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**A case initiated with respect to joining the town of Ikšķile and Tīnūži rural municipality to Ogre Region**

On 3 August 2020, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Panel of the Constitutional Court initiated the case “On Compliance of Sub-para 28.2. and 28.19. of “Annex to the Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas “Administrative Territories, Administrative Centres thereof and the Units of Territorial Division”” with Article 1, the Article 101 of the *Satversme* of the Republic of Latvia and the Third and Sixth Part of Article 4 and Article 5 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government”.

**The Contested Norms**

Sub-para 28.2. of “Annex to the Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas “Administrative Territories, Administrative Centres thereof and the Units of Territorial Division”” provides that the town of Ikšķile is part of Ogre Region, whereas Sub-para 28.19. provides that Tīnūži rural municipality is part of Ogre Region.

**The Norms of Higher Legal Force**

Article 1 of the *Satversme* of the Republic of Latvia (hereafter – the *Satversme*): “Latvia is an independent democratic republic.”

Article 101 of the *Satversme*: “Every citizen of Latvia has the right, as provided for by law, to participate in the work of the State and of local government, and to hold a position in the civil service.

Local governments shall be elected by Latvian citizens and citizens of the European Union who permanently reside in Latvia. Every citizen of the European Union who permanently resides in Latvia has the right, as provided by law, to participate in the work of local governments. The working language of local governments is the Latvian language.”

The third part of Article 4 of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (hereafter – the Charter) “Scope of local self-government”: “Public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are closest to the citizen. Allocation of responsibility to another authority should weigh up the extent and nature of the task and requirements of efficiency and economy.

The sixth part of Article 4 of the Charter: “Local authorities shall be consulted, insofar as possible, in due time and in an appropriate way in the planning and decision-making processes for all matters which concern them directly.”

Article 5 of the Charter “Protection of local authority boundaries”: “Changes in local authority boundaries shall not be made without prior consultation of the local communities concerned, possibly by means of a referendum where this is permitted by statute.”

## **The Facts**

The case was initiated on the basis of an application submitted by the Ikšķile Regional Council. On 10 June 2020, the *Saeima* adopted the Law on Administrative Territories and Populated Areas. The Annex to the Law defines the administrative territories, their administrative centres and the units of territorial division. In accordance with sub-para 28.2. un 28.19., the town of Ikšķile and Tīnūži rural municipality are part of Ogre Region.

The Council holds that the town of Ikšķile and Tīnūži rural municipality have been joined to the Ogre Region without properly considering the possibility of joining the town of Ikšķile and Tīnūži rural municipality to the Salaspils Region or retain these territories as an independent local government. It is alleged that the *Saeima*, in adopting the contested norms, had violated the principle of good governance and local-government, likewise, it did not comply with the subsidiarity principle and had not properly consulted the Ikšķile Regional Council and its residents. The contested norms are said to be incompatible also with Article 1 and Article 101 of the *Satversme* as well as with the third and the sixth part of Article 4 and Article 5 of the Charter.

## **The Legal Proceedings**

The Constitutional Court has requested the *Saeima* to submit a written reply on the facts of the case and the legal reasoning by 5 October 2020.

**The term for preparing the case is 4 January 2021.** The Court will decide on the type of procedure and the date for hearing the case after it has been prepared.

**The decision on initiation of the case is available here:**

[http://www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv/web/viewer.html?file=/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-38-0106\\_Lemums\\_ierosinasana.pdf#search=](http://www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv/web/viewer.html?file=/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-38-0106_Lemums_ierosinasana.pdf#search=)

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The press release was prepared with the aim to facilitate understanding of cases heard by the Constitutional Court. It shall not be regarded as part of the judgement and is not binding to the Constitutional Court. The judgements, decisions and other information regarding the Constitutional Court are available at the homepage of the Constitutional Court [www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv](http://www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv).

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