

I n t e g r a t i o n o f S o c i e t y

Latvia is a distinctly multiethnic and multicultural society. Latvia pursues an active long-term policy aimed at the integration of various ethnic groups within society. Latvian language training, support for naturalization of non-citizens, coordinated projects in areas of education, culture and public information constitute the main elements of this policy. Latvia has benefited from a broad cooperation with international organizations on society integration issues.

Better coordinated political oversight

The Government of Latvia decided in the fall 2002 to create a new Cabinet post of the Minister for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs (MSIA), which focuses its efforts on promoting dialogue among different groups of Latvia's society and protecting the rights of minority groups. The new institution consolidates administrative structures and subordinates to the MSIA the existing Department for Society Integration from the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Minority Affairs from the Naturalization Board.

Sufficient resources provided

In the next year, the budget passed by the Government has assigned 315,000 Euro for running of the MSIA, while the total funding of programs overseen by the MSIA will amount to 2,150,000 Euro. The funding allocated to integration issues will increase through the expenditure of EU funds (ACCESS and PHARE) and increased government co-financing. All in all the funding for society integration programs from both state budget and international programs will reach about 4,75 million Euro next year. In addition, funding continues for the Naturalization Board, the National Program of Language Training and other smaller programs related to state language training.

Society integration program

The State Program "Integration of the Society in Latvia" was established in 2001 and contains projects in the areas of public information, culture, education and others. Projects are financed through the Society Integration Fund, which is managed by a dedicated Secretariat. With the establishment of the new Ministerial post for Society Integration Affairs, the minister has assumed the coordination of the implementation and annual review of the program.

Dialogue with minorities

The MSIA will create a Consultative Council for Integration Issues in order to involve representatives of minority groups in a dialogue with the Government and to consult them in the drafting of integration legislation and decision making process. In addition, the MSIA will renew the work of the inter-institution working group dealing with integration affairs. The MSIA also plans to increase dialogue with regions and on the municipal level.



The Festival "Zelta kamoliņš" gathers minority representatives to express the beauty of different cultures.

/ Photo: The Festival "Zelta kamoliņš"/