

## **Latvian Preliminary Position on Priority Fields to be Included in the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007 – 2013**

As a first reaction to the European Commission drafted the Working document for the Community Strategic Guidelines for economic, social and territorial cohesion (Guidelines), Latvia elaborated its initial contribution to the process of the preparation of the Guidelines. Throughout the appraisal of the Working Document of the services of the Commission on the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013, the Ministry of Finance in cooperation with state institutions, and regional and social partners identified potential needs of investments to be considered when elaborating the Guidelines. Needs of supports were identified by comparing those mentioned in the three following documents:

- (1) Fields of support mentioned in the draft regulations of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), and the Cohesion Fund (CF);
- (2) Fields of support mentioned in the Single Programming Document and Cohesion Fund projects for 2004-2006; and
- (3) Support priorities mentioned in the Working Document of the Commission on the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007 – 2013.

This document presents a list of investment needs that are specific for Latvia and are important in the light of preparation of the Guidelines and draft regulations. This document is meant for facilitating discussion between Latvia and the Commission, and it is prepared without prejudice to further position of Latvia in negotiations on the Guidelines, draft regulations, and programming exercise for 2007-2013.

**Issue 1: “Delivering the Goods” (Transport<sup>1</sup>)**

1. The main problem for Latvia, also for other Nordic Europe countries with low density of population, is reconstruction of the automobile roads, not limited to the TEN-T network, but rather including access roads to the TEN-T;
2. Improvement of transport safety in all modes of transport is necessary for sustainable transport development;
3. Development of sustainable public transportation, including passenger railways and local airports, in order to improve accessibility and relieve the pressure on the backbone transport infrastructure;
4. Accessibility of seaports throughout the year, both from the side of the sea and the land, evading risks of congestions and promoting sustainable development;
5. Even by utilising all resources available within the next programming period 2007-2013, it would not be possible to adequately integrate the Latvian transport structures into the TEN-T (the resources available in the present programming period allows below 10% of TEN-T reconstruction), therefore the issue of adequate financial means in framework of the financial perspective is to be one of the top priorities for Latvia.

**Issue 2: “Linking Europe” (Information Society)**

6. Latvia supports the e-content development efforts;
7. Need for continued investment into improvement of on-line services, ensuring adequate infrastructure both for the provider of services and for the consumer (including public administration information and telecommunication technology infrastructure, public access point development and improvement);
8. Need to promote awareness and skills of internet users.

---

<sup>1</sup> Including the passenger transportation, promoting accessibility and labour force mobility

**Issue 3: “Cleaner Environment” (Environment Protection)**

9. Taking into account low level of infrastructure development, need to continue investments into:
  - a. Water management and sewage development;
  - b. Waste collection and processing services, including management of household, nuclear and dangerous waste;
10. Considering low level of investments, additional support is necessary to:
  - a. Nature and biodiversity protection;
  - b. Revitalisation of contaminated sites;
11. Support to a number of enterprises struggling with ensuring compliance with environmental requirements, including development and introduction of innovative environment protection technologies, and integrated prevention of industrial pollution;
12. Foreseeing natural and technological risks and combating the consequences, including the elaboration and implementation of relevant strategies.

**Issue 4: “Kyoto+”**

13. Minimizing climate change and air quality promotion, especially focusing on introduction of use of renewable energy sources, including cogeneration processes;
14. Promotion of energy efficiency, especially in the area of central heating.

**Issue 5: “Smart Administration” (Efficiency of the public administration)**

15. Modernisation of the public administration;
16. Local level administration capacity building;
17. Implementation of the partnership principle across national, regional and local level, including public, private and voluntary sector.

**Issue 6: “Enlarging the Labour Force”**

18. Promotion of economic activity, including promotion of entrepreneurship and self employment, improvement of employment services infrastructure and management system;
19. Promotion of adaptability of the labour force, including development of basic skills, rise of qualification and re-qualification (particularly in less developed areas);
20. Increasing effectiveness of education system by rising quality of secondary and vocational education, promotion of higher education in natural sciences, technologically intensive and high value added areas.
21. Prolonging labour life, including active employment measures and lifelong learning system, improvements of labour environment, and flexible working-time management;
22. Investments in the infrastructure linked to promotion of human capital, including labour market and social, education, health and child care facilities.

**Issues 7 & 8: “Towards an Ideas Economy” / “Speeding up Innovation”**

23. Further development of R&D potential, particularly investments in infrastructure;
24. Integration of Latvian university and R&D centres into EU Joint Research Area, promotion of R&D network across whole territory of the country, including promotion of applied research;
25. Transfer of knowledge from universities and R&D centres to enterprises – developing networking between enterprises and universities and R&D centres, particularly between universities and SMEs, including application of modern entrepreneurial methods (clusters, business and technological parks etc.);
26. Commercialisation of new technologies;
27. Promotion of technologically and knowledge intensive as well as creative industries.

**Issue 9: “Access to Finance”**

28. Ensure access to financial resources for enterprises in order to promote entrepreneurial spirit by providing direct support, particularly focusing on creating new businesses;
29. Direct support to enterprises in order to create more jobs, improve infrastructure, and rise competitiveness.

**Issue 10: “Pacts with the Cities and Rural areas”  
(Promotion of Rural and Urban areas)**

30. Strengthening role of small and medium size cities as local economic driving force;
31. Improvement of environment for living and economic activity, including infrastructure development and reconstruction, as well as provision of services;
32. Development of tourism products of national and regional scale with clear economic potential;
33. Development of new cultural facilities and projects as well as revitalisation of cultural and historical heritage in order to promote local economies;
34. Special measures to reduce negative disparities amongst different parts of the territory and to promote balanced development:
  - a. energy networks (i.e., gas pipelines);
  - b. promotion of economic activities in economically underdeveloped territories;
  - c. revitalisation of former military and industrial sites;
35. Support to restructuring of housing sector, to address problems of access to housing (social aspect), quality, safety, energy efficiency of the housing, and technogenic risks involving deterioration of housing built in the Soviet times;
36. Promotion of balanced rural and urban development by developing sustainable public transport, improving connections between cities and rural territories, as well as improving traffic organisation in the cities.

**+ Territorial Cooperation**

37. Support to Commission proposal for cross border, trans-national and interregional cooperation.
38. For translational cooperation particular focus on spatial development aspects.