

**POSITION PAPER OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA**  
**Chapter 18: "EDUCATION AND TRAINING"**

Setting the time frame for the process of adoption and implementation of the European Union's *acquis communautaire*, the Latvian Government adopted 1 January 2003 as the date on which Latvia will be prepared for accession to the European Union.

Latvia accepts and will implement in full the *acquis communautaire* in the area of Education and Training until 1 January 2003. Where it is possible Latvia is ready to adopt and fully implement Community Law even sooner. Certain provisions of *acquis communautaire* applicable exclusively to the Member states will be fully implemented as from the date of accession.

The provisions of EU legislation in the area of education and training are implemented in Latvia. EU policy guidelines in this area are observed in practice. Latvia already takes part in EU programmes LEONARDO, SOCRATES and YOUTH FOR EUROPE.

The Law on Education of 1998 implements the European Court of Justice's rulings regarding free movement of students. The Law on Education also implemented Directive 77/486/EEC on the education of children of migrant workers. The law provides for access to education for EU citizens temporarily resident in Latvia, and their children, as well as to all persons entitled to a non-citizen Latvian passport, and all persons permanently resident in Latvia. It states that education fees are set according to the same procedure for all these groups.

A question of special attention for the Latvian legislation also in the education for children of migrant workers is the Latvian language training. Language training is provided both by the public and non-governmental institutions. Since 1996, the National Programme for Latvian Language Training has been continuously implemented. Under the auspices of the National Programme for Integration of Society in Latvia, there is a special project for the provision of intensive Latvian language training to the persons who moved to live, work or study in Latvia for a longer period.

In parallel to the education in the Latvian language there is a possibility to participate in bilingual education programmes, where besides Latvian another European language – English, French or German – is used for instruction. Some schools are providing education also in other European languages. Minority education programmes are currently provided for Estonian, Lithuanian, Polish, Hebrew, Roma (Gypsy), Ukrainian, Russian and Belarussian minorities. Minority education is bilingual with part of subjects being taught in minority language and part in Latvian.

The Law on Vocational Education provides for possibilities to improve in the area of vocational training: modernisation, structural reform etc. The Law embodies the main principles of the common EU policy in the area of vocational training as defined in Council Decision 63/266. The qualification requirements provided in the law correspond to those of EU. The law therefore can provide for mutual recognition of professional qualification as defined by Council Decision 85/368.

Latvia has concluded a number of international bilateral agreements on the co-operation in education and training. These agreements are in full conformity with the provisions of *acquis communautaire* in this area.

The necessary infrastructure is in place and works satisfactory.

Responsible at state level for questions concerning the access to education, including access for the children of migrant workers, is the Ministry of Education and Science. Education establishments are established by the local municipalities. For the implementation of the Latvian Language Training Programme, "The Latvian Language Training Programme Project Implementation Unit" has been established as a non-profit state organisation.

The Cabinet of Ministers decides the policy and strategy for vocational training at national level. The Ministry of Education and Science issues normative acts and guidelines binding

for the educational establishments. Some questions concerning training for unemployed persons fall under the competence of the Ministry of Welfare.

Under the Ministry of Education and Science have been established the Centre for Vocational Training and a structure for technical support – Vocational Training Development Programme's Agency.

According to the Decision 2/98 of Association Council, Latvia takes part in the education programmes SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI and YOUTH FOR EUROPE. Responsible for the implementation of these programmes is the Ministry of Education and Science. National Programme Agencies are established within the Academic Programme Agency, the Vocational Training Development Programme Agency and the International Youth Programme Agency.

The Academic Information Centre (national ENIC/NARIC Centre) and the Centre for Quality Assessment for Higher Education provide for academic recognition of qualifications and ensure the compatibility of Latvian higher education programs with those of EU Member States

Taking into account the aforementioned, the Republic of Latvia will not request any derogation or transitional period and proposes that the negotiations within the chapter "Education and Training" be provisionally closed.