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President Vejonis supports burqa ban

The Baltic Times (11.08.2015) –

http://www.baltictimes.com/president_vejonis_supports_burqa_ban/ - Latvian President Raimonds Vejonis believes a ban on the face-covering burqa should be the subject of debate in the Latvian parliament.

Speaking to the LNT TV channel on August 11, 2015, the recently elected president said he believes a debate surrounding a ban on the burqa should be started. He added he would be in favour of the decision.

Latvian Ombudsman Juris Jansons called for a debate on the subject after a similar proposal was made in Estonia.

The author of the proposal is the Estonian minister of social protection and chairman of the junior coalition party Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (IRL), Margus Tsahkna. He argued the ban should be introduced on security grounds.

Tsahkna explained his rationale by suggesting people should be identifiable.

The minister believes it would be fair to take the decision now, so immigrants soon arriving to Estonia would know the new regulations in advance.

Latvian President calls for discussion about banning burkhas in Latvia

AZERTAC (11.08.2015) –

http://azertag.az/en/xeber/Latvian_President_calls_for_discussion_about_banning_burkhas_in_Latvia-876776 - It is necessary to initiate a discussion about whether or not to allow residents to wear Muslim headgear and other garments covering the face in Latvia's public places, says President Raimonds Vejonis.

According to what he said in an interview to 900 seconds programme of LNT, the refugee matter showed very clearly that Latvia is not yet prepared for many changes. The work group assigned to develop guidelines for dealing with refugees could eventually have to tackle the matter of allowing or prohibiting burkhas. This matter should be resolved as soon as possible, said the president.

"I'm not saying that something should be prohibited or allowed on the spot. But this discussions should nevertheless be launched," noted Vejonis.

When asked about his personal opinion on this matter, Vejonis said he is against allowing burkhas being worn in public places. "My personal opinion is that such headgear should not be worn, because Latvia's society is an open one – we accept people from different ethnic backgrounds, we are tolerant toward them, and I see no reason why anyone should have to use such things here," said Vejonis.

Last week, Estonian Social Defence Minister Marguss Cahkna had actualized the matter regarding whether or not it is necessary to ban brakhas in the country. During a government meeting, he suggested banning Muslim headgear and other garments that cover the face, as reported by Postimees Online.

The goal of this initiative is to prevent problems that have already surfaced in other European countries.

The government has asked Justice Ministry to analyse problems related to integration of people from different cultural background. One specific proposal was the ban of garments that cover the face.

“Rules have to be adopted before problems that have already appeared in other European countries start appearing in our country. Regulating this matter is very complicated. As for wearing face-covering garments in public places, our society prefers having identifiable people,” said Cahkna.

He noted that it would only be fair toward Estonians and people who travel to Estonia – to provide them with this information beforehand.

Wearing clothes that cover the face should be regulated with specific legislative amendments.

The minister noted that Muslims living in Estonia currently do not have problems with this matter, as there have not been any sightings of people wearing face-covering garments so far.
