



THEMATIC NETWORK PROJECT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGES III

**SUB-PROJECT TWO:
LANGUAGES FOR ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET**

NATIONAL REPORT / Latvia

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1. Introduction

Latvia with its unique geographical location on the Baltic coast and in the centre of the Baltic countries has for centuries been a significant industrial area and a junction of international trade. Today, thanks to the strategic location and free trade agreements, Latvia has become a convenient place for investment and an ideal springboard to vast Russian and the EU markets with 600 million consumers.

The good transport infrastructure and transit opportunities intensify the advantage of the geographical location of Latvia. Three major ice-free ports and a growing international airport, a network of roads and railways contribute to Latvia as a transport superpower.

To continue, the capital city of Latvia, Riga, is, beyond doubt, the capital of the Baltics. It is located in the centre of the Baltic countries and is an important transport hub, a rapidly growing financial and commercial centre, the most important market in the Baltics and the metropolis of culture, tourism, education and entertainment. Most representative offices of foreign companies servicing the whole region are located in Riga.

Apart from the above mentioned facts, Latvia also offers politically and economically stable environment for foreign businesses, which is an important factor in the selection of investment locations. Latvia as a EU Member State is a

pledge of long-standing stability. Besides, Latvia can boast its economic growth, which is proved with economic indicators and credit ratings awarded by international agencies. In the year 2003 Latvia had the most rapid economic development among all the other EU member states- 7,4%.

Key indicators of economic development

Increase over the previous year, in per cent					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004(forecast of the Ministry of Economics)
Gross domestic product	6,9	8,0	6,4	7,5	7,5
Consumer prices	2,6	2,5	1,9	2,9	5,5
% of GDP					
General government budget fiscal balance	-2,6	-2,0	-2,3	-1,6	-2,1
Central government debt	12,2	13,8	13,3	13,4	14,9
Current account balance	-6,4	-9,0	-7,0	-8,6	-9,5
Exchange rate, LVL per US dollar	0,606	0,628	0,618	0,571	0,55
Exchange rate, LVL per euro	0,560	0,563	0,583	0,645	0,66
Rate of job seekers(% of economically active population, 15-64 years old)	14,6	13,3	12,1	10,7	10,0

Corporate Tax Rates in European Countries (01.1999)



Source: Latvian Development Agency

A reference to the figure: An inherent feature of the favourable investment climate in Latvia is the low corporate tax, which is the second lowest in Europe

The aim of the government's economic policy is to ensure sustainable and balanced economic and social development and implement the transition from labour-intensive economy to a knowledge-based one achieving the EU average GDP per capita level within next 20-30 years. In order to achieve this goal a stable macroeconomic environment is maintained and structural reforms are directed towards growth and deeper integration into the EU. The law guarantees the protection of foreign investment, non-residents can repatriate profit and capital freely and equal terms are provided to domestic and foreign entrepreneurs. Moreover, the support of the Eu funds will facilitate structural changes within the economy and help to reduce social and economic disparities.

1.1. A brief overview of the national labour market.

Current labour market

The total labour market of Latvia is 1.3 millions, the largest concentration of the labour force is in Riga and other biggest Latvian cities – Daugavpils, Liepaja and Jelgava. In general, the demographic situation is characterised by a decline in the total population, mainly due to emigration, and by the decline in natural increase. The population decreased by 5.4% in Latvia between 1990 and 1994. By all accounts, the population of Latvia is ageing. This is confirmed by the increasing share of people over 65 years of age in the total population. They account 13.1% in Latvia as of January 1994. However, economic development in recent years has made a positive impact on the labour market and the number of employed aged 15-64 years increased (by 2% in 2003). The employment rate of females is comparatively high (57,8%) exceeding the average the EU employment rate. Women comprised 48,7 % in the total number of employed. The majority of population is employed in manufacturing comprising 17,4% of the total number of employed while 15,3% are employed in trade, 13%- in agriculture, hunting and forestry. In I quarter 2004 the number of employed aged 15-74 years increased by 8,8 thsd compared with the corresponding period of the previous year.

Labour market indicators

Despite the employment increase, registered unemployment on the 1st of February, 2004 rose by one fifth of a percentage point from the previous month to 8.8%. This was up from 8.7% a year before. Also the share of job seekers aged 15-74 years in economically active population increased over the year from 10,7% in I quarter 2003 to 11,5% in quarter 2004 as the number of economically active population decreased.

According to the data of the National Employment Agency, 93,4 thsd unemployed persons were recorded at the end of May 2004 (91,6 thsd at the end May 2003). The regional distribution of registered unemployment remains very dispersed- the highest unemployment rate is in Latgale, where in several districts it exceeds 20%. The lowest unemployment rate being 4.6% is in Riga. In general registered

unemployment rates are much higher in country districts than in the cities. Despite the high numbers of unemployed people, in Latvia there is an important inflow and accessibility of new specialists in the labour and intellectual market. To continue, Latvia is one of the leaders in Europe regarding the number of university students per number of inhabitants – 4.3% thus leaving behind such countries of the Baltic Sea Region as Sweden and Germany, falling only behind Finland (4.4%). Besides, the average annual university enrolment growth since 1995 constitutes 18%.

At present the largest inflow of the new specialists within an intellectual market is in branches of business administration, legal and communication sciences but tendencies show that in the nearest future engineering sciences would become the most popular among the new specialists. At present the most important engineering science specialities within the intellectual market are mechanics, electrical engineering and electronics, as well as the IT.

Therefore, it is important to prepare the new specialists in future thus incorporating into the New Economy business model. It is necessary to stress on IT literacy and its duly mastering – at present already 18% of peoples (in 2001) acquire IT knowledge in grades 1 – 9, while 90% of peoples – in grades 10 –12. Mastering of foreign languages as well starts on the school level, for example, 90.7% of peoples master the English language in schools.

Additionally, presence of internationally recognised curriculum in schools and universities guarantee the professionalism of graduates. For example, engineering curricula in the largest universities are similar to that offered by the universities in Pittsburgh, Stockholm and Helsinki.

1.1.2. Types of companies in operation: international, SMEs etc., catering for local/regional/national or European/ international markets.

In the first five months of the year 2004, there is a remarkable growth of newly registered companies in Latvia. In particular, if in the first five months of the year 2003 there were 2906 new companies registered, then in the first five months of this year there were more than 32% – 3847 companies registered.

This tendency is like an evidence that gradually our economic system becomes more stable and that the situation is improving. The beginnings of the continuous improvement can be traced ten years earlier when the growth of newly registered companies started. As one of the undoubted explanations of this activity might be the joining to EU and the access to investments and funds of this organisation. Possibly, the part of new companies' tendencies of activities can be explained by the wish of some businessmen to start new history of credit.

Division of economically active companies and corporations in Latvia, the year 2002, according to the form of properties and business activities (according to the actual whereabouts of an office; except farmers' households).

Total number of companies and corporations	From those – according to the form of business activities					
	Limited liability company	Joint-stock company	Individual businessman	Municipal enterprise	State enterprise	Other forms
42549	33483	816	6351	445	99	1355

Division of economically active companies and corporations in Latvia, the year 2002, according to the form of economic activity (according to the actual whereabouts of an office; except farmers' households).

Total number of companies and corporations	From those- according to the form of economic activity								
	AB	CDE	including D	F	G	H	I	K	JLMNO
42549	1154	5487	5163	2470	18081	1975	2769	6314	4299

Agriculture, huntsmanship and forestry A Financial mediation J
 Fishing industry B Operations with real estate,
 Mining industry C lease and other business
 Manufacturing industry D transactions K
 Electrical power, gas and water supply E State administration and
 Building F protection; obligatory
 Wholesaling and retailing; repair of social insurance L
 motor-cars, motorcycles, objects of Education M
 individual use and domestic equipment G Health and social care N
 Hotels and restaurants H Other municipal and
 Transport, storage and communications I individual services O

As it can be concluded from the tables, in Latvia the most popular form for organising business is limited liability companies and their activities mainly do with wholesaling and retailing, as well as with repair of motor-cars, motorcycles, objects of individual use and domestic equipment.

1.2. Recent changes in the labour market as a result of increasing European integration and globalisation.

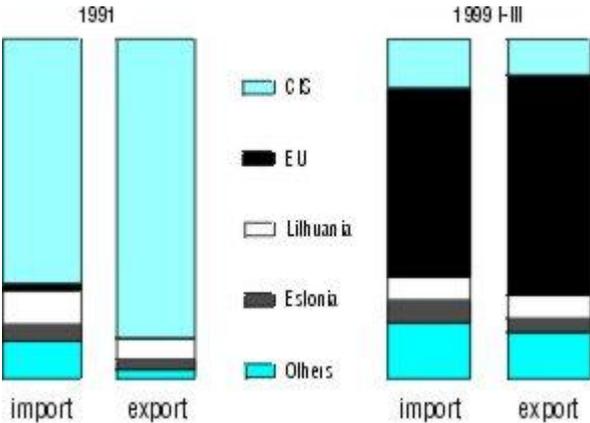
The three Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - have made impressive progress since the early 1990s, when they suffered a severe transitional shock as a result of the breakdown of the Soviet economy. Having regained independence in 1991, they quickly opened their small economies to international competition and aligned their economic policies with those of other market economies. However, while the economic transition to the market system can be regarded as essentially achieved, the restructuring of industry, agriculture and services needs to continue at a high pace because the Baltic States are still far behind OECD countries in terms of economic development. Private initiative and capital are now the main driving forces for development. The privatisation of state property is on the whole completed. Only a few state monopolies are not yet privatised. In recent years the business environment in Latvia has been substantially improved by introducing the EU body of legislative acts (*acquis communautaire*) and implementing The *Action Plan for Improvement of Business Environment*. During last years steady progress has been made in the strengthening of competition policy, insolvency procedures and regulation of public utilities. New institutions have been established and now

are operating in these areas. The Commercial Law, testifying to a fundamental reform of the business environment, came into force in 2002.

The government’s tax policy is aimed at the reduction of the tax burden on entrepreneurial activity, which would foster economic growth and ensure competitiveness. As a result of tax reduction the share of tax revenues in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) has decreased from 33% in 1998 to 28% in 2003. Currently the corporate income tax rate in Latvia is among the lowest (15%) in the EU. In addition, legislation provides special corporate income tax relief for large-scale investment projects as well as for enterprises operating within the special economic zones.

In spite of the fact that Latvia has joined EU, it can be observed that in the majority of companies in which the holders of capital shares, are foreign companies, these capital shares are “overtaken” by investors of Latvia side or joint ventures are liquidated. For example, in the first five months of the year 2004, looking at the “traditional” foreign cooperation partners, it can be stated that in the same period the number of newly registered companies is bigger than the number of liquidated (or sold) companies only in Russia (13) and Poland (8). In other contries this tendency is negative and the numbers are the following: Lithuania (-4), Estonia (-3), Sweden (-7), Germany (-24), USA (-33)

Latvia’s Foreign Trade by Group of Countries



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

A reference to the figure: Latvian export and import markets have during recent years changed substantially and the national economy is not dependent on a single market. In 1991, Latvia’s main trade partners were Russia and other CIS countries, while in 1999, 64.9% of Latvian export and 55.7% import turnover originate from trade with EU countries.

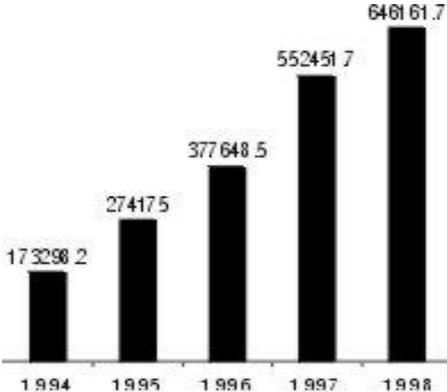
Foreign companies operating in Latvia especially appreciate the highly qualified, educated and easily adaptable workforce speaking several languages and available at prices which are by far lower than those in the investor countries.

The Latvian government recognises the contribution of foreign investment to the national economy and actively promotes the inflow of foreign investment. Latvian legislation is liberal and encouraging to investment. Foreign investors are provided the same opportunities as national businesses and even offered special incentives.

Business conditions in Latvian free ports and special economic zones are particularly beneficial.

Foreign investors have evaluated the advantages of Latvia as a place for investment. Many companies well known in the world have already noticed Latvia, and the inflow of foreign investment keeps growing from year to year. Latvia is among the leaders in Central- and Eastern European countries by accumulated foreign investment.

Accumulated Foreign Investment in Latvia



Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia

A reference to the figure: The rapid growth of foreign investment in Latvia shows that foreign investors appreciate the favourable investment environment and the economic growth of Latvia.

Accrued Foreign Direct Investment by Industry
(at end of March 2004, %)

Commercial services	Trade	Finances	Manufacturing	Energy
21%	19%	15%	14%	9%
Communication	Transport	Other		
9%	8%	5%		

At the end of March 2004, accrued DFI (direct foreign investment) comprised 1990,1mln lats or 30% of the annual GDP output. The largest investments were made in real estate and various sectors of business services, industry and trade. In January-March 2004 the inflow volume of DFI comprised 4,6% of GDP. The most noteworthy FDI came from Germany, Russia, the Netherlands and Denmark.

The most prospective production sectors capable of attracting foreign investment are:

Information Technologies. A state-of-the-art telephone and data communications network, allied to the availability of highly qualified, inexpensive IT specialists, make Latvia an ideal contract manufacturing and outsourcing base.

Electronics and mechanical engineering. These sectors provide a long tradition of excellence and the availability of relevant skills for the investor.

Chemical and pharmaceutical industries offer a highly developed scientific research structure, and strong links to the Russian and CEE markets.

Wood processing. With 45% of Latvia covered by forests, wood products are its principal export commodity, it is one of the most dynamic industries in Latvia. The industry growth is the result of exports increase as about 70 % of the products are exported and the EU member states are the main sales market.

Food processing industry offers high quality raw materials and long standing traditions of trading with Russia and the Baltic Region.

Textiles industry. Well qualified, experienced and inexpensive labour makes Latvia an excellent base for high-quality and cost-effective textile production. Excellent transportation structures and a long industrial tradition, with West European work practices, support the investor in all of these sectors.

1.3. International takeovers: How many companies have recently been taken over by foreign companies and vice versa.

In the recent years several big foreign enterprises have bought Latvian companies. Only in the first six months of the year 2004, several big Latvian companies have been overtaken by foreigners. For example, Norwegian food enterprise "Orkla Foods" has disseminated the announcement about the acquirement of "Spilva"-Latvia's biggest fruit's and vegetables' processing company. The shares' control-packet of one of the Latvia's biggest textile industry companies "Lauma" has been sold to Estonian investment partner group "Alta Capital". Latvian monopolcompany of telecommunications "Lattelekom" was bought by Finnish "Telia/ Sonera". This process is still going on.

Economic relations

Germany is Latvia's main trading partner. In 2002 (Jan. - Nov.), imports from Germany accounted for 17.1% of total Latvian imports; 15.7% of Latvian exports were destined for Germany. Germany also takes first place when it comes to direct investment - before Sweden, Denmark and the US. The largest single investors were Ruhrgas AG, Preussen Elektra, Vereins- und Westbank, NordLB and Glasseiden GmbH Oschatz.

Bilateral agreements have been concluded on the protection and promotion of investments (April 1993), air, sea and road transport (April 1993) and double taxation (February 1997).

(For this point also part 1.2. has to be looked at.)

2. New linguistic demands in the private and public sectors resulting from European integration and globalisation: languages and skills/competencies

Due to the Europe's integration and globalisation process the demands for specialists who are already working or just start working in the companies of private and public sectors have been vitally changed. In the last 13 years after the regaining independence, also economy of Latvia has become international. Therefore, in the first place, Latvian businessmen have to know how to work and communicate, arrange documents, keep correspondence, etc. according to the requirements of a certain country's legislation system. Then, secondly, they have to know languages of the main countries investing in Latvia (reference to 1.2.) and of the main trading partners and be able to use them appropriately. The most important demands to local businessmen of private and public sectors are: the competence to communicate (orally and in written form), the ability to take part in the face-to-face conversations and discussions, as well as to talk on the phone, the readiness to prepare different kinds of documents in foreign languages in a quick but qualitative manner and if it is necessary to be ready to translate from/to Russian, English, German, French and Spanish languages. On average, services of translators are expensive and inefficient, that is the reason why both: Latvian and foreign companies prefer employing specialists, for example, lawyers, economists, accountants, managers, etc., who are good at foreign languages. Among that kind of companies can be mentioned the following ones: "Lattelekom" (the biggest company of telecommunications), "Latvenergo" (the biggest electrical power company), "Latvijas gāze" (the biggest gas company).

In Latvia there are working several big international banks, like Germany's "Vereinsbank", Finland's "Nordea", etc. In these banks mainly the working languages are Latvian and English.

Questioning leaders of several joint- companies (Lattelecom, Rigas Radio Rupnica etc), we have come to the conclusion, that in the companies working in the international environment there is a need for various kinds of specialists (for example, engineers, IT specialists, accountants, secretaries, managers, clerks, etc.) who master one or more foreign languages. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for highly knowledgeable and skillful employees in a number of specialised fields, like a chartered accountant who knows English. It is because that in Latvia there are several international companies from the EU, Norway and also the USA and many other joint stock companies. In general, the basic communication language in these companies is the English language. Therefore, it has to be highlighted that English as a means of communication has a really significant role in foreign companies which are leading their business in Latvia and also in Latvian companies which have partners abroad. However, not only English is used as a work language in business. For example, the Russian language is still of the utmost importance and gradually the German language is gaining popularity for there are many investors in Latvia's economy from these countries and many joint business entities have been founded.

Not taking into account rapid process of internalisation of our labour market, till this time there has not been a national research on the theme of the role and importance of foreign languages in private and public sectors carried out. Consequently, it is not possible to make any summarising conclusions. While there

has been a research “Necessary Skills and Competences for the Social and Economic Needs of Latvia” carried out by the Association of Employers in cooperation with the World Bank. This shows that our country thinks about innovative economy based on knowledgeable people resources where science is integrated with national economy. Therefore the next logical step would be to carry out a research regarding linguistic and intercultural skills and competences due to increasing importance of foreign languages in daily life of Latvia’s economy.

3. In regard to non-language graduates, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages / skills and competences – are sought after on the national labour market?

According to the results of questionnaires, now-a-days Latvia’s national labour market is supposed to be demanding and thought to be based on rather competitive principles. This means that non-language graduates are expected to use foreign languages in their daily routines fluently and those who cannot deal with it are made to quit the labour market sooner or later. Moreover, the results reveal that it is not enough to know just one foreign language – it is already a standart. Preferences are given to possible candidates who know two or more languages, for example, English and German, and then can also come the Russian and French languages. However, relying on the answers of employers employment of “foreign” workers for linguistic reasons in Latvia is not common. Still valuable are professionals in their field of work who in case of urgent need can learn a foreign language afterwards.

Nevertheless, corresponding to the requirements of our labour market, people have started to learn foreign languages *on their own*. They understand that if they are not able to have a conversation with their foreign partners or possible investors they will lose bargains. They will lose bargains even then if they have done all the preparatory work and all the documents are in order but they cannot discuss details or sign agreements in the language that is spoken by people of the other side (either the native language, or any foreign language they speak in). To add more, not knowing foreign languages can also be a reason for low quality of work and mistakes in the work process or in the result of it.

If a person does not know foreign language his/her ability of being communicative lessens and a person becomes shy and timid but these are not the qualities a successful businessman should possess. Consequently, lack of knowledge of foreign languages can turn the best businessman into unsuccessful one.

Apart from knowing foreign languages people have to know something about the people and the culture of the countries their business partners and investors come from. In other words, it is a matter of knowing and observing the culture and language etiquette of other countries. It includes useful knowledge of saying “hello” and “good-bye”, shaking hands, giving presents and flowers, etc. It is advisable to get that kind of information before you welcome foreign business partners or go abroad yourself.

One more important thing before making any connections with foreign companies is to know their business history, history of their company in order to leave good impression (showing that you are really interested in cooperation) and also to escape unpleasant surprises regarding their financial situation, etc.

4. In regard to language graduates (bachelor and master) outside language-related industries and professions, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages / skills and competences - are known to enhance career prospects?

In regard to language graduates (bachelor and master) outside language-related industries and professions there are several important things they have to acquire to enhance career prospects.

First of all, they miss specialised vocabulary even if it is only vocabulary of business. During the studies they have learned patterns and vocabulary of general language not paying attention to specific fields of activities, for example, technical terms, medicine, law, economics, geography, etc. If they join to these specific fields and decide upon taking up other specialities they have to acquire missing vocabulary, specific terms. In spite of the fact that the situation sounds to be difficult and problem causing, it is easy to overcome. As newly-coined specialists are language graduates they do not find it frustrating to learn supplementary vocabulary. They can do it individually or attend some specific courses organised for this particular purpose. Sometimes courses have to be found by employees themselves while sometimes they are specially organised by companies where they are working.

Second problem issue is the missing knowledge about the processes going on in a certain field of industry where a language graduate has decided to work. One thing is just not to know the appropriate vocabulary one needs to explain certain procedures (as it is mentioned above – this problem can be easily solved); other thing is to have language but not be able to talk about particular procedures even in one's native language. Here the main importance lies in the fact whether a language graduate can cooperate with new employers and find a way out. One of the possible solutions for companies is to organise special training programmes for non-specialists thus providing them with the necessary information.

Third question is more of personal characteristics, namely, it concerns person's ability to communicate with colleagues, readiness to provide individual input in the sake of a company's development, etc.

In brief, these are the main points that have to be taken into account if we are speaking about possibilities for language graduates outside language-related industries and professions to enhance their career prospects.

5. Validation of learning, assessment, certification – what does the labour market recognise and value?

In Latvia in all the higher education establishments foreign languages (English, French, German) are included in the compulsory part of studies programmes. For example, in the University of Latvia courses of foreign languages have been offered to students as a part of their compulsory studies programme and the total amount of an acquisition of a foreign language constitutes 32 to 128 academic hours, that is 2 to 8 credit points.

Moreover, students have a possibility to choose courses of foreign languages as a part of their C part (free choice part) subjects (subjects chosen individually by students). In this case they can choose any of the offered languages and in any

amount of offered credit points. In the University of Latvia students can choose among 30 different languages, for example, Arabic, Chinese, Danish, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish, etc. languages. After the fulfilment of the requirements of foreign language courses the work of students and their acquired knowledge are certified in the supplements of the diploma in accordance with the declaration of Bologna where the amount of work and the gained mark are reflected.

Similar practice there is also in other Latvia's state and private higher education establishments. Regretfully, there is no precise information exactly which languages are offered in the establishments of higher education and how many students learn them. However, the data is gathered about the situation in secondary schools.

Number of students in general education secondary schools in Latvia learning foreign languages (school year 2003/2004)			
No	Learnt language	Number of schools	Number of students
1.	English	975	263427
2.	Russian	754	94042
3.	German	518	54878
4.	French	51	3758
5.	Swedish	9	179
6.	Latin	5	332
7.	Spanish	14	434
8.	Finnish	1	10
9.	Danish	2	25
10.	Yiddish	2	355
11.	Norwegian	3	28
12.	Polish	3	492
13.	Estonian	1	156
14.	Italian	2	39
15.	Japanese	1	145
16.	Nordic languages (Danish or Norwegian, or Swedish in Nordic Gymnasium)	1	300

Till now-a-days in Latvia there do not exist special university or inter-university language certificates.

Within the settings of different exchange programmes (Socrates/ Erasmus, Lingua) approx. 500 students from Latvia go abroad to countries of the EU, to the USA or Canada, or Japan to study or work as assistants of language teachers. These exchange programmes have to be looked upon very positively because all of participants of these programmes return to Latvia with evitably better knowledge of languages and experience of studies' process completed abroad. Moreover, their world outlook is much broader and they are ready to join the international labour market and they are competent enough to analyse the situation in Latvia in all spheres of life in comparison with other countries.

In Latvia it is possible to take many exams with recognised international certificates.

For example, in British Council there is a possibility to take the following examinations:

- IELTS- accepted by most British, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand academic institutions. If a person wants to go to study or work in the USA it is possible to take TOEFL test (sometimes also European countries accept this test instead of IELTS) and GRE or GMAT tests in the USA Education center.
- Cambridge exams
 - Young learners
 - KET (key English test); elementary level
 - PET (preliminary English test); intermediate level
 - FCE (first certificate); upper intermediate level
 - CAE (certificate and advanced English); advanced level
 - CPE (certificate and proficiency English); very advanced level
 - BCC (business English certificate)
- Professional and Academic exams
 - ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants)
 - CIM (certificate, advanced certificate and diploma in marketing)
 - Shipbrokers' exam.

In the Goethe Institute it is possible to take TestDaF examinations as well as Das Grosse deutsche Sprachdiplom etc.

The majority of these certificates have been asked from young people who are going to study abroad. However, the practice of asking these certificates from people who are going to work abroad is not common yet.

In Latvia European Language Portfolio for reflecting students' knowledge of foreign languages is not widely used yet. Nevertheless, some steps have already been taken to change the situation for better. For example, the State Language Agency, founded in 2003, the 11th of November, being responsible for realising the project "European Language Portfolio in Latvia" in 2004, the 1st of July, announced the project competition with one of the main guidelines "Implementation and Introduction of European Language Portfolio in Latvia". All in all, there were three projects submitted but due to special criteria of the project evaluation commission the winner was acknowledged to be the Language Learning Centre. The idea of this project is to put into practice and make ready for conformation in The National Commission the European Language Portfolio for Adults.

Individual language portfolios compiled by graduates themselves can be met rather seldom in Latvia, however, they are present.

In Latvia in-house language tests in the biggest international companies are not practised.

6. Communication and co-operation between higher education institutions / public authorities and the world of work (private and public employers, the social partners, professional associations etc) – aims and structures

Communication and cooperation between higher education establishments and public authorities and labour market is significant matter but not well worked out in

Latvia. There are no information centers or special state organisations in Latvia which would work with these matters.

Once a year there is Career Information Day for Students where students can get information about possible study programs as well as information from part of employers about the situation in Latvia's labour market and mostly needed professions. Other possibility either for future-to-be students or any person is to look through job advertisements in that way getting information about the situation in our labour market.

However, some programs of University of Latvia have started to make direct connections with relevant fields of world of the work by sending their students to practice. For example, department of foreign language teaching/learning methodology from the faculty of Education and Psychology (University of Latvia) has started project of mentoring thus showing their students real picture of their future workplace-school.

7. Institutional, regional and national career services

In Latvia there are several regional career services in municipalities and one national career service in Riga if with these words we understand help of professionals to people who cannot choose their careers. In these career services professional psychologists and specially trained persons help to find right paths of career according to people's individual character features and abilities tested by specific programs. Test takers have to give answers to a number of written and oral questions. Then, on the basis of the analysed data professionals give advice to a person about the most appropriate and suitable careers to him/her.

These career services mainly are used by secondary-school graduates who have to choose their future study programs and also by unemployed people who have to change their careers.

8. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to bring about improved consultation and co-operation between higher education and the world of work

Local/regional level

More attention could be devoted to the Career Information Day for Students for it could be convenient time and place when and where not only information could be obtained by students but also information could be exchanged by higher education institutions and the world of work.

Businessmen could be invited by universities to look through their study programs and see what kind of specialists they are educating so that necessary changes could be made according to the recent situation in the labour market.

In every company there could be a special person who would maintain connections with universities informing them about the specialists they are missing. And vice versa- universities could have a person who would inform companies what kinds of specialists are graduating.

Special booklets by universities could be sent to companies with the information what kind of specialists they are educating and then some students relevant to companies' field of work could be taken for practice.

Students of universities could be invited by companies to participate in their projects and also vica versa.

Member State and European level

There could be regular change of information organised (either as a conference or sending out reports) so that good ideas from other countries could be borrowed and used in practice.

Information conference about the latest trends in European and world's labour market could be organised once a year. This kind of event could serve as an information stock where different problems are discussed and solutions found.

9.Process recommendations: measures to be taken to survey higher education graduates and to provide careers advice in regard to linguistic and intercultural requirements

Institutional level

Higher education institutions could maintain closer connections with graduates to trace their careers.

University of Latvia graduates could be questioned whether they are satisfied with the level of acquired linguistic and intercultural skills and competences at universities; are they able to use them in their work if there is a need.

Employers of university of Latvia graduates could be questioned to find out whether they are satisfied with the level of their employees acquired linguistic and intercultural skills and competences at university; are their employees able to use them in the work if there is a need.

Clear requirements for each vacant position in regard to linguistic and intercultural skills and competences could be worked out by employers.

Member State and European level

In each country there could be an international information center founded and these centers could carry out researches in their countries and then share the gathered information.

10.Initial overarching recommendations regarding learning outcomes and academic profiles

Non-language graduates

Emphasis could be put on learning English for Specific Purposes not on general English in order to make young graduates to be able to work in foreign language according to their specialities.

More credit points could be given to learning foreign languages.

Several foreign languages could be offered at universities.

Suggested outcomes of the process of learning foreign languages could be introduced at the European level.

New, more intensive methods could be implemented in practice.

Learners' individual language portfolios could be activated.

Language graduates

Language programs could be more varied and the acquired themes could be from general English to business English and English for nurses.

Several foreign languages could be offered at universities.

Suggested outcomes of the process of learning foreign languages could be introduced at the European level.

New, more intensive methods could be implemented in practice.

Learners' individual language portfolios could be activated.

11.Initial recommendations regarding validation of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences

Institutional level

Common system regarding validation of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences could be introduced among universities.

Employers

Advertising vacant positions employers could clearly state what kind of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences they would like to receive together with CV if they ask any at all.

Member State and European level

Common system in all countries regarding validation of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences could be introduced among universities, language courses, etc. based on the European Language Portfolio.

12.Needs for future projects, studies and research

Local/regional level

A research regarding foreign languages and labour market of Latvia should be carried out and deep analysis done.

Member State/ European level

More often information change conferences or seminars could be organised.

Similar projects regarding specialisations of graduates and their relevance to labour market could be carried out.

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