

NAME OF STATE OR ORGANISATION: The Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia

EXPLANATIONS AND QUESTIONS

If a question does not apply to your State, please answer “Not applicable” or “N/A”.

Some questions can be answered by marking a box.

Where your answer refers to specific provisions of your law / laws, please cite the law and provision number as it may be a helpful reference in the Guide to Good Practice.

Where your answers can be enhanced by providing a link to an electronic version of a document (*eg.*, guidelines, criteria), please give that link.

USE OF TERMINOLOGY

There are three situations in which accreditation and authorization (as used in the Convention) may occur. A distinction is to be made between “accreditation” and “authorization”

- (1) adoption bodies are accredited in the receiving State to work in States of origin (Arts 10, 11) (1993 Hague Convention terminology: **accreditation**);
- (2) those adoption accredited bodies of receiving States are granted authorization in the State of origin with a view to arranging the adoption (Art. 12) (1993 Hague Convention terminology: **authorization**);
- (3) bodies in the State of origin are accredited by it to work with foreign bodies of the receiving State with a view to adoption (Arts 10, 11) (1993 Hague Convention terminology: **accreditation**).

NB: FOR STATES OF ORIGIN, PLEASE MAKE IT CLEAR IN YOUR ANSWERS IF YOU ARE REFERRING TO YOUR OWN ACCREDITED BODIES OR TO FOREIGN ACCREDITED BODIES WORKING IN YOUR STATE.

At the very beginning the Central Authority of Latvia wants to point out that terms “accreditation” and “accredited bodies” used in the questionnaire are used only within the frames of national (local) understanding.

A. General policy issues concerning accreditation

1. In your State what terminology do you use for the situations described in (1), (2) and (3) above? is it the same or different? If different, please specify, define and indicate if you intend to use your own terminology to answer the following questions

Re: Concerning the terminology, Latvia uses the meaning and understanding of accreditation in accordance with Latvian law on Hague Convention of 29.05.1993 where in article 3 it is pointed out that functions mentioned in articles 11 and 12 of the Convention in the Republic of Latvia are realized by the Latvian Orphans` Courts.

2. Is your State a receiving State or a State of origin or both?

Re: Latvia is a State of origin.

3. Have you informed the Permanent Bureau all of the details of bodies accredited by your State, as required by Article 13? Is the information which is currently on the Hague Conference website up to date?

Re: The Central Authority of Latvia has not informed the Permanent Bureau about bodies that have been accredited in Latvia because according to article 5 of Latvian law on Hague Convention of 29.05.1993 information about statements made in the Republic of Latvia to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Netherlands and to the Permanent Bureau provides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia. And according to article 13 of the Convention at the web page of Permanent Bureau there is given the information about institutions which implement the functions mentioned in articles 11 and 12 of the Convention.

If your State has decided not to use accredited bodies, please explain the reasons and indicate what has influenced the decision. Please answer any questions that are relevant to your State's situation.

N/A

4. How do you define "accreditation" and "accredited body" in your State?

Re: Accredited bodies in Latvia are defined with law on Hague Convention (came into legal force in 11.09.2001) and we do not accredit other Latvian institutions within Latvia. Functions of accredited bodies implement institutions of state administration (Ministry of Welfare and Orphans` Courts (institutions of children guardianship made by local municipalities). Central Authority understands accreditation as a giving of rights to act in Latvia within the field of adoption. And therefore accredited body is an institution which is granted with accreditation.

5. Do the following categories of actors come within the definition of accredited body (are they Included as accredited body staff, employees or personnel)?

- facilitators (if they exist in your State, please specify their role)
- national representatives of foreign accredited body
- translators
- lawyers (*e.g.*, with a power of attorney *from* prospective adopters)
- guide, drivers, etc.

If these actors are not employees of the accredited body, what is their legal relationship, *if* any, to the accredited body?

N/A

6. As at 30 September 2009, what is the current number of accredited bodies In your State, state or province? If possible, please indicate how many bodies have been refused accreditation, have lost their accreditation or discontinued their activities since 1 January 2006, and for what reason.

Re: At 30th September 2009 there are 118 already established accredited bodies (Orphans` Courts), but due to regional reorganization the number can reach 200. Right now it is difficult to name exact number of bodies as until the 1st of October 2009 they will set in force reorganization. More precise number will be known in the second half of October 2009.

7. Do you think the number of accredited bodies accredited by, or operating in your State Is proportional to the number of Intercountry adoptions taking place? If not, do you intend to take any appropriate measures?

Re: Central Authority of Latvia wants to inform that at the present moment there are 1315 adoptable children of whom 612 are adoptable to foreign countries, and of those 612 children 431 are in the age group of 10 up to 18 years. Therefore the Central Authority of Latvia welcomes those organizations/institutions which would like to cooperate within Intercountry adoption of children older than 9 years, siblings groups of three or more of a one family, or children, who are seriously diseased or with remarkable health (mental/physical development) interferences.

8. Do you impose any limits on the number of accredited bodies which are granted accreditation In your State? If yes, on what grounds are limits imposed?

Re: Due to the article 3 of a law on the Hague Convention of the Republic of Latvia the only locally accredited bodies in Latvia are Orphans` courts. We do not accredit other local bodies.

9. Does the Central Authority or the accredited body make the choice of the foreign States with which the accredited body could work (if authorization were to be given)?

Re: No.

Receiving State questions

10. (I) Receiving States: does the grant of accreditation automatically include an authorization to act in:

- a) any State of origin;
- b) a specified State/States of origin?

(II) Do you limit the number of accredited bodies for every State of origin?

B. Organization and structures

11. On which subjects does the accredited body have to provide evidence to, or inform, the Central Authority or other competent authority to obtain or maintain accreditation? Please tick relevant box:

- Composition of the accredited body's personnel and any changes
- Qualifications and experience of personnel
- Resolution of the board of governors attesting that the body is bound by ethical principles and rules of professional conduct
- Internal statute, regulations and guidelines of accredited body, including
 - documents which demonstrate the legal constitution of the accredited body
 - financial management and accounting practices
- Costs and expenses charged by accredited body
- Copy of the terms of collaboration between the accredited body and the body or person to whom the body entrusts responsibilities in performance of the adaption procedure
- Budget forecasts for 12-24-36 months
- Copy of the standard-form contract between the body and adoptive candidate
- Insurance for legal liability
- Other — please provide details

N/A

Receiving State questions

- Certified true copy of an official version of the legislation of the State of origin with which the accredited body will co-operate
- Contracts with foreign collaborators or intermediaries, their qualifications and mode of payment (monthly salary / flat rate for every adoption)
- Agreements with orphanages in the countries of origin or internal regulations relating to the handling of cases, and confidentiality rules
- Copy of the statement of authorization or approval to work in the State of origin if applicable
- Evidence of knowledge of the situation (cultural, social and legal) in the State of origin
- Evidence of knowledge of the adoption law and practice in the State of origin, and understanding of the role of counterparts In the State of origin

12. Is it compulsory for staff of an accredited body to be professionally qualified? If yes, which professions? (e.g., lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, etc).

N/A

13. If volunteers are used, what is the ratio of volunteers to professional staff?

N/A

14. Are your accredited bodies required to sign a contract or agreement with the prospective adoptive parents? In general, what are the obligations of accredited bodies to adoptive candidates?

N/A

15. What are the role and responsibility of the Central Authority or competent authorities with respect to the training of accredited bodies?

N/A

16. Are your accredited bodies required to have Internal guidelines for carrying out tasks related to adoptions including guidelines on confidentiality of information?

N/A

17. Are your accredited bodies required to keep the adoption records for a certain number of years? How many years?

N/A

C. Accreditation procedure

18. Please provide details (including powers and resources) of the authority or authorities which grant accreditation, Briefly describe the procedure to obtain accreditation.

Re: As Central Authority of Latvia receives a request for accreditation of organization which already has received accreditation from Central Authority of Receiving State, Central Authority of Latvia examines a program of planned actions and compare them with the tendencies of adoption, as well as organization's ability to ensure observance of requirements of legal acts of the Republic of Latvia. If the program complies with tendencies then the Central Authority of Latvia accredits the organization for acting in Latvia according to article 12 of the Convention.

19. Please give a brief outline of your accreditation criteria, guidelines or legislation. If possible, please provide an electronic copy of your accreditation criteria, guidelines or legislation, and any translations into English, French or Spanish.

Re: Legislation of the Republic of Latvia does not prescribe the details of accreditation within the territory of Latvia.

20. is there a central registry of all accredited bodies?

Re: There is not such a registry in Latvia

21. For how long is the accreditation granted?

Re: Period of accreditation depends from the Receiving State as Central Authority of Latvia does not set the period of expiration. For example – USA sets a period of validity for a number of agencies, in its turn France and Italy do not. Therefore if Receiving State has not set validity, Central Authority accredits an organization for unlimited period of time. And if there were/are made some violations, Latvia can withdraw the accreditation.

22. What are the conditions for renewal of accreditation?

Re: There have to be an updated accreditation from the Central Authority of Receiving State and afterwards by taking into account the previous cooperation with the proper organization, Central Authority of Latvia evaluates the possibility to renew accreditation.

D. Authorization of foreign accredited bodies

23. In your State how do you define “authorization” in the context of Article 12? Do you have criteria for authorization?

Re: Legislation of the Republic of Latvia does not prescribe the authorization of institutions. Central Authority of Latvia relies only on article 12 of the Convention, so the only criteria for authorization is tendencies of adoption. In addition as well as organization’s ability to ensure observance of requirements of legal acts of the Republic of Latvia.

24. Who makes the decision to authorize accredited bodies in accordance with Article 12? Is your process of authorization formal or informal? Please describe the process.

Re: As Central Authority of Latvia receives a request for authorization of organization which already has received accreditation and authorization from Central Authority of Receiving State, Central Authority of Latvia examines a program of planned actions of the organization which asks the authorization and compare them with the tendencies of adoption. If the program complies with tendencies then the Central Authority of Latvia authorizes the organization for acting in Latvia according to article 12 of the Convention.

25. Is the Permanent Bureau informed of the authorizations?¹

Re: The Permanent Bureau was not informed of any authorization from the side of Central Authority of Latvia, and it has no information whether the Receiving State has informed the Permanent Bureau.

Receiving State questions

26. As a receiving State, can you provide the current numbers of accredited bodies authorized for individual countries of origin?

27. On what basis does the accredited body seek authorization to work in a State of origin?

28. What factors or criteria are relevant for the Central Authority (or competent authority) to consider when giving or denying authorization to work in a State of origin?

State of origin questions

29. As a State of origin, have you authorized foreign accredited bodies to undertake Inter-country adoptions in your State (see Art. 12)? How many accredited bodies are currently authorized and from which receiving countries? How many were authorized as at 31 December 2005?

Re: The Central Authority of Latvia has authorized to work in Latvia in the field of Inter-country adoption twelve foreign accredited bodies to work in Latvia:

- ✓ “Eltern-Kind-Brücke e.V” (Germany);
- ✓ “AiBi Associazione Amici dei Bambini” (Italy);
- ✓ “Agenzia regionale per le adozioni internazionali” (Torino, Italy) ;
- ✓ “AAA Associazione Adozioni Alfabeto Onlus” (Italy);
- ✓ “AGAPE´-Onlus” (Italy);
- ✓ “Lutheran Social Services of New York” (United States of America);
- ✓ “The Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc.” (United States of America);
- ✓ “One World Adoption Services, Inc.” (United States of America);
- ✓ “About a Child” (United States of America);

¹ “Where a body accredited in one Contracting State is, in accordance with Article 12, authorized to act in another contracting State such authorization should be communicated to the Permanent Bureau by the competent authorities of both States without delay, Recommendation No 3 of the 2000. Special Commission (reaffirming Recommendation No 2 of the 2000 Special Commission).”

- ✓ “World Links Association, Inc.” (United States of America);
- ✓ “Child Adoption Associates, Inc.” (United States of America);
- ✓ “Agence Francaise de l’Adoption” (France).

And six institutions we work with are Central Authorities of Andorra, Canada, Switzerland, Spain for which due to the Convention authorization is inapplicable. There was one authorization issued to accredited adoption agency of Israel “Haeled Hatzohek” which authorization has expired and it never was renewed so we consider that this agency has stopped to act in Latvia.

30. As a State of origin, is the foreign accredited body required to be fully accredited by your State and by your procedures, rather than simply “authorized”?

Re: Foreign accredited body have to be fully authorized by Central Authority of Latvia to perform Inter-country adoption.

31. As a State of origin, how do you decide how many foreign accredited bodies are needed in your State?

Re: Central Authority of Latvia wants to inform that at the present moment there are 1315 adoptable children of whom 612 are adoptable to foreign countries, and of those 612 children 431 are in the age group of 10 up to 18 years. Therefore the Central Authority of Latvia welcomes those organizations/institutions which would like to cooperate within Inter-country adoption of children older than 9 years, siblings groups of three or more of a one family, or children, who are seriously diseased or with remarkable health (mental/physical development) interferences. At the present moment there is not a specified number of foreign accredited bodies which Latvia would need, because Latvia authorizes such accredited bodies which can find adopters for children to whom we lack adopters. And therefore we do not want to set any limits of number of authorized bodies as it can minimize the possibilities of children to get adopted.

32. Countries of origin; If you authorize a foreign accredited body to “act” in your State, does this mean:

Re: c) it means that the foreign accredited body does not have an office or intermediary in the State of origin and it liaises directly with the Central Authority.

33. Countries of origin: have you experienced any difficulties with foreign accredited bodies working with or in your State?

Re: At present moment can point out following difficulties in mutual cooperation: knowledge of a foreign languages – very often authorized bodies use language which they do not know very well and therefore it makes our communication harder. The second thing is delaying of post-adoption reports when we have to involve embassies of the relevant state to search for adopters and ask to fulfill their obligations. This matter comes with the next point concerning the responsibility of authorized accredited body about suitability of adopters for adoption as we as the Central Authority have to inform adopters about questions which have to be discussed/solved before the adoption case is sent to Latvia (such as possibilities of adoption, about the situation of adoption in Latvia and more detailed examination of prospective adopters).

E. Supervision and review of accredited bodies

34. How do you supervise bodies accredited in your State (Art. 11 c)? Are regular reports required such as annual reports (including financial reports) from the accredited body to the supervising authority?

Re: that have to be done by the Central Authority of Receiving States as we (the State of Origin) have to follow that requirements of legal acts of the Republic of Latvia would not be violated.

35. What supervision occurs in the State of origin of authorized foreign accredited bodies?

Re: The only supervision we can do is to follow that all requirements of legislation of the Republic of Latvia would be taken into account.

36. How is the performance of the accredited body assessed or evaluated?

Re: the performance of foreign accredited bodies is supervised through everyday adoption procedures, and if some problems emerge, we start to solve it immediately. There is no other type of supervision.

37. *Does* the supervising authority have the power to make regular inspections *of* and reports on the accredited bodies? Have secrecy or privacy laws hindered inspections?

Re: No, because in accordance with the legal enactment of the Republic of Latvia the Ministry provides only methodic management of Orphans` Courts.

38. Do you require accredited bodies to report on any problems with intercountry adoptions, such as problems with particular countries, procedural problems or problems with implementation of the 1993 Hague Convention (see Convention Art. 33)?

N/A

39. Does your law have provisions to deal with breach of duties or breach of the conditions of accreditation by accredited bodies? *E.g.*, Suspension or revocation of accreditation or authorization? Other penalties / measures? Please give details,

N/A

40. If accreditation has been suspended or withdrawn and is later re-instated, what conditions if any, apply after re instatement?

N/A

41. Is it possible to suspend or withdraw accreditation if the general situation in the State no longer offers the necessary guarantees for Intercountry adoptions?

N/A

42. Are there restrictions upon activities of accredited bodies (e.g., advertising their services; advertising, including on the Internet, of adoptable children; limits on amounts that can be charged for fees and other expenses)?

Re: yes, there is a restriction. Orphans` Courts cannot provide the information on adoptable children, as the procedure of Adoption strictly prescribes that information on adoptable children issues the Ministry.

43. Are you aware of any acts or behavior by accredited bodies that contravened your accreditation criteria? Please also provide details of any sanctions or penalties applied?

Re: no, we are not aware of such cases.

44. What are the means used by the authorities supervising accredited bodies in order to Improve good practices or remedy breaches in relation to requirements for accreditation or as regards to behavior?

N/A

45. Is there collaboration among the accredited bodies working in the same State of origin, or in different countries? If so, what kind of collaboration?

N/A

46. Is the information on each accredited body's website regularly checked by the supervising authority? By an authority in the State of origin with which it Cooperates?

N/A

F. Financial issues

47. How are your accredited bodies financed?

Re: Latvian accredited bodies are financed by local municipalities (of the budget of a local municipality).

48. How are fees and charges set? E.g., by accredited bodies themselves, by a public authority. Is there bilateral cooperation between your State and other countries to establish appropriate fees for the 2 countries concerned?

N/A

49. Is detailed information about all the fees, charges and costs associated with an intercountry adoption available easily to adoptive candidates and other authorities?

Re: information about all expenses during the process of adoption in Latvia is available, but we do not know whether such information about expenses with which the adopters have to count is available in the relevant Receiving State.

50. How and when is that information provided to adoptive candidates?

Re: This information have to be provided to adopters by the authorized foreign accredited body

51. How is financial transparency and accountability of accredited bodies achieved? *E.g.*, by standard bookkeeping? Receipts and proof of purchases? Reports submitted with financial statement?

Re: Yes, donations are allowed according to the legal enactment of Latvia and that is executed in the way of voluntary wish.

52. Do you allow donations to be paid to children's homes by the accredited bodies or prospective adoptive parents? Under what conditions?

N/A

53. The costs relating to adoption are extremely difficult to evaluate. Can you state the average amount or range (smallest to highest amount payable) for the following items.

Costs In the State of origin

- a) the body's administrative costs,
- b) cost of procurement of statutory documents (birth or marriage certificates, psychosocial report, etc.),
- c) co-ordination of the case through (in-country staff of) the accredited body,
- d) cost of professional services (lawyers, interpreters, guides, drivers, etc) in the State of origin,
- e) cost of filing of the documents with the appropriate authorities,
- f) translation and assistance,
- g) legal or administrative costs in the State of origin,
- h) transport and hotel costs for the adoptive parents,
- i) humanitarian contribution and donation to the orphanage, etc.,
- j) other — please specify.
- k)

Re: Adoption procedure in Latvia is for free. The only costs adoptive parents have to count with are mentioned in points d); f); g) and h).

54. What is the relation between adoption fees (and contributions) and actual costs? Is it calculated for the whole budget of the accredited body or per State or does each adoption carry its own costs? How is the relation between fees and actual costs supervised?

Re: it is prescribed with a budget of each local municipality, therefore such a detailed information is not at the disposal of the Ministry.

55. What general comments can you give about costs of Intercountry adoption (from the perspective of your own State and in other countries?)

N/A

State of origin questions

56. In the State of origin, who is responsible for the coordination of the costs: an accredited body's employee? A third party? in case of a third-party, how is he selected? How is he financed? How is he evaluated? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that these costs are reasonable and transparent? What are the factors that make these costs vary from one adoptive file to another?

Re: Since almost each foreign adoptive family which has submitted their documents in Latvia has their own legal representative, those legal representatives are the persons who coordinates all living spaces, transport expenses, translation expenses (in many cases these legal representatives are sworn interpreters and advocates in one person) etc. Just some of these legal representatives are employees of accredited bodies therefore in those cases the amount of money to perform all necessary conditions for family could be comparatively similar. But of course it is necessary to point out that expenses are different for each family as it depends on the period which the family have to stay in Latvia (pre-adoption care period), the place where the family stays in Latvia and which legal representative family has chosen. Information about possible legal representatives the families get from the authorized bodies as well as in embassies of a relevant state. Those mentioned at embassies are evaluated by embassies as they are working together, but if legal representative comes from authorized body – it should evaluate such persons. In the same time each family have rights to decide on their own with which representative they want to work with and therefore they accept the costs their representative will demand.

G. Operational issues

57. Which are the tasks carried out by accredited bodies in your State? Tick boxes if applicable. For countries of origin please specify if your own national accredited bodies or foreign accredited bodies perform the tasks.

State of origin questions

The Ministry wants to point out that answers in this question are given only as for foreign accredited bodies, but not locally accredited bodies within Latvia.

- Assessment of the adoptability of a child
- Work with birth parents on family preservation to avoid adoption of the child
- Decision on the adoptability of a child
- Counseling and information for birth parents / consequences of consent
- Obtaining Consent
- Search for parents in cases of abandonment
- Assume responsibility for the child prior to the adoption
- Prepare the child for adoption
- Agreements under Article 17 of the 1993 Hague Convention
- File adoption documents with court or authority

- Search for socio-biological background information of child and birth family and reunion with birth family
- Make the matching decision
- Preparation of the adoptive child
- Assistance provided to the adoptive parents during their stay
- Other tasks: please provide details.

Re: Foreign accredited bodies which are authorized to act in Latvia also sends all additional information about adoptive parents (if necessary).

H Post adoption services and reports

58. What post adoption services do your accredited *bodies* offer (e.g., counseling and family support)? Is provision of post adoption services one of the conditions of accreditation?

Re: According to legal acts of Latvia, Orphans` Courts can provide any kind of post-adoption services, e.g. post-adoption supervision, providing of a qualified personnel as psychologist, social worker etc. And since such regulation is included in the legislation of Latvia, there is no other necessity to set such a demands as a priority conditions of accreditation.

59. Are there any publicly funded post adoption services?

Re: post adoption services provided in Latvia by Latvian accredited bodies are funded by the budget of local municipalities. And in this matter it is necessary to point out that such post adoption services are available for foreign adopters who are living within the state of Latvia. Such services are available also in the pre-adoption period both for local and foreign adopters.

Receiving State questions

60. Do accredited bodies have to provide regular reports on the child? To whom are the reports sent e.g., Central Authorities of State of origin and of receiving State? Other?

N/A

61. Do your accredited bodies prepare the post adoption report or do they ask the adoptive parents to prepare it and send it to the State of origin? *If* a public authority is responsible for post adaption reporting, please explain.

N/A

62. How do you monitor the obligation to the State of origin to send post adoption reports?

N/A

J. Approved (non accredited) bodies and persons²

63. Does your State permit approved (non-accredited) bodies or persons (see Art. 22(2)) to arrange Intercountry adoptions. If not, go to Question 68. If yes,

² The term “non-accredited person” was used in the Explanatory report of Professor Parra Aranguren to refer to the person in Art. 22(2). Some countries now employ the term “approved person” when referring to person In Art. 22(2). However, the 2005 Questionnaire responses revealed enormous confusion when the term “approved persons” was used. Consequently, the Guide to Good Practice has followed the usage of the Explanatory Report to try to Improve the public’s understanding of the functions of these particular persons. The term “approved (non-accredited) person” is a compromise to retain the precision of the Explanatory Report, but recognizes the usage by some countries of the term “approved person”.

Re: No, it does not.

64. Have you informed the Permanent bureau of the details of approved (non accredited) bodies or persons in your State, as required by Article 22(3)? Is the information which is currently on the Hague Conference website up to date?

65. What are the guidelines by which approval is granted?

66. What is the process by which approval is granted and renewed?

67. How is the supervision of approved (non-accredited) bodies or persons carried out in your State (Art. 22(2))?

68. Has your State made a declaration under Article 22(4) to prohibit the involvement of approved (non-accredited) bodies or persons in Inter-country adoptions?

Re: No, it has not.

69. Are you aware of any acts or behavior by approved (non-accredited) bodies or persons that contravened their conditions of approval? Please also provide details of any sanctions or penalties applied.

Re: we are not aware of such acts of behavior, but if there would be such, the one and only sanction would be exclusion from the register of adoption

State of origin questions

70. As a State of origin, do you allow approved (non-accredited) persons or bodies from abroad to “act in your State (as a similar procedure to authorization of accredited bodies under Art. 12)?

Re: No, we do not allow. We authorize to act in the field of Inter-country adoption only foreign accredited bodies, but not such approved (non-accredited) persons or bodies.

K. Development aid activities

71. Are accredited bodies required to or permitted to engage in humanitarian projects or development co-operation activities in countries of origin?

N/A

72. What types of activities are undertaken?

N/A

73. How do you ensure that the humanitarian aid does not influence or jeopardize the integrity of the Inter-country adoption process (e.g., by the expectation of a regular ‘supply’ of children in exchange for regular humanitarian or development aid)?

Re: There still is a possibility that out-of-family care institution has joined in a cooperation with some foreign organization which primary aim is to provide the humanitarian aid to Latvian orphans and afterwards they hope to have some advantage in questions concerning the adoption. But it is not possible to start and finish such adoption, as Central Authority of Latvia has already made clear that there is an order and procedure of adoption and there is no other way how to accomplish the adoption. Therefore such a problem have occurred only a couple times and had been solved on the basis of legal acts of Latvia.

L. Co-operation between countries

74. Have you experienced any difficulties in obtaining assistance or co-operation from other Central Authorities in regard to accredited bodies?

Re: The main problem in cooperation emerges from the situation that many Central Authorities of Receiving States accredit and give them authorization to work Internationally without any knowledge of the situation in the field of adoption at all. And sometimes if they do, the information which they use as a guide is a bit old and does not fit in the real situation. Therefore we have to start the communication with a foreign accredited body when such an organization is asking for authorization to act in Latvia. In its turn the problems emerge because we have to conclude that these organizations are in a total lack of information of what is happening in Intercountry adoptions from Latvia. And when we give the information about the restrictions, many organizations have to give up their plans just because the Central Authority of a relevant state has not informed about tendencies of adoption, but organizations already have spent a lot of money to prepare all paperwork for authorization.

75. Have you experienced any difficulties or concerns regarding the supervision of accredited bodies in other countries?

Re: There have been some doubts about the supervision of authorized foreign accredited bodies, but we have solved them in a reasonable period of time.

76. Have you experienced any difficulties with other countries or Central Authorities because you do not use accredited bodies?

Re: No we have not.

77. Are there any particular aspects of your accreditation procedures *e.g.*, good practices that you would like to bring to the attention of other States?

N/A

78. Do you have any other comments about any of the topics covered by this Questionnaire?

Re: No we do not have.

State of origin questions

79. Have you experienced any pressure from foreign accredited bodies?

Re: Yes. As the tendencies of adoption have changed not in a favor of foreign adopters, Central Authority of Latvia has experienced a pressure from foreign accredited bodies of Receiving States, because since the year 2006 a possibility to adopt a healthy children to foreign countries have diminished, but almost 80 percents of all adopters wanted to adopt a healthy child up to 6 years old. And due to those tendencies Central Authority of Latvia has set the restrictions for acceptance of new foreign adoption documents since 1st March 2008 up to 31st December 2010. The other problems are connected with the situation when a foreign adopter submits documents for adoption in Latvia, where (as well as before we have pointed out) the lack of information comes into play – the biggest part of all foreign adopters think that as they have submitted their adoption documents, it means that adoption is already as promised, but it is not like that. We already have informed our cooperation partners for many times in personal meetings as well as through the mutual correspondence, that the fact itself if adoption documents are submitted then adoption is guaranteed, is false. And even today we still say to adopters (since almost none of foreign organizations has draw their attention to this matter) that we cannot guarantee the successful adoption.