



EU ENLARGEMENT CONTRIBUTION FOR LATVIA 60 MILLION FRANCS



Population: 2.2 million
Swiss imports from Latvia: 42.2 million francs
Swiss exports to Latvia: 200.6 million francs
Real GDP growth rate: 5.5 percent
Purchasing power in relation to EU-Ø (2010): 51.0 percent
(Source: Eurostat, Swiss Foreign Trade Statistics, 2011)

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

12 projects, accounting for some 56.9 million francs, have been approved in Latvia. All projects further one of the following objectives:

■ Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions

Training in accounting and auditing regulations

The application of international standards to accounting and auditing practices improves the investment climate and helps prevent financial crises. This is why Switzerland is supporting Latvia in its efforts to implement EU laws governing company financial reporting and audits.

Micro-credit programme

The unemployment rate in Latvia rose dramatically as a result of the world's economic and financial crises. The microcredit programme makes it easier for micro enterprises and the self-employed to obtain start-up loans, and should result in the creation of up to 900 new jobs.

Scholarship and research programme

The scholarship programme enables doctoral and post-doctoral students from Latvia to conduct research in Switzerland for a limited period. This helps extend cooperation between Swiss and Latvian research institutes and to promote Latvia as a location for research.

An additional project is helping to improve Latvian university education and increase its international competitiveness by making it possible for Swiss professors, researchers and staff of educational institutions to visit Latvia for a brief period to give lectures, hold research colloquia or to exchange views about the development of new academic courses.

■ Improving social security

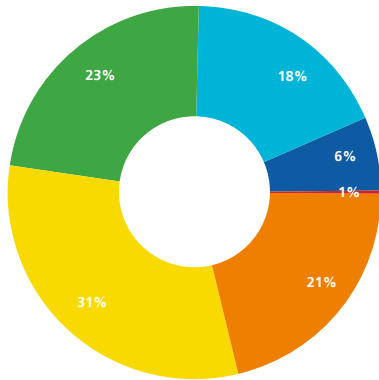
Regional development: school buses for rural areas and the establishment of youth centres

This project has improved the transport system for schoolchildren in rural and disadvantaged regions of Latvia. Thanks to the 110 school buses supplied to 60 municipalities, today 9,000 school-children are able to benefit from safer travel to and from school and thus enjoy easier access to education.

Thanks to an additional project, eleven new youth centres will be built and six existing ones renovated, on top of which support will be provided for regional activities for young people living in the remote and disadvantaged regions of Latvia. As a result of these projects young people will have the opportunity to become socially engaged.



Figure: Allocation of the Swiss contribution to the enlarged EU by project goal



Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions

4 Projects
CHF 11,956,905

Improving social security

2 Projects
CHF 17,769,767

Protecting the environment

1 Project
CHF 13,000,000

Improving public safety and security

2 Projects
CHF 10,379,730

Strengthening civil society

1 Project
CHF 3,500,000

Project preparation + technical assist.

2 Projects
CHF 273,598

Total CHF 56,880,000

The remaining amount covers expenses for administrative costs on the Swiss side.

Protecting the environment

Restoration of the polluted industrial harbour in Riga

Since 1872, the Sarkandaugava region has been used for the transport and storage of petroleum products. The Swiss contribution is being used to fund a project to decontaminate the soil and water, and to remove dangerous waste matter. This should also put a halt to the pollution of the River Daugava which flows into the Baltic Sea.

Improving public safety and security

Improved fire prevention in public schools

This project will improve fire safety for children in 138 schools in peripheral and disadvantaged regions of Latvia. In addition, Switzerland's experience in this area will be utilised and awareness of fire-protection will be raised.

Judiciary reform: video conferencing in courts and the optimisation of court proceedings

The aim of the project is to increase the quality and efficiency of court proceedings. This is being achieved by introducing new communication technologies (audio, video conferencing, Internet) and newly designed court procedures.

Strengthening civil society

Civil-society initiatives to help young people and the elderly

The NGO fund should help to improve the quality of life of children, young people and the elderly. The fund supports NGOs that work together with these sections of the population. Thanks to partnerships with public institutions and Swiss NGOs, it should be possible to fulfil these goals.

You can find additional information at www.swiss-contribution.admin.ch/latvia

