

20  
YEARS  
together



LATVIA

Twenty years ago, Latvia reclaimed its rightful place at the heart of Europe when it joined the EU. Since then, the country has seen positive changes. Our Union has invested in Latvia's economy, its digital future and in its cultural heritage. With support from the EU, Latvia now enjoys better infrastructure, more employment opportunities and greater economic prosperity. At the same time, Latvia has helped our Union move forward along the digital and clean transitions. **The European Union and Latvia are stronger together.**

## Creating opportunities and growth since 2004



Latvia's economy has grown prosperously over the past 20 years, with its **Gross National Income increasing by 8%** per year on average.



Since 2004, the **Latvian economy has steadily converged to the average of the EU-27**. The country's Gross Domestic Product per capita has gone from 47% of the EU-27 in 2004 to 72% in 2022.



As part of the Single Market, **Latvia has benefitted from the free movement of goods across the European Union**. Today, **the EU is the main destination for Latvia's exports of goods**, taking 64%. The value of these has increased from €2 billion in 2004 to €13.3 billion in 2023.



With more jobs and better employment opportunities, the country's **employment rate has increased** from 68% in 2004 to 77% in 2022.



**In 2014, Latvia officially adopted the euro as its currency**, allowing more businesses and citizens living in the euro area to embrace the advantages of the EU Single Market



With the support of EU funds, the percentage of Latvian households with internet access has increased substantially over the last two decades, rising from 15% in 2004 to 93% in 2023.

# Supporting Latvia's economy and society

Over the past 20 years, the EU's Cohesion Policy has strengthened the economic, social and territorial cohesion of EU Member States. **Over €10 billion in Cohesion Policy funding** has been invested in Latvia, benefitting citizens living in the country.

Driven by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Latvia has experienced significant progress in agriculture and rural development. **An investment of €5.8 billion in CAP funding has been directed towards the country, nurturing sustainable growth and prosperity in rural regions.**

With the support of up to **€1.97 billion in grants** from the EU, Latvia is helping Europe transform its economy and society, by investing in climate, digital and social actions:



Climate  
**42%**



Digital  
**23%**



Social  
**32%**

## Investing in regional transport

Latvia has benefitted from EU investments in transport infrastructure over the past 20 years. Today, it continues to see the benefits of EU funding for transport projects across the region. EU support is being channelled into the development of Rail Baltica - one of Europe's largest high-speed infrastructure projects. The project aims to establish a modern and sustainable rail link that will connect the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the European rail network. Rail Baltica will significantly reduce travel times between the Baltic States and major European cities.



## Modernising healthcare

For two decades, Latvia has benefitted from EU support in the area of public healthcare. Today, for instance, Latvia is using NextGenerationEU funding to invest in equipment and infrastructure for 10 hospitals and 40 clinics across the country. This will increase the availability of integrated and high-quality healthcare services for EU citizens living in Riga and other towns in Latvia.





## Playing a role in Europe's digital future

Thanks to EU funding and investments, Latvia has enjoyed greater connectivity, internet access and better digital infrastructure. With the support of WiFi4EU, more than 22 municipalities in Latvia now have access to public wifi hotspots. Latvia is also an integral participant in regional digital projects: As part of the Baltic Ring, which aims to connect Sweden and Finland via a fibre-based route through the Baltic states, Latvia is helping European countries connect with the global cloud, digital services and interconnection hubs globally.

## Advancing European research and innovation

In the 20 years since it joined the European Union, Latvian researchers and organisations have benefitted from access to EU grants. EU funding has led to more research projects and start-ups across the country.

With assistance from the European Innovation Council, for example, the Latvian start-up called Naco Technologies has created specialised nano-coatings and new materials that replace the need for platinum and other expensive materials in the production and usage of hydrogen.



## Standing in solidarity

Since 2004, Latvia has worked with other EU Member States to mobilise emergency relief through the Civil Protection Mechanism. During the 2023 wildfire season, for example, Latvia offered emergency specialists and firefighters to be prepositioned in Portugal, ready to support countries in need of firefighting assistance.



## Creating study opportunities

Over the past 20 years, young Latvian citizens have gained more opportunities to study across the European Union. Since 2004, almost 34 000 higher education students from Latvia have participated in the Erasmus+ programme. Through Erasmus+, almost 37 000 EU citizens have also enjoyed the opportunity to attend universities in Latvia



## Enriching our cultural heritage

Since Latvia became a member of the European Union, the EU has helped to promote Latvian culture, as well as the country's heritage. In 2014, for instance, Riga was awarded the title of European Capital of Culture. Throughout the year, Latvia hosted cultural activities and celebrations, attracting tourists to the country's capital city. The town of Liepāja will be Latvia's second European Capital of Culture in 2027.

## Enjoying Latvia's quality food

Over the past 20 years, EU citizens have been able to enjoy more high-quality foods, drinks and agricultural produce of Latvian origin. Today, four products from Latvia, including Latvijas lielie pelēkie zirņi (dried grey peas), are featured on the EU's list of products with protected designations of origin. Today, European consumers enjoy greater access to more authentic distinctive produce from all 27 EU Member States.



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