



EUROPE – THE “SIXTH” DEVELOPEMENT REGION OF LATVIA?

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Waves of Latvian emigration

1945	100-150	thousands
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... 2012	200	thousands
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... 2022	100-150	thousands
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... 2030	The last Latvian switches off the lights in Riga Airport	
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Latvians in Europe ...

- ✓ Scattered all over Europe
- ✓ Largest communities in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Sweden
- ✓ Meet mainly through common educational, cultural and artistic activity
 - +/- 26 formal and informal associations (15 linked to the ELA)
 - 30 Latvian heritage schools
 - 15 groups of choir and dancing activity
 - 2 local chambers of commerce
 - 7 mediums of communication (3 newspapers and 4 internet portals)

The ELA is ...

- ✓ The voice of the European Latvian diaspora in Latvia, Europe and in the world
- ✓ Established in 1951, but registered as NGO in Latvia since 2010
- ✓ Has 15 member organizations from 10 European countries other than Latvia
- ✓ Member of the World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) and of the Europeans throughout the World (ETTW)
- ✓ Addresses actively Latvian officials, local governments, businesses, NGOs

Diaspora's economic impact...

- ✓ Remittances (351 milj. lats or 2% of GDP in 2011)
- ✓ Market for Latvian goods and services, possibly
- ✓ Sales agents, possibly
- ✓ Source of qualified labor, possibly
- ✓ Source of human capital, possibly
- ✓ Source of financial capital, possibly

The ever increasing presence of Latvian people in Europe is an opportunity for Latvia, not a loss ...

but...

... before benefits arrive, certain adjustment in people's perception and in national policies is required

- ✓ UNDERSTAND THAT MIGRATION IS NORMALITY
fierce competition for people; labor recruiting strategy
- ✓ RECOGNIZE THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF DIASPORA
think positively; encourage networking
- ✓ NOTICE THAT DIASPORA NETWORKING IS A CONTACT SPORT
be patient; find leaders; build professional networks
- ✓ ASSIST NEW DIASPORA ASSOCIATIONS
limited capacity; support educational and cultural projects

Europe should help...

Free movement of people is a founding principle of the EU:

- ✓ Latvia - 10%, USA - 7%, old EU - 2.3%

Without compensatory transfers, it weakens the fiscal position of sending countries:

- ✓ Latvia - 2.4%, USA - 15%

Provokes the issue of preservation of migrants' national identity:

- ✓ European citizens concept should include cultural and linguistic rights

And there we are...

“Inspiring emigrants to think differently will be a big task for whatever [Latvian] government takes shape after the October 2nd [2010] parliamentary elections.”

Migration and Latvia. Far from home, *The Economist*, 01.10.2010.

“Latvia’s future development will depend from the quality of the management of Latvia’s limited human resources, including those from diaspora.”

ELA’s suggested wording for Latvia’s National Development Plan 2014-2020