

Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak in the EU

Fundamental Rights Implications

Country: Latvia

Contractor's name: Latvian Centre for Human Rights

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1 Measures taken by government/public authorities

On 12 March, the Latvian government adopted an order No.103 On the Declaration of Emergency Situation.¹ State of emergency was declared on 14 March throughout the national territory until 14 April 2020 to restrict the spread of COVID-19 during the validity of emergency situation.

16 March 2020, the Permanent Representation of Latvia to the Council of Europe transmitted *Nota Verbale* to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe formally notifying, “that under Article 15 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Latvia exercises the right of derogation from its obligations under the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the entire territory of Latvia. This includes derogation from certain obligations of Latvia under Articles 8 and 11 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and Article 2 of Protocol No.4 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.”²

The first COVID-19 patient was diagnosed on 2 March. By 24 March, 197 persons in Latvia have been diagnosed with COVID-19 806 persons have been tested, and 2,9% of tests have been found positive.³ Incidence is expected to rise with the return/repatriation of many Latvian nationals from abroad, particularly from affected areas. Passengers initially arriving from virus affected territories and from 12 March from any country are obligated to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Restrictions on freedom of travel

The movement of persons and vehicles through airport, port, railway and road border crossing points at the European Union’s external border, as well as at border crossing points intended for local border traffic, other than freight transport has been prohibited from 17 March 2020. The Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Foreign Affairs or Commander of State Border Guard may lift restrictions on the movement of certain persons and vehicles. This provision shall not apply to employees of transport and passenger transport companies, crews of passenger, cargo or test/maintenance flights/trips, passengers and crew members returning to Latvia or aboard their vessel if there are no symptoms of acute respiratory infection and there has been no contact with persons infected with Covid-19.

Nationals of the Republic of Latvia and foreigners whose permanent residence is the Republic of Latvia shall be authorized to cross the border of the Republic of Latvia through the border crossing points once – only to travel to their place of permanent residence. Nationals and permanent residents of Estonia and Lithuania shall be authorized to cross the border of the Republic of Latvia through the border crossing points referred to once – only to travel to their place of permanent residence.⁴ Repatriation flights and ferries will operate until 30 March.

From 18 March, state funded Corona virus tests are available to all persons who have returned from any country and are within a period of 14 days exhibiting symptoms of sudden fever, cough and shortness of breath. State funded tests are also accessible to contact persons defined by Disease Prevention and Control Centre (*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*) who are in quarantine and have exhibited symptoms of illness during 14 days.⁵ On 24 March, the State Operative Medical Commission (*Valsts*

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¹ Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No.103 On the Declaration of the Emergency Situation (*Rīkojums No 103 Par ārkārtējās situācijas izsludināšanu*), 13 March 2020 with amendments until 19 March 2020 at <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/313191-par-arkartejas-situacijas-izsludinasanu>

² Permanent Representation of the Republic of Latvia to the Council of Europe (2020). *Nota Verbale*. No. EP-3315.

³ Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*) (2020), Data on conducted tests, incidence of COVID-19 during 29 January – 20 March 2020, at <https://arkartassituacija.gov.lv/>

⁴ Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020). Cabinet Order No 13 On the Declaration of Emergency Situation

⁵ Nacionālais medicīniskās palīdzības dienests (2020), Who can receive COVID-19 tests for free. http://www.nmpd.gov.lv/nmpd/preses_relizes/?doc=2178

operatīvā medicīniskā komisija) announced that in the coming days testing will be more targeted and focus on at-risk groups. Covid-19 tests will be performed on all emergency room hospitalised patients with pneumonia, patients with serious acute respiratory infection, hospitalised patients with acute respiratory infections that has appeared in the hospital; emergency services – police, firefighters, border guards, customs officers, etc. with symptoms of acute respiratory infectious diseases, medical personnel involved in patient care, pharmacists and assistant pharmacists, clients of social care institutions (elderly persons with chronic diseases) and homeless shelters, personnel of social care institutions and homeless shelters with symptoms of acute respiratory infectious diseases.⁶ People with mild symptoms staying at home will not be prioritized in order to increase test efficiency and save healthcare resources.⁷

As of 23 March COVID-19 analysis can be submitted in 19 places, including seven cities. There are several ways of submitting analysis –at drive-in tents after appointment and by private vehicles only. Those unable to use drive-in, have to wait for a home visit by specialist,⁸ or if transported to hospital by ambulance service in case of acute illness. In other cases if not included in defined categories, individuals have to seek help in private labs, the cost of such a test is EUR 80.⁹

All those returning to Latvia through repatriation flights/ferries and other modes of transportation are required, upon embarkation, to fill out a special form with personal details and certify they will self-quarantine for two weeks.¹⁰

Besides the regular provisions on sickness leave, persons who returned from abroad and are employed in educational, social care institutions and perform work related to the communication with a client or a patient; persons who take care of a child who was identified as the contact person of those diagnosed with COVID-19 will have their 14 day sick leave fully covered by the state (currently, the first 10 days of sick leave are to be covered by the employer).¹¹

All schools and universities have been closed for the period of state of emergency and distance learning should be provided. Kindergartens and other child care facilities remain open for parents with no possibilities to organise child stay at home, parents are required to submit a weekly application confirming that they (including their child) have not been abroad during the last 14 days.¹² Several facilities have been quarantined since, as parents have also misinformed.

On 24 March, the government announced that sports centres, gyms and sport halls will be shut down completely, and many retail stores will be forced to close at weekends, with exceptions made for goods deemed essential to daily life. Consequently food and homeware stores, garden centres, pharmacies, pet stores and opticians will be allowed to open at weekends but luxury goods stores, clothes stores and other retail outlets will shut. The aim is to reduce the numbers of people coming into contact with each other.¹³

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6 Valsts operatīvā medicīniskā komisijas (2020). COVID-19 Recommendations for lab testing (Rekomendācijas COVID-19 laboratoriskai testēšanai), 23.03. 2020 Protocol, at http://www.vm.gov.lv/images/userfiles/testi_COVID_21_03_2020.pdf

7 LSM (2020). Coronavirus tests to focus on at risk groups from now on, 24 March. <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/health/coronavirus-tests-to-focus-on-at-risk-groups-from-now-on.a353039/>

8 National Health Service (*Nacionālais veselības dienests*) (2020). NVD: Pacientiem arī ārpus Rīgas būs iespēja ar savu auto doties nodot valsts apmaksātas COVID – 19 analīzes, Press release 20 March 2020.

9 LSM.LV (Latvian Public Media) (2020), COVID-19 tests will be also conducted in social care homes, 19 March 2020, at <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/covid-19-testi-tiks-veikti-ari-socialas-aprupes-centros.a352449/>

10 Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No.103 On the Declaration of the Emergency Situation (*Rīkojums No 103 Par ārkārtējās situācijas izsludināšanu*), 4.12.1.1, 13 March 2020 with amendments until 19 March 2020 <https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/aktualitates/regarding-declaration-emergency-situation>

11 Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*), The issuance of the sick-leave certificates for COVID-19 cases (Darbnespējas lapu izsniegšana COVID-19 gadījumā), <https://spkc.gov.lv/lv/aktualitates/get/nid/793>

12 Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No.103 On the Declaration of the Emergency Situation (*Rīkojums No 103 Par ārkārtējās situācijas izsludināšanu*), 13 March 2020 with amendments until 19 March 2020 at <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/313191-par-arkartejas-situacijas-izsludinasanu>

13 LSM.LV (2020). Sports centres , shopping malls to close at weekends, 24 March, at <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/economy/business/sports-centers-shopping-malls-to-close-at-weekends-in-latvia.a353097/>

It is upon municipalities to decide on the availability of meals during the state of emergency. According to the available information, Daugavpils municipality will continue the catering services for children from families at the risk of poverty. The meals are prepared and distributed in 21 places located in different areas of the Daugavpils city.¹⁴

According to the assessment of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) (*Izglītības un Zinātnes ministrija*), 3% or 5 000 school age children have no internet access.¹⁵ On 19 March, the MoES reached an agreement on the purchase¹⁶ and accepting a gift¹⁷ from mobile phone companies/retailers who will supply smart devices to all children in need and provide internet access.¹⁸ Three e-learning platforms are running for distance learning purposes.¹⁹

On 24 March, the State Employment Service reported that it had received notification from fourteen companies (transport, storage, catering, wholesale suppliers, hotels) about mass dismissals in total of 2 884 persons.²⁰

On 19 March, the Latvian government endorsed the Finance Ministry's (*Finanšu ministrija*) bill on measures for overcoming the crisis caused by COVID-19, and its effect on businesses, which encompasses a comprehensive set of state support measures, including benefits that will be paid to COVID-19 affected employees.²¹ A new stand-off benefit (*dīkstāves pabalsts*) will be introduced and paid directly employees who have been stood down as a result of COVID-19. It will be covered by the state, but will not exceed EUR 700. The company will have to submit a request within two months. The bill is to be adopted by the Saeima (parliament). The Minister of Economics (*Ekonomikas ministrija*) estimated that around to 150,000 employees will be eligible for such benefits.²² Employees in 40 branches of economy will be eligible for the benefit.²³ Initially priority will be given to four hardest hit branches of economy with around 73 000 employees.

However, only employees of companies that have paid taxes regularly will be eligible for the benefit. According to the State Revenue Service (*Valsts ieņēmumu dienests*), in 2018 the share of undeclared wages in the commercial sector was 19.6%. Moreover, in the Riga Region it was 37%.²⁴ The branches

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14 Daugavpils city council (2020), Children from needy families and low-income families will be provided with meals (*Bērniem no trūcīgajām un maznodrošinātajām ģimenēm tiks nodrošināta ēdināšana*), Press release, 20 March 2020, <https://www.daugavpils.lv/pasvaldiba/aktualitates/zinas/berniem-no-trucigajam-maznodrosinatajam-un-daudzbernu-gimenum-tiks-nodrosinata-edinasana>

15 Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija*) (2020), MoES together with partners plans to provide 5000 smart devices for Latvian students (*IZM kopā ar partneriem plāno nodrošināt 5000 viedierīču Latvijas skolēniem*), Press release, 19 March 2020, <https://izm.gov.lv/lv/aktualitates/3978-izm-kopar-partneriem-plano-nodrosinat-5000-viediericu-latvijas-skoleniem>

16 4 266 smart devices

17 1 000 smart devices

18 Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No. 117 On the acceptance of equipment and gifts for the provision of a remote learning process during an emergency (*rīkojums Nr.117 "Par iekārtu un dāvinājuma pieņemšanu attālināta mācību procesa nodrošināšanai ārkārtējās situācijas laikā*) <https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2020/56A.3>, 19 March 2020

19 Ministry of Education and Science (*Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija*) (2020), Distance learning, guidelines (*Mācības attālināti, vadlīnijas*), <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/macibas-attalinati>

20 News agency LETA (2020), NVA saņēmusi astoņus kolektīvās atlaišanas paziņojumus par kopumā 699 līdz 724 darbiniekiem, 24 March 2020

21 LSM.LV (2020), Latvian government announces further support measures for business and employees, 19 March 2020, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/economy/business/latvian-government-announces-further-support-measures-for-business-and-employees.a352437/>

22 Delfi.Tv (2020), Up to 150 000 people may be eligible for stand-off benefits; cheating will not be possibly to control, Reirs acknowledges (*Dīkstāves pabalsti varētu pienākties līdz 150 000 cilvēku; krāpšanos izkontrolēt nevarēs, atzīst Reirs*) (interview with Minister of Economics), 20 March 2020.

23 LSM.LV (2020), Dīkstāves pabalstus izmaksās darbiniekiem 40 nozarēs, 24 March, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/ekonomika/dikstaves-pabalstu-izmaksas-darbiniekiem-40-nozares.a353093/>

24 La.lv (2019), State Revenue Service Director Announces that the Situation with Wages in Envelopes is Dramatic, <https://www.la.lv/situacija-ar-aploksnu-alam-ir-dramatiska-vid-generalidirektore-nak-klaja-ar-pazinojumu> 13 May 2020.

of economy that have the highest share of undeclared wages are construction, passenger transportation, particularly cab services, security services.

Ministry of Culture (*Kultūras ministrija*) has been tasked to draft until 24 March 2020 government regulations on support measures for self-employed persons, NGOs in the realm of culture whose employees will be stood down as a result of COVID-19. These measures will also be available only to those who have paid taxes regularly.

On 24 March, the government announced that front-line health care staff would receive a 50% pay rise in March and a wider range of staff - 20% rise in April and May.²⁵

The Minister of Welfare informed that measures, such as unemployed benefits may be foreseen for self-employed persons.

A number of restrictive measures have been introduced in social care centres for the elderly and prisons. In prisons all short term leaves, short-term/long-term visits, activities with the presence of third parties have been banned. Decisions on early parole have been suspended. Prison governors are allowed to compensate restrictions by granting additional phone calls and video calls. Administrative arrest (predominantly for drink-driving) in police stations has been suspended, short term-imprisonment from 15 days to 3 months (new prison entries) has been suspended.²⁶

Accommodation centre for asylum seekers “Mucenieki” is working under conditions of quarantine. The number of social mentors available at the accommodation centre have decreased, only two mentors provide assistance. Legal aid providers, interpreters and other third parties are prohibited from visiting the accommodation centre.²⁷

Homeless shelters and soup kitchens in the capital Riga continue operating under strict conditions of quarantine.²⁸ Four soup kitchens and six places serving warm food co-financed by Riga municipality serve food in own dishes, persons are requested to keep the distance of 2 metres from each other in a queue. Compliance with the rules is monitored by the municipal police.²⁹ All persons willing to use homeless shelters in Riga are checked for body temperature and symptoms of illness. Those with mild symptoms of illness of upper respiratory tract are placed in the quarantine zone, where they stay 24/7. In case of more severe symptoms the shelter can call an ambulance. Persons who returned from abroad recently are requested to undergo COVID-19 testing and can use shelter’s service only after showing the testing results confirming they do not have virus. So far, there were three such cases.³⁰

As of 17 March 2020, regardless of the number of participants all public events are cancelled and prohibited, including festivities, entertainment events, culture events, sports events, leisure events (including at night clubs and discos), meetings and gatherings, entertainment events, culture events, processions and demonstrations (as defined in the Law on Meetings, Processions

²⁵ LSM. LV (2020). Government Supports Extra-Pay for Medics Combatting COVID-19, 24 March, at <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/valdiba-atbalsta-piemaksas-medikiem-kuri-cinas-ar-covid-19-marta-pat-lidz-50.a353098/>

²⁶ Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No.103 On the Declaration of the Emergency Situation (*Rīkojums No 103 Par ārkārtējās situācijas izsludināšanu*), 13 March 2020 with amendments until 19 March 2020 <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/313191-par-arkartejas-situacijas-izsludinasanu>

²⁷ Information received by LCHR by phone March 16 2020.

²⁸ Riga City Council (*Rīgas dome*) (2020), Rīgas pašvaldības iestādēs pārtraukta apmeklētāju pieņemšana klātienē; noteikti dažādi ierobežojumi, Press release, 18 March 2020, <https://www.riga.lv/lv/news/rigas-pasvaldibas-iestades-partraukta-apmekletaju-pienemsana-klatiene-noteikti-dazadi-ierobezojumi?19140>

²⁹ Welfare department of the Riga City Council (*Rīgas domes Labklājības departaments*) (2020), Biežāk uzdotie jautājumi ārkārtējās situācijas laikā, <http://www.ld.riga.lv/lv/par-departamentu/biezak-uzdotie-jautajumi.html>

³⁰ Information received from the representative of the Riga Shelter by phone on 23 March 2020

and Pickets (*Par sapulcēm, gājieniem un piketiēm*³¹), religious ceremonies with gathering of people. Unorganised gatherings of more than 50 people are restricted: at culture, entertainment, leisure, sports and religious gathering places. Working hours of all gathering places are limited to 8.00- 23:00.³²

Individuals failing to comply with the restrictions and bans during the state of emergency may be penalised with a fine of up to EUR 350 (Administrative Violations Code Article (*Latvijas administratīvo pārkāpumu kodekss*) 176(2)).³³ There are also various provisions in the Administrative Violation Code and Criminal Law (*Krimināllikums*) that foresee liability concerning violations of epidemiological safety. The State Police (*Valsts policija*) and the Municipal Police (*Pašvaldības policija*) are monitoring public areas where people may assemble. On 19 March 2020, the State Police conducted 388 checks, and opened 38 administrative cases, predominantly on violation of self-isolation.³⁴ According to the government decree, persons who have returned from abroad and contact persons of those diagnosed with COVID-19, have to self-isolate at their living place and not go anywhere outside. They are allowed to leave place of residence only with the purpose of purchasing essential goods or food and in the absence of any other solution, by wearing a face mask and observing a distance of two metres between shop visitors and employees, visiting the shop at a time when there are few people, and strictly observing hygiene. Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 and able to receive treatment at home, should observe strict isolation.³⁵ Persons who do not fall under above mentioned categories are advised to stay home and decrease social contacts.

On 17 March 2020, the government decided that all large wholesalers of medicines have to declare their medicinal reserves in electronic format and submit the information to State Agency of Medicines. An electronic register of wholesaler reserves will be set up and pharmacies will be able to request medicines only in electronic format, also notifying the SAM. The changes will allow to oversee the reserves of medicine in the state and their flow, to identify and reduce risks of medicinal shortages and prevent artificial lack of medicines. The measures have not been adopted solely because of COVID-19, but have been speeded up due to lack of transparency by wholesale retailers in the past. The information on amount of reserves in large wholesalers of medicines is available online.³⁶

2 Impact of the outbreak on certain national or ethnic communities

On 31 January 2020, a Latvian blogger posted a fake news video about the alleged arrival of a person with the new coronavirus in Riga, Latvia. Among other things, he also stated “generally those Chinese [censored] should be liquidated, the entire country should be. Nothing good ever comes from there.” On the same he was arrested and has been charged with incitement to ethnic hatred under Section 78

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³¹ Saeima, Law on Meetings, Processions and Pickets (*Par sapulcēm, gājieniem un piketiēm*), 13 February 199, <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=42090>

³² Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No.103 On the Declaration of the Emergency Situation (*Rīkojums No 103 Par ārkārtējās situācijas izsludināšanu*), 13 March 2020 with amendments until 19 March 2020 <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/313191-par-arkartejas-situacijas-izsludinasanu>

³³ Saeima, Latvian Administrative Violations Code (*Latvijas Administratīvo pārkāpumu kodekss*), 01 July 1985, <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/89648-latvijas-administrativo-parkapumu-kodekss>

³⁴ LETA (2020), Policija diennakts laikā konstatējusi 38 ārkārtējās situācijas noteikto ierobežojumu pārkāpumus, 20 March 2020.

³⁵ Cabinet of Ministers (*Ministru kabinets*) (2020), Order No.103 On the Declaration of the Emergency Situation (*Rīkojums No 103 Par ārkārtējās situācijas izsludināšanu*), 13 March 2020 with amendments until 19 March 2020 <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/313191-par-arkartejas-situacijas-izsludinasanu>

³⁶ State Agency of Medicines (*Zāļu valsts aģentūra*) (2020), Zāļu lieltirgotavām obligāti būs jāuzrāda zāļu krājumi atlikušo zāļu krājumi, Press release, 17 March 2020, <https://www.zva.gov.lv/lv/jaunumi-un-publikacijas/jaunumi/zalu-lieltirgotavam-obligati-bus-jauzrada-zalu-krajumi-atlikuso-krajumu-zalu-lieltirgotavas-saraksts>

(2) of the Criminal Law.³⁷ The video was removed. He has remained in detention since. He was earlier detained in summer 2019, for running several websites and spreading fake news, one of which included a news item about the collapse of the supermarket roof.³⁸ He eventually received a warning. Another person disseminating fake news was arrested by the police and then released on condition without changing the place of residence.³⁹ There has been no other information public information about incidents of alleged discrimination on the grounds of nationality in access to goods and services, employment, healthcare and any other sector against minorities.

Latvian Centre for Human Rights, who has a status of a “trusted flagger” with Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and twitter has noted rising hate speech against Latvian nationals repatriating from abroad due to COVID-19.⁴⁰

3 Impact on privacy and spread of disinformation

The Disease Prevention and Control Centre publishes data on incidence, rough geographic spread of the disease by region and by age groups.⁴¹ The State Data Inspectorate (*Datu valsts inspekcija*) has published key information on the rights and obligations of persons concerning data protection in health care context.⁴² On 20 March, State Data Inspectorate published general clarification on dissemination of sensitive data about persons diagnosed COVID-19, how such information should be presented preventing the dissemination of unwarranted and disproportionate information on certain ill-treated persons or persons at risk.⁴³

There have been reports by social media users, including notifications to the police, about persons who have returned from abroad and are failing to observe the 14 day quarantine. Thus far, media interviews have included infected individuals in quarantine who have consented to interviews.

On 24 March, a map with approximate geo-location of infected patients in isolation (nr., date, origin in some case (country/abroad) appeared in red on the site *pandemic.lv*. Later a disclaimer was added



Red locations are data defining where someone that's tested COVID-19 positive, has originated from. Not their current or actual location. **Data Source:** latvijaskoronakarte.lv The map also includes names of volunteers who can aid persons in need (e.g. elderly, those who have returned from abroad and are in quarantine, etc., services available in the area. The map is a private initiative. Information about the map appeared on Facebook and persons linked to the site cite the Statement on the processing of personal data in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. Adopted on 19 March 2020 of the European Data Protection Board..

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³⁷ State police (*Valsts policija*) (2020). Valsts policija par nacionālā un etniskā naida izraisīšanu aiztur vīrieti, 3 February 2020, <http://www.vp.gov.lv/?id=69&said=69&vrId=2020&reId=16828>

³⁸ In November 2014, a supermarket roof collapsed in the capital Rīga, killing 54 persons and leaving many injured.

³⁹ LSM.LV (2020), Police Detain Your for Spreading Fake News about Corona Virus, 20 February 2020, <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/policija-aizturejusi-jaunieti-par-viltus-zinu-izplatisanu-saistiba-ar-koronavirusu.a349048/>

⁴⁰ Notifications of hate speech to Facebook during 10-20 March, 2020. On files with LCHR.

⁴¹ Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (*Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs*) (2020), Data on conducted tests, incidence of COVID-19 during 29 January – 20 March 2020, at <https://arkartassituacija.gov.lv/>

⁴² State Data Inspectorate (*Datu valsts inspekcija*) (2020), DVI vērs uzmanību uz personu tiesībām un pienākumiem datu aizsardzības jomā veselības informācijas kontekstā, Press release, 17 March 2020, <https://www.dvi.gov.lv/lv/zinas/dvi-vers-uzmanibu-uz-personu-tiesibam-un-pienakumiem-datu-aizsardzibas-joma-veselibas-informacijas-konteksta/>

⁴³ State Data Inspectorate (*Datu valsts inspekcija*) (2020), Par sensitīvo datu publiskošanu, <https://www.dvi.gov.lv/lv/zinas/par-sensitivo-datu-publiskosanu/>, 20 March 2020.

*Re:Baltica*⁴⁴ runs a fact-checking and social media research hub *Re:Check*, and the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN)⁴⁵ has listed it among its verified signatories. It has called upon Facebook users to report fake news on COVID-19 and publishes information on fake news sites on Facebook in Latvian <https://rebaltica.lv/recheck/>. The Ministry of Culture has again disseminated five point guidelines how to recognise fake news,⁴⁶ published earlier to educate general public about fake news.

⁴⁴ The Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism *Re:Baltica* is a non-profit organization that produces investigative journalism in the public interest

⁴⁵ The International Fact Checking Network, <https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/>

⁴⁶ Ministry of Culture (*Kultūras ministrija*), <https://www.facebook.com/Kulturas.ministrija/posts/1120117811664040>