

Diaspora Policy

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Taking into account the large flow of emigration over the course of the last 20 years and the number of Latvian nationals living outside Latvia, which, according to both estimates and studies, exceeds 370 thousand, co-operation with the Latvian diaspora has become one of the most important duties of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed at promoting the political and civic participation of the diaspora, preserving its connection with Latvia and Latvian identity, and strengthening co-operation with Latvian nationals abroad.

In order to enhance the diaspora policy in Latvia, the [Diaspora Law](#) was adopted on 1 November 2018 and entered into force on 1 January 2019.

The law sets out the main objectives for the diaspora policy:

- to strengthen the Latvian identity and sense of belonging to Latvia among the diaspora as an integral part of Latvian society,
- to provide the diaspora with an opportunity to freely form, maintain and strengthen its ties with Latvia,
- to promote the preservation of the Latvian language and culture among the diaspora,
- to develop and implement diaspora support policy measures that not only strengthen the diaspora's ties with the Latvian economy but also provide favourable conditions for remigration,
- to support the civic and political participation of the diaspora.

The Law defines the tasks and principles of the diaspora policy, as well as assigning specific competencies to public administration authorities in the field of diaspora policy, designating the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the public institution in charge of the development and coordinated implementation of a unified national diaspora policy.

Since its adoption, the Law has facilitated the formation of a new political sector, starting from 2019, the state budget includes basic funding for the implementation of measures set within the framework of the diaspora policy. This allows strengthening the diaspora's ties with Latvia by providing state support for new initiatives.

Section 10 of the Diaspora Law envisages the establishment of the Diaspora Advisory Council, and it was established on 14 May 2019.

The Diaspora Advisory Council is an advisory body aimed at promoting a coherent development of diaspora policy and setting of its annual priorities, as well as the implementation and evaluation of the diaspora policy. The Council consists of delegated representatives of 26 organizations (public administration authorities, local governments, diaspora organizations, associations and foundations), 13 of which represent diaspora organizations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for organizing the activities of the Diaspora Advisory Council.

The Diaspora Advisory Council has set the following diaspora policy priorities for 2021:

- Promoting activation and participation of the diaspora, including attracting new members to diaspora organizations.
- Promotion of civic and political participation of the diaspora in public processes in Latvia.
- Strengthening children and young people's Latvian identity and sense of belonging to Latvia.
- Preservation of the Latvian language and cultural heritage and ensuring its accessibility for the diaspora.
- Support for measures promoting remigration and further development of policy planning documents and regulatory enactments.

19 January 2021 brought the approval, by the Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 33, of the [Plan for Work with the Diaspora for 2021-2023](#) (hereinafter – the Plan).

The plan was developed in close cooperation with public institutions and the diaspora and non-governmental organizations.

The Plan is the first comprehensive cross-sectoral policy planning document developed in accordance with the Diaspora Law and summarizes the work tasks of all institutions and organizations related to diaspora affairs, structuring the activities included in the Plan in four lines of action:

- strengthening of Latvian identity and sense of belonging to Latvia, preservation of Latvian language and culture outside Latvia,
- promoting civic and political participation of the diaspora,
- involvement of the diaspora in the development of the Latvian economy and science,
- support for remigration.

The Plan supports the diverse needs of the diaspora to achieve the statutory goals of the diaspora policy, covers the initiatives implemented so far and planned by the national, diaspora and non-governmental organizations, as well as outlines the tasks and priorities determined by the dynamic development of the diaspora in the context of globalization.

 [The Plan for Work with the Diaspora for 2021-2023 is available here.](#) 

<https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/diaspora-policy>