepared recommendations and proposals to be taken into account in the development of new regulations.

Full text available in Latvian.

[Read more](#)

DELNAS COMMENTS IN MEDIA

Defense is financed with a surplus, while science is rationed. How (un) fulfilled are the laws on funding as a percentage of GDP?

Funding for science and higher education has never been allocated in accordance with the amounts stipulated by law in the state budget. Similarly, funding for healthcare is not always provided at the levels specified in regulatory acts.

In Delna's view, the discrepancy between the budget amounts allocated to sectors in the draft law and the legal requirements raises concerns about the Finance Ministry's significant discretion, casts shadows on legality, and undermines confidence in the law. Contradictions in regulatory acts need to be resolved, and the current practice must not persist.

You can read the full article in Latvian at [lsm.lv](#)

Silence – is it golden?

How did Riga end up with restrictions on public discussions that hardly anyone is happy with?

"Bureaucrats have excelled in cunning. In fact, the ability of society to participate using this instrument is being eliminated," says Inese Tauriņa, Director of Delna, describing changes to the Riga City Council's regulations, which will now allow residents to initiate public consultations only if at least 20,000 residents of Riga sign up for it.

You can read the full article in Latvian at [ir.lv](#)

"Delna" called for not supporting deputy Kūtris for the position of the Speaker of the Saeima

Public discussions were sparked by the statements of Gunārs Kūtris, the candidate selected by the ZZS (Union of Greens and Farmers), for the position of the Speaker of the Saeima in the Latvijas Radio broadcast "Krustpunkts" on September 18, 2023. In this interview, he expressed his willingness to engage in discussions with accused and convicted individuals regarding national economic matters.

"In Mr. Kūtris's case, his past experience, on one hand, suggests that he has a very good understanding of how things should work, and his extensive legal knowledge gives him an advantage. However, in his comments during the broadcast, we heard that, even if someone is a suspect, allowances are possible, and concessions could be granted. Mr. Kūtris will likely meet with the U.S. Ambassador to Latvia at some point, and what will they talk about? Will the Speaker of the Saeima say that until the guilt of an accused and convicted person is proven, one should be cautious when looking at individuals on sanctions lists? This sounds very disturbing," explained Inese Tauriņa, Director of Delna.

Delna also sent a letter to Saeima deputies, urging them not to confirm Mr. Kūtris in the position of Speaker of the Saeima.

You can read the full article in Latvian at [lsm.lv](#)

Only half of the donated money from "Ulubele" goes to the welfare of animals and maintaining the shelter.

The largest animal shelter in Latvia "Ulubele" receives significant funding from the Riga and Pierīga municipalities, as well as from donors. However, last year, only half of the received funding was used for the maintenance of animals and the operation of the shelter. The majority of the income is allocated to legal services.

Commenting on the situation, Delna's representative Krista Asmusa pointed out: *"There is a significant lack of clarity regarding the use of funding, and deficiencies in the control process raise questions about the shelter's work and transparency. It seems disproportionate and incomprehensible, considering that it is an animal welfare*

organization. How can one-third of the income obtained be allocated to legal services? Are the people who donate to "Ulubele" informed that the funds go further to another foundation, not to "Ulubele"?"

You can read the full article in Latvian at ism.lv

We invite you to support our work! Every euro you donate to Delna helps in the fight against corruption in Latvia.



Kopā pret korupciju!

If you also want to participate in Delna's work and help reduce corruption in Latvia – we invite you to become a member. As a member of Delna you will join a community of 89 people in Latvia and be part of Transparency International's global anti-corruption network with chapters in more than 100 countries around the world.

DONATE TO DELNA'S WORK

Follow Delna's news on social networks



Delna's electronic newsletter is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway grant program "Active Citizens Fund" and reflects the opinion of Delna.

Iceland  Liechtenstein **Active**

Ercentenstem
Norway

Active
citizens fund

Sabiedrība par atklātību - Delna | Veru iela 6, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1010

This e-mail has been sent to [[EMAIL_TO]], [click here to unsubscribe](#).