



Creative Age Management Strategies for SMEs in the Baltic Sea Region

Annex 1: Country Studies LATVIA

Carola Newiger-Bogumil



Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)



Bundesministerium
für Verkehr, Bau
und Stadtentwicklung

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Publication Date: 12. September 2012

This report has been produced within the EU-funded project Best Agers.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the [European Union](#) and the [German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development](#).

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

The Best Agers project is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013

More information about the project and its results is available at:
www.best-agers-project.eu

The Republic of Latvia



Socio-Demographic Situation (Selected Indicators)

Indicators	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
Area	64,589 sq. km	4,324,782 sq. km
Population (2007)	2,259,810	495,000,000
Population density (pop. per sq. km)	35 Inhabitants per sq. km	115 Inhabitants per sq. km
Capital	Riga	
Form of Government	Parliamentary Democracy	
number of children per woman (2008)	1.36	1.52
Average Age	39.6	40.3 (not EU27, but the average of the ten participating countries)

http://www.ipicture.de/daten/land_lettland.html, 12.04.12

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

Latvia is a parliamentary democracy, the capital city and seat of the government of the Republic is Riga. Latvia has 2,259,810 inhabitants, who are ethnically very heterogeneous: 57.7 % are Latvians, the largest ethnic minority with 29.6 % are Russians and 4.1 % of Belarusians, 2.7 % of Ukrainians, 2.5 % of Poles, 1.4 % of Lithuanians and 2 % of others. Latvia, with 35 inhabitants per square kilometre, has

only about one third of the average EU 27 population density.

In 1990, Latvia declared independence from the Soviet Union; however, the Parliament's decision could, de facto, be effective only after the collapse of the Soviet Union on 21 August 1991. In 2004, the Republic of Latvia became the Member State of the European Union.

After gaining independence, the Latvian leadership tried to pursue a radical derussification policy. The rights of the Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians and Poles were cut radically in this country. In 2003, still 21 % of the population were stateless, and thus in a worse economic position. Only through international pressure, and in particular the conditions on the way to the EU, the Latvians made their minority policies much more moderate. This transition was important because this small country could not afford to exclude more than one third of its population wither politically or economically.

The average age of Latvians in 2008 was 39.6, thus the Latvian society is slightly younger than the average age of the other countries participating in this study.

Due to the very low birth rate (1.36 children per woman) and a relatively high emigration rate (population rate: -2.27/1000), the population of Latvia is shrinking.

The 2009 Ageing Report, European Commission;
CIA World Factbook, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Results of the Negotiations Concerning the Cohesion Policy Strategies and Programmes in the Programming Period 2007-2013

Average life expectancy at birth (years)	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
(2008) males	65.95	76.03
(2050) males	78.13	83.10
(2008) females	76.67	82.08
(2050) females	85.17	87.87

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The life expectancy of the Latvian society is increasing. The average life expectancy of the Latvian males was at the level of 65.95 years on 2008. A life expectancy of 78.13 is projected for the year 2050. The Latvian females are currently 76.67 years old on average. They have and retain the lowest life expectancy among the other countries participating in this study; their projected life expectancy for the year 2050 is 85.17 years of age.

Population	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
Young Population (0-14 years) as % of total (2008)	13.7	15.7
Young Population (0-14 years) as % of total (2050)	12.6	14.1
elderly population (65 years and over) as % of total (2008)	17.3	17.1
elderly population (65 years and over) as % of total (2050)	29.6	28.8

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The age structure in 2008 consisted of the following groups: 13.7 % of the population were below 15 years, this proportion of the population is expected to decline further by 2050 to 12.6 %. The proportion of people over 65 years of age was at the level of 17.3 % and it is projected for the year 2050 with 0.8 percentage points over the EU27 average.

Old-age dependency ratio	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
(2008)	25	25
(2050)	51	50

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

The dependency ratio in 2008 reached in Latvia the value of 25 %, a ratio of 1:4 between the inactive people (aged 65 and older) and the workforce.

For the year 2050, a share of 51 % of the persons aged over 65 is assumed in relation to the labour force, and thus it shall double.

Participation Rate (2008)	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
15 - 64 years old males	77.8	77.8
15 - 64 years old females	68.3	63.4
55 - 64 years old males	67.6	57.3
55 - 64 years old females	54.9	38.2

European Commission - DG for Economic and Social Affairs: The 2009 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the EU-27 Member States (2008-2060), Luxembourg 2009

In 2008, the participation rate of Latvian males was at the level of 77.8 % and is precisely consistent with the EU average. The labour force participation of Latvian females aged 15 to 64 was at the level of 4.9 percentage points over the EU 27 average.

67.6 % of the male population of Latvia aged 55-64 in 2008 were economically active; this participation rate is after Sweden (76.6 %), Norway (74.8 %) and United Kingdom (69.4 %), the fourth largest among the countries participating in this study. 54.9 % of the Latvian women aged 55-64 were economically active in 2008.

The official retirement age is at the level of 61 years of age in the case of women and 62 years of age in the case of men. The effective retirement age is at the level of 62.7 years and higher. According to the plans of the Riga government, the retirement age will gradually be raised to 65 years of age since 2014.

http://www.europeonline-magazine.eu/lettland-will-rentenalter-auf-65-jahre-anheben_202738.html

Can carry out the current profession with 60 years	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
(2005)	53.9	58.2
first findings (2010)	58.1	58.7

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

53.9% of Latvians in 2005 believed that they would be able to perform their current work even at the age of 60. Five years later, this figure increased in Latvia by 4.2%. An increase was recorded only in the countries of Poland (by 6 percentage points to 49.6%) and United Kingdom (by 3.3 percentage points to 66.8%); in the case of all the other countries participating in this study, this value dropped in the period of 2005 to 2010.

Work affects the health mainly negatively	Latvia	Europe (EU 27)
(2005)	64.2	35.4
(2010)	52.5	25.0

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

In 2005, 64.2 % of the Latvian population believed that work endangers health. This placed Latvia at the penultimate position among the countries participating in this study, after Poland (65.3 %).

After the decrease of this value in 2010 by 11.7 %, to 52.5 %, Latvia is at the rear position with this approach; in comparison: In the United Kingdom only 14.4 % of the population believed that work is dangerous to the health.

(very) satisfied with the working conditions	Latvia	Europe (EU-27)
(2005)	70.2	82.3
(2010)	74.2	82.3

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

70.2 % of the Latvian employees were satisfied with their working conditions in 2005. Although this value increased in 2010 to 74.2 %, Latvia was at the penultimate position among the countries participating in this study, before Lithuania (70.5 %). This fact may perhaps have been due to the low participation in the workplace training.

Participated in the last 12 months at employer-paid-Trainings	Latvia	Europe (EU-27)
(2005)	22.0	26.1
(2010)	29.2	33.7

European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

The participation in the workplace training in 2005 was the lowest in Latvia. 22.0 % of the Latvian workers reported having participated in training in the last twelve months (in comparison: the Finnish value was 52.6 %).

Although by 2010 7.2 percentage points more Latvian workers participated in occupational training, Latvia, with the value of 29.2 % was at the penultimate place next to Lithuania.

Indicator for Work-Life Balance	Latvia	Europe (EU-27)
Working hours fit well or very well with Family or social obligations (2005)	76.0	79.4

Working hours fit well or very well with Family or social obligations (2010)	75.9	81.5
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European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), Dublin 2008; First Findings 2010: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/smt/ewcs/results.htm>

In the comparison of countries of the BSR in 2005, the working hours were compatible with the family and social obligations for 76.0 % of Latvian workers, which was under the EU 27 average. This placed Lithuania in the third to last position among the countries participating in this study, next to Poland (70.6 %) and Estonia (75.8 %).

But while the Polish and Estonian labour force in 2010 regarded the compatibility of their working hours with family and social obligations as better (the Estonian value increased by 4.8 %, and the Polish value even by 14.3 %) the value in Latvia decreased by 0.1 % to 75.9 %. Thus, Latvia was in the last position.

General Overview

Economic Development

The Latvian boom lasted from the turn of the millennium to the year 2008: prices and wages rose. But during the global financial crisis, the economy shrank by 18 %. While in 2010, Estonia and Lithuania began to recover, in Latvia, the economic performance was decreasing again. Since 2011, the situation has been improving also in Latvia. According to the forecasts, the upward trend will continue. Also in the coming years, the GDP will significantly increase, although the rapid economic growth in the years before the crisis will never be regained. However, there are employees who pay the bill: The employees suffered pay cuts at the level of up to 40 %.

Remuneration

In comparison to other EU Member States, the people of Latvia earn little: The average salary in 2008 was € 650 gross per month. It is a sharp increase compared to 2006, when the Latvian employees earned only € 450 on average. Since the beginning of 2012, there is a minimum wage in Latvia, which amounts to LVL 200 (€ 285). Latvia will adopt the euro currency in 2014.

Criticism of Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs in Latvia criticise the labour law as inflexible, and associate the lack of quality of the vocational training system. A practical approach to adapting the training

to the needs of the company is urged. The conditions of research and development require improvement from the point of view of entrepreneurs.

In terms of the economic policy, entrepreneurs formulate their demands for a clear and long-term oriented economic policy concept. The focus here should be the measures to increase the competitiveness of the economy to ensure sustainable and long-term stable growth. In part, entrepreneurs complain about the unrecognised vision for further development of the region.

The dissatisfaction with the tax system and the tax burden still remains high in Latvia.

Unemployment

In 2009, the unemployment rate reached 17.1%; in 2010, it was at the level of 18.7 % and for 2011, the forecast was 16.1 %. The highest unemployment rate was recorded in the region of Latgale, while in Riga it was the lowest, at the level of 11.0 %. The following also applies to Latvia: The urban areas show a lower unemployment rate than the rural areas. Despite the high unemployment, many companies are looking for professionals.

Migration

One reason is the migration, particularly labour migration. Latvian emigrants emigrate mainly to Russia, Great Britain and Germany. After the EU enlargement, only a few countries opened their labour markets for the citizens of Latvia. Nevertheless, in the period 2004 and 2007, about 15,000 people emigrated annually. The rate of returns is extremely low. With the development of the economic situation in Latvia, it should be expected that the skilled labour force situation will be even more problematic.

Pensions

Working pensioners are not uncommon in Latvia, due to the low pensions. Because of their age, they work in branches which require presence more than activity, they are employed as night watchmen, cashiers, employees of public restrooms or cloakroom attendants.

In order to reduce the government spending, it was decided in 2009 to reduce the pensions by 10%. Moreover, all pensioners who worked alongside their pension benefits, and thus had additional income, received 70 % less retirement income. The reduction meant that it was not profitable for the working pensioners to supplement the small pension. About 9,000 pensioners complained. The Constitutional Court of Latvia decided that such cuts are consistent with the constitution. But other issues got quite a lot of media attention in Latvia. The question of unconstitutional pension cuts played no longer an important role.

Crime and Shadow Economy

The fight against crime and the shadow economy, as well as transparency of public

funds in the procurement procedures constitute the need for action in Lithuania. The conditions of access to the government and the EU funding are also criticised. Corruption is especially visible in the police. The police officers are regarded by the government employees as the most involved in the shadow economy. However, not only the trade unions point to the low remuneration.

http://www.ahk-balt.org/fileadmin/ahk_baltikum/Publikationen/Konjunkturumfrage/2011/Konjunkturbericht_2011_DE.pdf; 13.04.2012

<http://www.baltische-rundschau.eu/2010/01/29/arbeitslosigkeit-in-lettland-auf-rekordniveau/>; 13.04.2012

http://www.ba-auslandsvermittlung.de/lang_de/nn_2796/DE/LaenderEU/Lettland/Arbeiten/arbeiten-knoten.html__nn=true; 13.04.2012

<http://www.lettische-presseschau.de/recht-und-ordnung/7-kriminalchronik/410-probleme-mit-kriminellen-in-der-lettischen-polizei>; 13.04.2012

<http://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=8375&acro=living&lang=de&parentId=7784&countryId=LV&living=>

<http://www.zeit.de/2011/20/Lettland>; 13.04.2012

<http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/57177/baltikum-auswirkungen-der-wirtschaftskrise>; 13.04.2012

<http://lettland.blogspot.de/2010/01/wie-verdient-ist-eine-rente-in-lettland.html>; 13.04.2012

Measures Taken by Latvia

An innovative state strategy of Latvia is the Demographic Affairs Council, which was established on the 12th of April 2011 by the Latvian government. The Council is a consultative and coordinating public institution. It promotes the national demographic policy and its implementation at all levels of government. The Council assesses and coordinates the national demographic policy, and informs the media about the issues regarding demographic policy.

The Council is represented by the Minister of Economics, the Minister of Welfare, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Education and Science, the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, by the representatives of the Latvian University of Economics and Management, Faculty of Statistics and Demography Department, a representative of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, a representative of the Strategic Analysis Commission, a representative of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional governments, non-profit non-governmental organisations, Latvian Employers' Confederation of Latvia, Free Trade Union Confederation, NGOs, experts and other specialists.

The Council will meet on a quarterly basis. Extraordinary meetings can be called by the chairman or by at least three Council members.

A Demographic Affairs Sub-committee has recently been established in the Saeima (Parliament). It has 22 members and is therefore the largest of all existing parliamentary committees and sub-committees.

<http://www.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40209068> ; 02.08.2011

A proposal from the Latvian project member is that Policies from France would be an example worth implementing. Such as childcare allowances to alleviate the cost of childcare when parents employ a childminder or a nanny in their home; tax schemes for married couples and for families allow a progressive reduction in taxable income according to a unit scheme that allocates units according to family size and composition; The laws reducing working time to 35 hours a week to improve the work–family balance.

see: <http://www2.ier.hit-u.ac.jp/pie/Japanese/discussionpaper/dp2003/dp160/text.pdf>; 02.08.2011

Cohesion policy as a means of implementing the Lisbon Agenda

The income level in Latvia is among the lowest in the entire EU. Significant differences also exist between the region of Riga and the rest of the country, in particular the eastern part. Over a half of the gross domestic product (GDP) of Latvia is generated in the region of Riga.

The resources of the cohesion policy since 2007 have been aimed at making the economy and the society of Latvia competitive and to create jobs and increase productivity.

A key national strategy to align the business to more high-tech industry sectors, provides i. a. for improving the quality of education for all, inspiring more young people to get a university degree in the area of science and technology, as well as promoting the national sector for research, development and innovation.

Particular attention should be paid to supporting the life-long learning and better coordination between the systems of education and training, and the demands of the labour market.

The Latvian cohesion policy responds to the globalisation and the structural transition in detail in the following way:

- 26% (approximately 1.17 billion) of the total Structural Funds are invested in the environmental and transport infrastructure in order to improve its accessibility. Also a mobility plan for Riga should be worked out.
- 22.3% (about 1 billion) of the total Community allocation is planned by Latvia in order to strengthen the scientific and research potential of the country potential, increase international competition and support the transfer of knowledge and its commercialisation. 18,000 m² of area is created for business incubators and 200 research projects are supported.
- 5.6% (281 million) of the total resources from the Structural Funds will be provided to enterprises, in particular the SMEs. The Operational Programme "Entrepreneurship and Innovations" includes a priority with more than €160 million.
- 5 % of the total Community allocation (about € 237 million) will help to improve education and training at all levels and to promote life-long learning, in order to enhance the competitiveness in Latvia.

- 4.2 % (190 million) total resources from the Structural Funds will be provided to improve the information and communication technology. The percentage of residents who use e-services should be increased to 35%.

The Operational Programme "Human Resources and Employment" (about € 142 million) will address the current labour market problems. More than 28,000 employed workers will participate in training measures and improve their qualifications.

- With the help of the Operational Programme "Human Resources and Employment", the adaptability of employees should be increased and a more sustainable approach should be promoted. A separate measure "Health Protection at Work" is adopted. This measure will be supported with about € 40 million.

Labour shortage due to the demographic change and the migration of the labour force abroad is counteracted by the Latvian cohesion policy through the removal of obstacles in accessing the labour market.

This concerns in particular the following target groups:

- job seekers with training needs,
- women who wish to return to work after maternity or parental leave,
- the unemployed who strive to get work, as well as
- entrepreneurs who seek new forms of business support. In order to prevent social exclusion; Latvia committed itself, with the use of Structural Funds, to support 36,000 unemployed and over 14,000 disadvantaged people.
- 0.9 % from the structural funds (about €42 million) will serve to promote social integration. Likewise, Latvia has taken steps to embed equality between men and women.

Results of the Negotiations Concerning Cohesion Policy Strategies and Programmes for the Programming Period 2007-2013

Social System: Occupational Safety and Health Promotion, Pension and Retirement Age

The Latvian social security system is centralised and funded by contributions and taxes. Contributory benefits and pensions are financed through a separate budget, which is composed of mandatory contributions, payments from the central government budget and other sources.

The Cabinet shall determine the income that is used as a basis for social security contributions (or the minimum amount for self-employed workers who voluntarily joined the social insurance).

It amounts to 33.09 % for the employees: 24.09 % comes from employers, 9 % is paid by the employees. Family benefits are financed from taxes. From 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013, no maximum levels are set as a foundation of the social security contributions, i.e., in this period, the employed persons have to pay social security contributions from all employment contracts.

The minimum amount of state-established minimum wage (or hourly rate) is defined for employees.

The State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA) is an agency under the Ministry of Welfare, which administers the social security budget and grants pensions, allowances and severance payments under the social security system and is concerned for their disbursement.

Source: European Commission

Within the framework of the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks, ESENER) of the EU-OSHA, both employers and employee representatives who are responsible for the health and safety at work, were asked about the management of risks in the area of occupational health and safety.

The main obstacles in dealing with health and safety was "the lack of resources such as time, personnel or money", regarded as a crucial factor by 36 % of establishments in the EU 27. Latvian employers and agents for Safety and Health estimated the public administration with 60 % (Finland 21 %).

Out of companies which used the information or external support, 35% reported the need of further support in this respect. This opinion was supported extensively in Latvia (59 %). Broken down by sectors, the need for additional support in education and public administration was the highest (45 %).

Source: http://osha.europa.eu/de/publications/reports/de_esener1-summary.pdf

Labour Market and Education System

Evaluation of qualification measures of the Latvian State Employment Agency by Phillip de Jong, APE, the Hague, the Netherlands and Alfred Vanags, Bizeps, Riga, Latvia in July 2009:

The unemployment, measured by the Labour Force Survey in Latvia, increased rapidly from 6.9 % in July 2008 to 17.2 % in June 2009. Thus, in this period, the spending on the unemployed has increased sharply, which is contradicted by a 24 % reduction in the operating Latvian state budget within this period. It is not expected that the unemployment will decline quickly.

According to the State Employment Agency of Latvia (SEA), every Latvian employee carries a burden of 210 registered unemployed in comparison with 131 in Lithuania and 156 in Estonia (but only 37 on average in Germany).

An evaluation of the qualification measures offered by the SEA is necessary in order to be able to assess more accurately whether the right offer is provided, taking into consideration the current situation in Latvia and future needs (short-term or long-term, specific or general skills).

So far, traditional training programmes were offered, which had to be adapted to the overall situation and needs, and incentives must be created so that the Latvian unemployed could also use the training offer.

A number of new initiatives have been implemented since 2009, partly as a reaction to the economic crisis. These include i. a.:

1. Work Programmes of Municipalities

This program was implemented in the period 09/2009 to 12/2010

Each municipality provided a new job in the social sector, which lasted at least two weeks and not more than six months.

The jobs were financed by the SEA; in total EUR 36 million were invested in the programme, for the most part from the ESF resources.

35,400 job seekers were involved in this programme.

This important emergency measure was necessary in order to collect a large number of unemployed people, who received no more unemployment benefits since autumn 2009. On the other hand, they could get through practical work and improve their skills.

2. More Flexibility in the Access to Education and Training Programmes

The programme is conducted in the period of 09/2009 to 12/2013 and is budgeted at EUR 15 million. An act stipulates that potentially unemployed persons should be supported through government-funded training and retraining.

This preventive approach to avoid unemployment is implemented by the SEA and the Latvian educational institutions. 11,000 participants should be supported with scholarships and educational vouchers.

3. Educational Vouchers

From September 2009 a system of educational vouchers will gradually be introduced.

Before 09/2009, trainees were assigned directly to traditional education providers. The students are now in some training programmes in a position to choose the preferred educational institutions for free, so that competition can improve the quality of education. Also private providers will compete with state educational institutions.

The voucher system initially binds 2 target groups:

- potentially unemployed persons
- employees older than 25 years of age within the framework of the new initiative (2010-2013) of life-long learning, 25,000 participants are expected
- about 1,500 persons who already have higher education, should be promoted in vocational training of up to 18 months.

Overall, the following should be achieved i. a.

- through well-planned and coordinated training programmes, the social benefits are higher than their costs
- public employment services, taking into consideration the different target groups and the regional labour conditions, should make efforts to achieve high placement rates and make their results comparable through a regional placement.
- that regional employment offices concentrate on their best customers
- that the employment services and the performance management works in cooperation in the public employment services. Through such a "centre for employment and income, " the services for job seekers should be employed
- the reintegration of the unemployed through individual training programmes can be improved
(These programs were introduced in the Netherlands in (individuele Re-Integratie Overeenkomst, IRO), they offer the unemployed or disabled beneficiaries the opportunity to purchase training, coaching and mediation services from a wide variety of service providers.)
- through outsourcing of the reintegration of the unemployed to private agencies, special education, coaching and training offers are developed and thus the competition is to increase the placement rates

Source: EEO Ad hoc request, Information prepared by Alfreds Vanags, SYSDM Correspondent for Latvia and Philip De Jong, Thematic SYSDM Expert

Good Practice Examples

Work and Life in Countryside

CONNECT Latvia is a non-profit organisation and a project partner of the BestAgers project. They support entrepreneurs, innovators and start-ups in the form of training, consulting, and organisational development. Best Agers provide support as mentors and experts.

The initiative Work and Life in Countryside was established by CONNECT Latvia within the framework of the Best Agers Projects. Support is provided i.a. to the homeless and the elderly who want to live and work in the countryside. An Internet platform was established for rural businesses and farms in search of workers (www.gribustradatlaukos.lv). Best Agers are hired as experts, they help people who are unemployed or were affected by unfortunate life circumstances. They educate, mediate and exchange their experiences with partners from other regions.

<http://www.best-agers-project.eu/ProjectPartners/Partnership/CONNECTLatvia/tabid/1202/Default.aspx>

Grindeks JSC

Within the framework of the European Week for Health and Safety at Work "A Safe Start into Professional Life for Young People in 2006", the leading pharmaceutical company in the Baltic States, Grindeks JSC, initiated the project "Intra- and Inter-company Training of New Employees in the Pharmaceutical Industry."

The «Grindeks» Group with about 500 employees developed a training and mentoring programme for new employees and established partnerships with schools, universities and relevant ministries in order to improve the knowledge and practical skills of students and young workers in the area of health and safety at work, as well as environmental protection.

Problem

Knowledge of occupational safety and risk factors in the work environment in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry is of special importance. There are numerous factors which influence the risk potential posed by chemical substances. For this reason, young people without work experience are given special attention. The company has two objectives:

1. the promotion of relevant higher education, as well as general and vocational training.
2. A phased approach to education of new and young employees to work safely

In 2005, young professionals aged 19 to 24 constituted 11 % of all employees. The measures for their health and safety shall include the initial phase of their business in various aspects of the enterprises.

For each employee who was granted a licence to work independently, regular follow-up measures and additional training will be conducted. The Department for Safety and Health at Work organises various theoretical and practical training courses for the staff.

The company is currently developing a manual for new employees, which will include explanations of the system principles to safeguard the health and safety at work.

The project brings the following benefits to the enterprise:

- a relatively small number of industrial accidents,
- maintaining the health of all employees, improving professional skills and work efficiency;
- involvement of students and new professionals in the investigation and solution of occupational health and safety problems;
- ensuring that students who return to Grindeks after graduation, already have a good basic knowledge of safety and health at work
- a positive attitude of employees towards the company and their profession.

Source: <http://osha.europa.eu/de/publications/reports/GPB06>