

To the European Commission
Copies to:
Máire Geoghegan-Quinn
European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science
and
Valdis Dombrovskis, Prime Minister of Latvia

Letter of Latvian Scientists

Sir/Madam,

With this letter we wish to inform you about the financial situation regarding science funding in Latvia. Especially we would like to draw your attention to the situation of scientists involved in European Social Fund (ESF) financed projects 2009-2012, where the **objective was to recruit and revert human resources** (undergraduate and graduate students as well as experienced scientists from industry and abroad) **to the science in Latvia**. More than five hundred scientists are left without or with miserable financial support after the ESF projects ended at the end of 2012. Therefore, many **scientists are forced to leave Latvian science** taking nonscientific positions in enterprises or scientific positions abroad.

We would like to stress that the finances planned for science in Latvia in 2013 are even LVL 30 million lower than in 2012, reaching about LVL 90 million (including support from EU funds and private enterprises) for all scientific and associated institutions. Only LVL 3.3 million was granted for fundamental and applied research in 2013, which is only 0.02% of the GDP. Moreover, all attempts of the scientific community to reach a consensus on the finances for science with Latvian government have reached a dead end so far. For instance, many scientific institutions are facing a shortage of finances for infrastructure needs; and a proposal for additional LVL 5.5 million for these urgent needs for this year as well as plans for next years to increase the finances was refused by Latvian government this March.

It is also important to notice that the **Law on Scientific Activity** of Republic of Latvia **obliges to increase the financial support** for science to 0.15% of the GDP annually, until it reaches at least 1% of the GDP; however this **obligation has been ignored** during the last years. Additionally, in the **National Reform Programme of Latvia for the Implementation of the “Europe 2020” strategy** it was proposed to invest in science over LVL 130 millions, which **was also ignored**.

In light of this, we would like to appeal to you to admonish to the authorities of Latvia concerning their national and international obligations on financial support of science. This is of great importance not only to nationally important science, for example Latvian issues in humanities and social sciences, but even more to the sustainable growth of Latvian economy (knowledge-based economy). The economy of EU in general requires to promote development of new technologies in chemistry, biology, physics and applied sciences. No less important is research to meet the new EU targets for biological diversity in 2020. It is obvious, that an economically strong EU needs to raise research funding, not cut funding, as in the case of Latvia.

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