

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

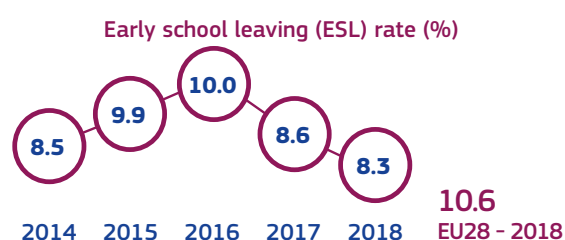
Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

LATVIA

SUMMARY

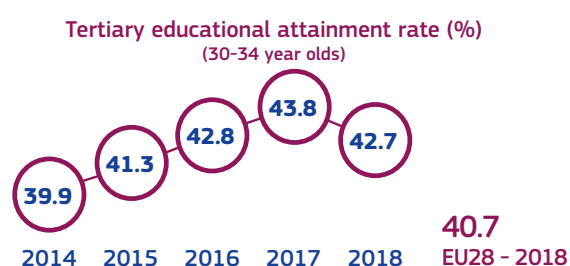
ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 273 million euro has been allocated to such operations in Latvia, with 15 014 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Latvia.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES



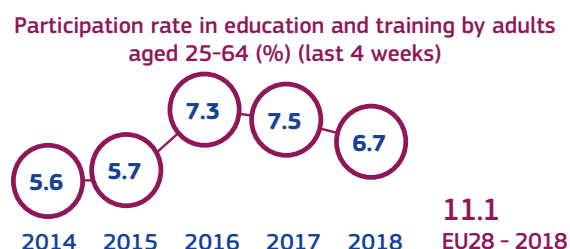
► The **early school leaving (ESL)** rate has continuously decreased in Latvia since 2014 and reached 8.3% in 2018, below the national and EU targets of 10%. However, the differences between ESL rates for women and men remain high with 5% and 11.4% respectively in 2018.

► The number of **low achievers in reading, mathematics and science** is below the OECD and EU average, but there are big differences in performance between pupils in rural and urban areas. .



► The **tertiary educational attainment rate** was just above the EU28 average in 2018 and exceeds the EU 2020 target rate of 40%. Women have a higher attainment rate than men (55.2% compared to 30.6% in 2018). The share of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics remains low at 20.5% compared with an EU28 average of 25.7% in 2017.

► The **adult participation rate in lifelong learning** remains a challenge despite continuous efforts and dedicated ESF operations. In 2018, the participation rate dropped to 6.7%, well below both the EU average of 11.1% and national target of 15%.



► Latvia has one of the highest **public expenditure rates in education** in the EU (5.8% of GDP in 2017).

EXPLANATORY NOTES

ESF European Social Fund

TO10 Thematic Objective 10

OP Operational Programme

IP Investment Priority

* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN LATVIA

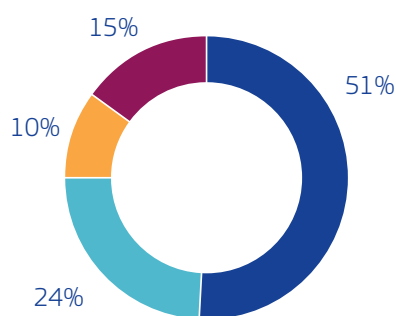
- ▶ Latvia has **one** ESF Operational Programme (OP) for the whole country: 'Implementation of Growth and Employment'.
- ▶ The OP has the following priorities relevant to Thematic Objective 10 (TO10):
 - ▶ Promoting **equal access and use of lifelong learning** of all age groups; expanding the number of quality offers of education and training, improving legislation and ensuring efficient management of resources, upgrading the skills and competences of the workforce through career guidance and validation of competences;
 - ▶ Improving the **quality and efficiency of tertiary education** to increase participation and attainment levels, particularly of disadvantaged groups;
 - ▶ **Reducing and preventing ESL** and promoting equal access to quality early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education, including different learning pathways for reintegration;
 - ▶ **Improving VET systems** to better meet labour market needs, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes.

38% of total ESF funding¹...

€273 826 242

...is allocated to the following TO10 investment priorities: **early school leaving (51%)**, **access to quality tertiary and equivalent education (24%)**, **enhancing access to lifelong learning (10%)**, and **improving the labour market relevance of education and training (15%)**.

Allocation of ESF TO10 funds



- Reducing and preventing early school leaving - IP10.i
- Improving quality and access to tertiary education - IP10.ii
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning - IP10.iii
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training - IP10.iv

STATE OF PLAY

85% of planned resources under TO10 had been allocated in 2018, with 12% spent.

Number of overall participations in TO10 operations by the end of 2018:

15 014

- ▶ **8 134** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ **28** participations in operations to improve the access to, and quality of, tertiary and equivalent education
- ▶ **6 852** participations in operations to improve the labour market relevance of education and training

¹ This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

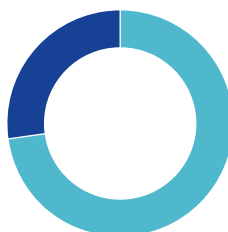
PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



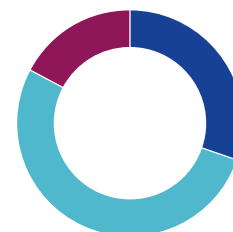
34% (5 154) Inactive²
63% (9 848) Employed

Sex

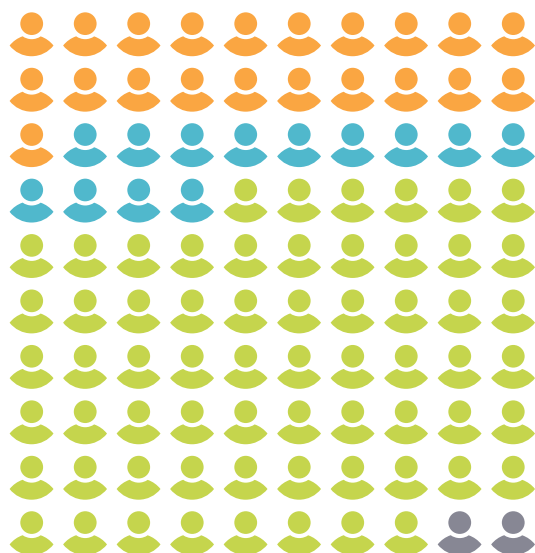


73% Women
27% Men

Age



30% (4 546) <25 years
52% (7 848) 25-54 years
17% (2 608) >54 years



21%

Primary (ISCED 1) or lower
secondary (ISCED 2) education³

13%

Upper secondary (ISCED 3) or
post-secondary education
(ISCED 4)

64%

Tertiary education
(ISCED 5-8)

2%

No education
(no ISCED)

24

Migrants

469

Other disadvantaged

468

Participants with
disabilities

7

Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Latvia include⁴:

- ▶ **712** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
 - ▶ **177** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
 - ▶ **279** participants went into education or training
 - ▶ **9** participants gained a qualification
 - ▶ **247** participants moved into employment upon leaving
- ▶ Using ESF financial support, nine joint doctoral programmes were developed and implemented (82% of the 2023 target); 22 new pedagogical tertiary study programmes were developed and implemented, thereby already meeting the 2023 target; and 59 tertiary study programmes were developed and implemented in other EU languages (95% of the 2023 target).⁵
- ▶ Some priority target groups have not been reached effectively, for example, employed people under the age of 25 with a low level of education (completed or incomplete basic education or general secondary education), and other adults with a low education level.

² The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

³ ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

⁴ Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

⁵ These results were achieved in 2019.

LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

► Stakeholder involvement

National project supervisory (monitoring) boards include employers, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, the Latvian Association of Large Cities, the Free Trade Union, the Employers' Confederation of Latvia and the Latvian Youth Council. It can be difficult to balance the interests of these different stakeholders, but their support and cooperation is a key component of operations' success.

► Work-based learning

ESF funding has been used to support the development of work-based learning and related national legislation. As a result of the ESF investments, there is a better understanding amongst stakeholders e.g. VET institutions, employers, and students, of their roles and responsibilities.

► EU added value

ESF funding in Latvia has been used in general secondary education and VET to develop methodological guidance for local governments and teachers. It has also provided the opportunity to pilot support to NEET youth activation activities, and to support students at risk of ESL.

► Coherence with ERDF

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has a high degree of coherence with ESF funding to support education and training. The ERDF is used to build and upgrade education infrastructure, for example, to provide IT learning tools and equipment, science equipment for classrooms, student dormitories and sports halls.

► Regional disparities

One of the main challenges in implementing the ESF T010 in Latvia has been the high regional disparities and fragmented capacity due to large number of local governments (119). Local governments are also more focused on ERDF investments.

► Ongoing challenges

Latvia is still looking to achieve a 50:50 participation rate in general and vocational education, and this is a challenging target. There are high dropout rates in VET compared to general education: in 2017-18 around 7.5% of students dropped out from general upper secondary education, while 19% dropped out from upper secondary vocational education.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

► Staff development at tertiary education institutions

ESF funding is used to support the development of existing academic and administrative staff and to attract new staff from overseas. The national institution of quality assurance in higher education (AIC) received capacity-building and training support for its application to join the European Quality Assurance Register, which it did successfully in 2018.

► Reducing early school leaving

This ESF T010 operation targets pupils in grades 5-12 as well as 1st to 4th year students enrolled in VET programmes. The operation is implemented by the State Education Quality Service, in cooperation with municipalities and education institutions. ESF funding is used to develop and strengthen the professional competence of education staff, and to provide direct support to young pupils in terms of specialist consultations, transport, dormitory, meals, as well as education materials, clothing, and footwear.

► Support for the integration of disadvantaged groups through vocational training

ESF supports targeted training for people with severe physical and mental disabilities. The training programmes have been developed in collaboration with employers in five vocational training programmes and 35 skills training programmes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Evaluation report 'Reduce study programme fragmentation and strengthening resource sharing', 2017. https://www.esfondi.lv/upload/8.2.1.izvertejuma_zinojums_4v_24072017.pdf

European Commission, Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

The ESF in Latvia: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=389&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Latvia: <https://www.esfondi.lv/sakums>

