



## LATVIA'S ASSISTANCE TO MOLDOVA

Latvia's Development Co-operation Policy Plan for 2005 identifies technical assistance to developing and transition economies as one of the priorities in the development cooperation policy. Moldova and Georgia have been selected as the priority countries.

In April, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government institutions participated in fact-finding mission to Moldova to study the situation and to identify areas in which Moldova requires assistance from Latvia. Four co-operation projects between Latvia and Moldova have been completed or are still continuing.

### Transfer of Latvia's experience in establishing of a co-ordination model of EU integration issues

In June two Latvian government officials participated in consultations and held a seminar for Moldavan government officials and representatives of non-governmental sector on co-ordination of EU affairs. The Latvian officials were Edvards Kušners, Deputy Director of the Legal Board of the Bank of Latvia and former director of the European Integration Bureau, and Jeļena Drozdova, Head of the EU Member State and General Policies Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*The Latvian experts concluded that "Latvia has now achieved a level of development which allows us to help other countries which are currently undergoing similar reforms. A seminar of this kind is an effective way of transferring Latvia's experience in strengthening democracy in the region of the EU's neighbouring countries."*

### Project of the NATIONAL DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE (NDI) to train Ukrainian officials at Latvian government institutions

The aim of this project is to help Ukrainian government officials to enhance their capacities and professionalism to pursue the necessary reforms in Ukraine's government structures.

Latvia's National School of Administration has agreed to co-ordinate the project. Several ministries have expressed interest in having Ukrainian officials seconded for work at the relevant institutions.

*The commander of Latvia's State Border Guard, Gunārs Dāboliņš, thinks that assistance to Moldova as it pursues EU membership is a new and major challenge for Latvia, and he adds that because of the received political support in this regard, it is quite possible that the process will be successful. (LETA news agency, 26.08.2005)*

### PRESIDENT OF MOLDOVA VISITS LATVIA

The president of Moldova, Vladimir Voronin, visited Latvia on September 26 and 27. President Voronin met with Latvia's highest-ranking government officials to discuss ways in which Latvia's reform experience could be transferred to Moldova.

In the meeting with the Moldavan president, Latvian president Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga told that Latvia would like Moldova to achieve territorial integrity and implement democratic reforms. "We are ready and open to offer all kind of experience and to exchange specialists," said Vīķe-Freiberga.

Voronin said that Moldova requires Latvia's advice and the experience of its specialists in the area of administrative and other major reforms. He expressed his thanks for Latvia's support in the international arena regarding Moldova's territorial integrity. \*

\* LETA news agency, 26.09.2005

### Support to Moldova in strengthening administrative capacity for border guard and control, as well as Surveillance of Foreigners

The aim of this project is to transfer Latvian Border Guard experience and recommendations to Moldova to enhance the capacity and professionalism of the State Border Guard of Moldova. Of the 11 planned missions this year, six have already taken place. The Latvian Border Guard has provided informative materials to its Moldavian colleagues, and experience exchange visits have taken place among officials in Latvia and Moldova.

On August 28, the border guard institutions of Latvia and Moldova concluded an agreement on future co-operation. At the end of September, experts from the Latvian Border Guard visited Moldova to provide support in preparing and administering EU-financed projects. Before the end of 2005, representatives of the Moldavian Border Guard's Cynology Service will visit Latvia to study the operations of their colleagues in Latvia.



Collection of Moldova customs duty and improvement of transparency of the customs service, as well as establishing a service of customs brokers both in normative acts and in practice

The aim of this project is to inform Moldovan officials about the work and activities of customs brokers in Latvia. It is planned to improve the work of existing, non-governmental customs broker organisation in Moldova that would make the cooperation between all stakeholders more effective. Latvian experts have visited Moldova, and Moldavian experts have visited Latvia to engage in consultations and to discuss recommendations about ways in which a system of customs brokers can be established and improved.

*“Moldova has received sufficient experience from Latvia for the establishment of an institution of brokers, and in the autumn of this year, a new customs system will be put in place in Moldova. This will make it easier for businesses and the national customs services to do their work, reducing the level of corruption and making it easier to control the flow of taxes”, experts admitted.*

LETA, 24.08.2005

Support to the Republic of Moldova in enhancing administrative capacity in managing and reforming of the penitentiary system

In early September, officials from Moldova met with senior officials from the Latvian Prison Administration, employees of the institution's training centre, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Probation Service, and relevant NGOs. Agreement was reached between representatives of Latvia and Moldova on future co-operation in the exchange of information and in the area of training specialists.

*During the visit, the Moldovan delegation said that experience and knowledge from Latvia would be of great importance in reforming the penitentiary system in Moldova.*

The next phase of the project will involve the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in purchasing computer equipment for the personnel-training centre for employees of Moldavian penitentiary institutions. There will also be further co-operation in terms of exchanging information and specialists.

#### DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT VIDZEME UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

On September 7, Ministry of Foreign Affairs concluded an agreement on co-operation with Vidzeme University College on a joint project – “Elaboration and Testing of a Further Education Course in Development Studies.”

Ministry of Foreign Affairs will assist Vidzeme University College in designing the curriculum for training specialists in the area of development co-operation.

The course will be made for employees of government institutions, Latvian NGOs and upper-level university students. Participants will learn about development co-operation and project administration in relevant areas. This knowledge will be of use in providing assistance and transferring Latvia's experience to developing countries.

Next year a priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the area of development co-operation will be the provision of support for development studies in order to promote greater understanding about development co-operation in government institutions and the public at large.

#### Informative events

- On August 29, in co-operation with the European Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a seminar on “EC Development Co-operation: Policy, Instruments and Financing”. Representatives of the European Commission and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as Ģirts Kristovskis, a member of the European Parliament (Development Committee), and representatives from Czech NGOs took part in the seminar.
- On September 8, a seminar was held for representatives of Latvia's media to discuss Latvia's investment in development co-operation. Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Latvian NGOs, the chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Latvia, and expert of foreign policy from Georgia, Alexander Rondeli participated in the seminar. The aim of the seminar was to inform the media about the concept of development co-operation and to speak about past activities and future plans in this area.

*Minister of Foreign Affairs Artis Pabriks in the seminar admitted that “since joining EU and NATO Latvia has reached another stage of development. From a country that was receiving assistance, Latvia is becoming a country that is ready and able to give!”*



## LATVIAN ASSISTANCE PROJECT FOR IRAQI CIVILIANS Involvement in the Reconstruction of Iraq and Democracy Promotion Programmes

In 2003, the Latvian government approved financing of LVL 55,000 (EUR 84,500 in 2003 rates) for the reconstruction of Iraq. The funding is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNDP office in Latvia. Training has been organised several times for experts on the documentation of Iraq's cultural heritage and the work of local governments.

In mid-September, five representatives of the Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works visited Latvia to study local experience in environmental management, waste management, water treatment and environmental protection. The visit was organised by the Latvian agency "Vides projekti".

On September 27, Latvian specialists returned from a trip to the Jordanian capital of Amman, where they worked with Iraqi specialists in the protection of cultural monuments on documentation of the country's cultural heritage. This concluded Latvia's assistance project to Iraq in the area of culture.

*Minister of Environment Raimonds Vējonis stressed the importance of Latvia's experience in the restoration of Iraq. "When a system has to be built up from scratch, it is good to have a colleague who has handled the relevant process in the past and can share his or her experience."*

### "THE LATVIAN-GEORGIAN NGO FORUM" TOOK PLACE ON OCTOBER 5 AND 6 IN GEORGIA, TBILISI

The aim of the forum is to provide support for the democratic society of Georgia as the country moves closer to the EU and NATO membership, and to promote development co-operation in the NGO sectors of Latvia and Georgia. The Forum was the first important and visible step to be taken in building partnerships in development co-operation among NGOs in the two countries.

As a part of the state visit to Georgia, Latvian President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, representatives of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as experts from Latvia and Georgia took part in the Forum. The forum is being organised by the Latvian Platform for Development Co-operation (LAPAS) in cooperation with the Soros Foundation-Latvia, the UNDP office in Latvia, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### "Baltic EU Integration: Recommendations for Moldova" – a Conference held on July 5 in Moldova

The aim of the conference was to promote co-operation between government institutions in Moldova and the Baltic States on issues of European integration. Representatives of the Baltic States discussed their experience in the pursuit of reforms.

Representatives from the three Baltic States and Romania were invited to talk about their experience. Two experts from Latvia, Ivo Rollis and Krišjānis Veitners, spoke about EU issues and the support by the member states for greater European integration. Latvian presentations were praised for being very appropriate for Moldova's current needs.

The participants of the conference were - Moldova's Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Estonian Foreign Minister, representatives of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, advisors to the Romanian Ministry for European Integration, representatives of the British Embassy in Moldova, and a number of representatives of the Moldavian government.

*Information prepared by  
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