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Latvian Diaspora Support Programme

2004 - 2009

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Abbreviations and terms used in this document

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MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MES – Ministry for Education and Science

SMSIA – Secretariat of the Minister for Social Integration Affairs

GCCF – Culture Capital Foundation of Latvia

RLC – Russian Latvian Congress

MC – Ministry of Culture

LEC – Latvian Employer's Confederation

LELC – Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church

LELCA – Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

LI – Latvian Institute

LNFC – Latvian National Federation in Canada

ULRGL – Union of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia

LR – Republic of Latvia

CM – Cabinet of Ministers

NB – Naturalisation Board

WFFL – World Federation of Free Latvians

OCMA – Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

MRDLG – Ministry of Regional Development and Local-governments

SIF – Society Integration Foundation

MT – Ministry of Transport

Explanation of the terms used in the text

Diaspora – in the programme the term “Diaspora” describes the representatives or group of the same ethnic origin that lives outside their (ethnic) homeland.

Latvian Diaspora – in the programme this term describes the Latvians that live outside Latvia.

Western Latvian Diaspora – in the programme this term is used to describe Latvians and Latvian groups that live in the countries that traditionally are called Western democratic countries (Western European countries, Scandinavian countries, United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), Eastern European countries (for example Czech Republic and Slovakia) as well as Latin American countries.

Eastern Latvian Diaspora – in the programme this term is used to describe Latvians and Latvian groups that live in Post-Soviet countries and in the Baltic States (except Latvia).

Relation of the Latvian Diaspora Support Programme 2004 – 2009 to the priorities and approved policy documents of the Government and the Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for Social Integration Affairs

Under guidance of the Secretariat of the Minister for Social Integration Affairs (further in text – SMSIA) in compliance with the “Declaration about the intended work of the Cabinet of Ministers headed by Mr. I.Emsis” adopted on the of 9th March 2004 (We will support Latvians living abroad that want to create close links with cultural, political and economical environment in Latvia. Secure that Latvian community abroad could keep close connection with Latvia. We will pay attention on long-term programme “Latvian Diaspora”. We will use all kind of opportunities that could be given to support Latvian education abroad either in Latvian schools abroad, or in Latvia. (I [Foreign Affairs] 39.); “We will accept and financially support state programme for co-operation with Latvian Diaspora abroad supporting cultural, educational and informational programmes as well as repatriation of Latvians living abroad back to Latvia” (VII [Integration] 5.)) will be produced Latvian Diaspora Support Programme 2004 – 2009 (further in the text – Programme).

For drafting programme, with the 29th April 2004 Direction No. 178 of the LR Prime Minister “About the Working group for drafting Latvian Diaspora support programme 2004 -2009”, Working group was established that had a task to submit, in settled procedure, draft proposal to the Cabinet of Ministers till August 1, 2004. In fact this Working group started the work already on December 2, 2003 on the basis of December 2, 2003 direction of the Minister of Special Assignments for Social Integration Affairs “About the establishment of the working group”.

The need of the Latvian Diaspora support programme was highlighted already on the 7th of April 1995 in a document adopted by LR Saeima (Parliament) “Main direction of Foreign policy of the Republic of Latvia till the year 2005” (“Draft the programmes “Latvia in the World” and “Latvian Diaspora”. Aim of the programmes is to create and secure conception appropriate to a reality about Latvian state in the international public opinion as well as contribute sustainable connection with Latvian Diaspora in cultural, economical or other spheres” (5.))

Co-operation with compatriots abroad is one of the priorities of the Latvian Integration policy wherewith priority of SMSIA, that is pointed in the State programme “Society Integration in Latvia” which is approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on the 6th of February 2001 (Carry out concrete activities that would contribute to maintaining and development of communication with Latvians abroad, that would conduct preservation of communities and also facilitate repatriation process. Latvians living abroad are invaluable assistants in the creation of Latvian image also in contact making process in their countries where they are located and the government. Latvian non-governmental organisations and local governments also have to take part in co-operation with compatriots abroad (First chapter III)).

Target group of the programme and description of the situation

2.1. Target group of the programme

The primary target group of the programme is representatives of the Latvian Diaspora, their societies and organisations.

The indirect target group is all Latvian society, because strong Latvian Diaspora is essential to creating of a positive image of Latvia abroad, promoting Latvian culture, traditions, art as well as making it known all over the World.

2.2. Description of the situation

The contribution of the Latvian Diaspora to Latvia and to the society in preserving national self-confidence and identity, protecting rights of Latvian nation, the rights of Latvian society to the

statehood and place among other nations is incredible. Considering that Latvians living abroad are an integral part of the Latvian nation, Diaspora nowadays has an important role of promoting Latvian culture and traditions on the World scale. It has great potential in creating positive image of Latvia abroad. That is why not only representatives of the Diaspora themselves but also Latvian state and society is interested in supporting Latvians abroad.

There is a number of events that have had effect on why Latvians left Latvia. For example, there are many Latvians and their generations in the United States of America who went there after the revolution in 1905, but most of the Latvians went to the Western countries in the end of 1940-ties from refugee camps in Germany. Most of the Latvians who went to Brazil, in turn, are from 1900 – 1930 Baptists missionaries¹.

Around 200 000 Latvians permanently live outside Latvia currently (around 100 000 in the United States of America, 20 000 in Australia and New Zealand, 20 000 in Canada, 20 000 in Brazil, 35 000 in Russia, 5 000 in United Kingdom, 4 000 in Sweden, 4 000 in Germany, 400 in Venezuela, 300 in France, 200 in Norway, 200 in Georgia, 200 in Argentina, 100 in Chile and a small number in other countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Italy and other countries)². That means that at least 1/10 of Latvians live outside Latvia, and taking into account the small number of Latvians, Latvia cannot ignore this part.

Almost all **Western countries** have nation-wide organisations or associations – Latvian National Council in Great Britain, Latvian Community in Germany, Latvian Central Council in Sweden, Latvian Society in Norway, Latvian Association in France, Latvian Association in Czech Republic and Slovakia, American Latvian Association, Latvian National Association in Canada, Latvian Association in Australia and New Zealand and also Latin American Latvian Association. There are organisations that are located in concrete cities or administrative regions – Latvian Centre in Munster, Latvian Society in Hamburg, Latvian Centre in Toronto, and Latvian Cultural Centre in Novaodesa (Brazil). Latvian Welfare Fund is a particularly active and very wide scale organisation. There are also foundations in several countries, for example, Latvian Education Foundation that is registered in British government institution *Charity Commissioners*, Latvian Welfare Fund. In most countries there are different activities for preserving Latvian identity – there are choirs, dance groups, weekend schools, summer schools and 3x3 camps. Some activities are already a tradition, for example, Latvian Culture Days in Australia. Some countries have Latvian schools, Lutheran and/or Catholic churches have service in Latvian.

The main communication toll in Western Europe is the newspaper “Free Latvia” (Brīvā Latvija). This newspaper is printed in Riga since 1994 and it is then sent to the subscribers around the world. Besides several bulletins there are also two newspapers in North America. Newspaper “Time” (Laiks) is a private one; the editorial staff is located in Riga now, the newspaper is electronically prepared in Riga and sent to New York where it is published and sent out to the subscribers. Toronto publishes newspaper “Latvia in America” (Latvija Amerikā). It is supported by the Latvian Welfare Fund and Latvian National Association in Canada. The weekly newspaper “Australian Latvian” is the main communication tool for Latvians living in Australia. Besides these publications they also publish informative bulletins and there are several web pages, for example www.latviansonline.com and e-newsletter Toronto News (Toronto Ziņas).

Eastern Latvian Diaspora is mainly represented by the Latvians living in the Russian Federation. It consists mainly of three groups: “old Latvians” – those who left Latvia in the second half of the 19th Century, those who were deported in the time of Stalin, and also those who left voluntarily during the soviet time.

¹ Minutes No. 2 of the Working group for drafting Latvian Diaspora support programme meeting, Representatives of the Working group – World Federation of Free Latvians Board members L. Vasovas and A. Ozolina – summary reports about Latvians and their organisation in East and West, 12th January 2004.

² Same.

Since the beginning of the 1990-ties various Latvian organisations have operated in Russia, being mainly Latvian culture organisations in the biggest cities in Russia: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Omsk, Tomsk, Krasnojarsk, Magadan, Smolensk and recently also in Pskov. There are also regional associations such as Latvian Culture centre of Bashkortostan that unites all Latvians living in Bashkir. Komi-Baltics (Komi-Baltija) also partially fits this model by uniting Latvian communities from Siktivkar, Inta and Uhta. Several Latvian Evangelical Lutheran churches in the regions of Moscow, St.Petersburg, Bashkortostan, Krasnojarsk, in the village of Down Bulan and Magadan have renewed their activity. Baptist parish exists in Omsk region in the village of Bobrovka.

The activities of “old Latvian” villages differs from city community activities, because for some it is daily issues and lifestyle, for others it is work in strange and alien circumstances. All Latvian centres are united in one organisation – Russian Latvian Congress (RLC) and are part of the World Federation of Free Latvians. Preserving and promoting the Latvian language, culture and traditions in their cities, regions, villages, also promoting co-operation with some organisations in Russia, to keep feed-back with Latvia, to take part in world Latvian activities, also promoting positive image if Latvia in Russia Main activity areas for RLC and other organisations.

In the school year 2003/2004 5 teachers from Latvia work in Latvian centres. Three teachers are supported by WFFL and Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LELCA), and the other two - by Society Integration Foundation. Churches are supported by LELCA and Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (LELC).

Latvians abroad are not a monolithic formation, it represents diverse communities and groups of individuals that have formed in different countries and under different conditions. Subsequently, social, economic and cultural levels, as well as needs and relationships with Latvia differ. The needs of Latvians depend on the conditions and environment where they live. Great differences exist between situation of Latvians and their organisations in countries with different economic development. Notwithstanding the varying needs and opportunities of Diaspora in different countries, compatriots living abroad find it difficult to preserve and develop their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and sometimes also religious identity without support from Latvia.

3. Aim and under-aims of the programme

3.1. Aim of the programme

The Aim of the Latvian Diaspora Support Programme is to secure the links of Latvian Diaspora with Latvia and the feeling of belonging to one’s ethnic homeland, through creating a unified system for maintaining co-operation with Latvians abroad.

3.2. Under-aims of the programme

1. Implement activities for Latvian Diaspora for preserving and developing ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identity.
2. Provide and actualise accessibility of information about Latvian Diaspora.
3. Provide and secure the links between representatives of the Diaspora, communities, associations and their members with Latvia on regular basis.
4. Promote Latvian culture, traditions and art as the cornerstone for Latvia’s image abroad.
5. Provide institutional co-operation for the support of Latvian Diaspora.

4. Planned policy results and activity results of the programme

4.1. Policy results

- Latvian Diaspora has secured the feeling of belonging to their ethnic homeland.
- Representatives of the Latvian Diaspora improve knowledge of the Latvian language.

- The communities and organisations of the Latvian Diaspora work more actively promoting Latvian culture and art.
- The communities of the Latvian Diaspora more actively are involved in communication with Latvia and with the Latvian communities in other regions and countries.
- The representatives of the Latvian Diaspora and the international society better recognise Latvian culture, traditions and art.
- Latvian state and local-governments as well as Employer's Confederation and activists of business organisations more actively co-operate with the Latvians abroad and with administrative regions where representatives of the Latvian Diaspora live.

4.2. Activity results

- Administrative and financial capacity to the Latvian centres, communities, associations and organisations raised.
- Latvians abroad and inhabitants of Latvia are provided with the necessary information about Diaspora.
- The representatives of Latvian Diaspora are regularly provided with the information and educational materials as well as with the Latvian newspapers.
- The representatives of Latvian Diaspora are regularly informed about their opportunities to co-operate with the Latvian state and to take part in the ongoing processes.
- The situation and the dynamics of Latvian Diaspora is analysed.
- The Diaspora issue is introduced to children and young people.
- Opportunity is given to children and young people of the Diaspora to get to know their native land, improve their knowledge of the Latvian language and establish links with the Latvian children and young people from other countries.
- Opportunity provided for the students of Summer schools, teachers, staff workers and qualified leaders of the cultural events to get scholarships for their studies and activities.
- The representatives of the Diaspora – repatriates have opportunity to study Latvian language in intensive language courses.
- Opportunities of innovation for Latvian choirs, dance groups and amateur art groups increased.
- Representatives of the Latvian Diaspora increase the working skills and skills of traditional art craftsmanship.
- Circumstances for preserving and developing the religious identity are improved in the places where Latvian Diaspora is located..

5. Outcome Indicators for reaching the policy results and action results

5.1. Outcome Indicators for reaching the policy results

- Number of representatives of the Latvian Diaspora who report in the opinion polls that they have the feeling of not belonging to the Latvian state is reduced.
- Number of Diaspora representatives has decreased in opinion polls of Diaspora organisations who believe that the Latvian government takes very little care of the compatriots living abroad.
- Number of Diaspora representatives has decreased in opinion polls of Diaspora organisations who do not speak or almost do not speak Latvian language.
- Number of Diaspora representatives has increased in opinion polls of Diaspora organisations who speak Latvian language on a level adequate to be able to have intensive language courses in Latvia.
- Studies about situation of the Latvian Diaspora and its dynamics show that there is an increase of the number of Latvian communities and organisations which are active in

promoting and developing Latvian culture and art in their country of residence and other regions.

- Studies about situation of Latvian Diaspora and its dynamics show that there is an increase of the number of projects in culture and art development which are run by the communities and organisation of the Latvian Diaspora in their country of residence and other regions.
- Studies about situation of Latvian Diaspora and its dynamics shows that there is an increase of the number of those communities and organisations of the Latvian Diaspora that co-operate with Latvia and with Latvian communities in other regions and countries.
- In the countries with the biggest population of Latvian Diaspora “Latvian Day’s” are organised regularly as well as amateur art and professional artists’ group visits and writers’ visits are organised with the aim of promoting Latvian culture, traditions and art to the Latvian Diaspora and elsewhere in the world.
- Inter-institutional co-operation is established and strengthened for the support of the Latvian Diaspora, several municipalities and entrepreneurs’ organisations in Latvia and foreign state authorities are involved in Diaspora support events.

5.2. Outcome Indicators for reaching the activity results

- A unified data-base about the Latvian Diaspora organisations is created.
- “Diaspora section” is created in the webpage of SMSIA.
- Mass media are involved in covering the issues concerning the Latvian Diaspora and its activities.
- Support is provided to the mass media of the Latvian Diaspora.
- Support is provided to the foreign Latvian communities, associations and centres.
- New Latvian (cultural) centres abroad are established and the activities of the existing ethno cultural centres are supported.
- An effective mechanism is set up for disseminating informative, educational materials, Latvian newspapers to the Latvian communities, associations and centres abroad.
- “A Guide to the Latvians Abroad” is published and regularly updated, booklet series about the Latvian Diaspora is prepared and a conference about important issues to the Latvian society and Latvian Diaspora is organised bi-annually.
- Research about the Latvian Diaspora and its dynamics is carried out.
- Children and youth erudition and creativity competition about Latvian Diaspora organised Every year.
- Summer language courses, co-operation camps, 3x3 camps and summer schools are supported abroad and in Latvia.
- Scholarships are provided to the Secondary school students, teachers, employees and qualified organisers of cultural events (30 scholarships every year).
- Intensive Latvian language courses for the representatives of Latvian Diaspora – repatriates will be organised.
- Latvian choir and dance groups abroad will be supported financially, amateur art groups of Latvian communities, associations and centres will be provided with the national costumes.
- Working skills and traditional craftsmanship skills improvement courses will be organised.
- Visits of the clergyman to the Latvian communities, associations and centres abroad will be organised.

6. Implementation mechanism of the programme, monitoring of the implementation, reporting and evaluation procedure

Co-ordination Council for the implementation of the Programme (further in the text – Co-ordination Council) will be established to provide successful implementation of the Latvian Diaspora Support Programme and secure a co-ordinated co-operation of the involved institutions .

At least once in 6 months the organisation responsible for a particular programme activity will submit information to the Co-ordination Council about the implementation of the action plan and the pace of other activities.

At least once a year SMSIA submits a Report about the implementation of the Programme (further in the text – Report) to the Cabinet of Ministers for consideration, as well as publishes it. The evaluation of the Programme results will include information about activities implemented, as well as reports and conclusions from the organisers and partner organisations.

At least once a year the Co-ordination Council will hear to the opinion and proposals of the WFFL about the implementation of the Programme and submits it to the Government together with the Report.

Co-operation contracts will be signed between the state and local-government institutions and foreign authorities to provide the inter-institutional co-operation for the support of the Latvian Diaspora. Co-operation of local-governments in Latvia and concrete administrative regions where Latvian Diaspora representatives live will be provided. Co-operation between the state, the employers and entrepreneurs for the support of the Diaspora will be developed and provided.

7. Action plan for the implementation of the programme

No.	Activity	Time scale for the implementation of the activity	Funding		Diaspora			Responsible and involved institutions
			Current (LVL)	Necessary (LVL)	West	East	Both	
1st under-aim – implementing activities for the Latvian Diaspora for preserving and developing ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious identity.								
1.1.	Intensive language courses for repatriates in Latvia	2005-2009	17 500	6 500 a year			X	Grant competition: SIF, financing in the 1 st grant scheme
1.2.	Financing of the work of Latvian language teachers	2004-2009	29 000	50 000 a year		X		Centralised event: MES
1.3.	Administrative and financial support to Latvian communities, associations and centres abroad (grants)	2004-2009	35 000*	40 000 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA
1.4.	Organising of the craft skill, working skill and traditional craftsmanship skill courses.	2004-2009	35 000*	10 000 a year			X	Grant competition: SIF, financing in the 1 st grant scheme
1.5.	Organising erudition and creativity competition for children and young people (on annual basis) about Latvian Diaspora.	2004-2009	1000	6 000 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MES, MFA
1.6.	Supporting summer language courses, co-operation camps, 3x3 camps and summer schools abroad and in Latvia.	2004-2009	35 000*	49 000 a year			X	Grant competition: SIF, financing in the 1 st grant scheme in co-operation with SMSIA, MES, NGOs (need for co-financing)

Unofficial translation

Draft proposal

1.7.	Scholarships for summer school students, teachers, employees and qualified leaders of cultural events.	2004-2009	0	30 000 a year (half is covered by applicant)			X	Grant competition: SIF 2 nd grant scheme (In co-operation with SMSIA and MES)
1.8.	Providing clergyman visits to the Latvian communities, associations and centres abroad.	2005-2009	0	4 300 a year			X	Centralised event: LELC, other “traditional confessions”
1.9.	Establishing Latvian (cultural) centres and supporting the existing centres.	2008-2009	6 000	6 000 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA
2nd under-aim – provide and actualise accessibility of information about Latvian Diaspora.								
2.1.	Creation of a system of sending informative, educational materials, Latvian newspapers to the Latvian communities, associations and centres abroad.	2004	0	0			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MFA, WFFL, MT
2.2.	Regularly sending informative, educational materials, Latvian newspapers to the Latvian communities, associations and centres abroad.	2004-2009	3 000	30 000 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MFA, WFFL, MT
2.3.	Creation of a unified data-base about organisations of Latvian Diaspora	2004	0	1 500 (for creation) 750 a year (maintenance)			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MFA, WFFL
2.4.	Research about Latvian Diaspora and its dynamics	2005 2007	0	8 500				Centralised event: SMSIA
2.4.	Monitoring of mass media (in Latvia and abroad) about the coverage of Diaspora issues	2004-2009	0	2 800 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA

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Draft proposal

2.5.	Creation of the “Diaspora section” and its regular updating on SMSIA webpage	2004-2009	0	1 500 (for creation) 800 a year (maintenance)			X	Centralised event: SMSIA
2.6.	Involving the mass media in the covering of Latvian Diaspora and its activities	2005-2009	0	700 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA
2.7.	Supporting mass media of Diaspora (newspapers, informative bulletins etc.)	2005-2009	0	8 000 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA
2.8.	Latvian Diaspora Support Programme implementation Report, submission to the CM and publishing	2004-2009	0	0			X	Centralised event: SMSIA
3rd under aim – provide and secure the link between the representatives of the Diaspora, communities, associations and their members with Latvia on regular basis.								
3.1.	Publishing „A Guide for the Latvians abroad”	2004-2009	1500	4 500 (for creation) 2 000 a year (activate)			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MES, OCMA, NB, MFA
3.2.	Publishing booklet series about the Latvian Diaspora	2004-2005	1500	8 000			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MES, WFFL, MFA, OCMA, NB, local-governments, NGOs
3.3.	Organising conference once in two years about important issues for the Latvian society and Latvian Diaspora	2005-2009	0	10 000 (together with travel and accommodation costs for experts)			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with MES, WFFL, MFA, OCMA, NB, local-governments, NGOs

4th under-aim – promoting Latvian culture, traditions and art as the cornerstone for the image of Latvia abroad.								
4.1.	Supporting Latvian choirs and dance groups abroad.	2005-2009	1500				X	Centralised event: MC in co-operation with GCCF, LI, MFA
4.2.	Organising visits of Latvian amateur art and professional art groups and writers to the Latvian Diaspora	2005-2009	1500				X	Centralised event: MC in co-operation with GCCF, LI, MFA
4.3.	Organising „Latvian Day’s” in the countries with the biggest population of Latvian Diaspora	2005-2009	0	16 000 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with LI, MFA, MC, MES
4.4.	Providing Latvian communities, associations, organisations with the national costumes.	2004-2009	17 500	12 000 a year			X	Grant competition: SIF, signed grant in the 1 st grant scheme
5th under-aim – providing inter-institutional co-operation for the support of the Latvian Diaspora.								
5.1.	Providing co-operation of Latvian local governments with concrete administrative regions where Latvian Diaspora is located.	2005-2009	700	1 500 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with ULRGL, local-governments
5.2.	Signing contracts of co-operation between the State, local-governments, and foreign authorities about the support to the Latvian Diaspora.	2005-2009	700	1 500 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with ULRGL, local-governments
5.3.	Providing co-operation between the State, employers, and entrepreneurs about the support to the Diaspora.	2005-2009	0	1 300 a year			X	Centralised event: SMSIA in co-operation with LEC and local governments

* Grant competition in 2004: SIF; Sum total: LVL 35 000.