

## Comparative Remarks on Residential Tenancy Law in Latvia and Estonia

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Latvia and Estonia share a common history and common inheritance of Soviet legal regime from 1940 to 1991. The period after regaining independence in 1991 signifies a radical turning point in the housing policies in all three Baltic States. More particularly, over the last 25 years, the availability of residential housing in Baltics has been influenced by general liberalization of housing market. As a result, the housing market in Baltics is commonly characterized by a high rate of private ownership of housing stock and a high rate of owner-occupancy in comparison to the rental housing, which, by estimations in Estonia and Latvia, is not higher than 15%.<sup>1</sup> However, increasing migration and urbanization will lead to a greater need for rental apartments. The authors examine some aspects of the regulation of tenancy relationships where the balanced and reasonable protection of interests of both parties – tenants and landlords – seems to be missing. There are not very many studies about differences in development of Estonian and Latvian legal systems, and this analysis will contribute to filling the gaps in comparative studies of these two countries.

**Keywords:** tenancy law, rental contract, protection of weaker party, housing policy.