Introduction

On December 6, 1994, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted the Leonardo da Vinci programme for implementation of the Community vocational training policy. This programme had the key objective of supporting the vocational education policies and innovative actions in the Member States, by promoting transnational partnerships.

Latvia became a partner of the Leonardo da Vinci programme in November of 1998. Already in 1999 the first phase of the programme was accomplished and during the period 111 mobility projects and 7 pilot projects were approved in Latvia.

The second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme ended in 2006, having lasted from 2000 to 2006. The key objectives of the programme during this phase:

- to improve the skills and competencies of people, especially young people, on initial vocational training at all levels in a remarkable way;
- to improve the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training and the lifelong acquisition of skills and competencies, with view to increasing and developing adaptability, particularly in order to consolidate technological and organisational change;
- to promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation in an excellent manner, with a view to improve competitiveness and entrepreneurship, also in a view of new employment opportunities.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme has an essential role in development of the EU labour market and in the facilitation of its overall competitiveness. The programme provides opportunity to acquire work and life experience in other countries, to widen the world outlook of individuals, to improve the intellectual development and to raise the overall level of professional knowledge. Within the framework of the projects supported by the Leonardo da Vinci programme, it is possible to develop educational standards and programmes, training materials and methodology, transnational information exchange networks and reference materials.

During the period from 2000 to 2006 about 245,000 residents of the European Union have participated in the programme supported projects. 527 Mobility projects and 25 Pilot and Language Competencies projects were approved in Latvia during this period of time. From 2000 to 2004 taking part in the mobility projects their skills and competencies have extended almost 2000 individuals from Latvia. Expected amount of beneficiaries in 2005 and 2006 are 1400 individuals who will improve their competencies and skills.

In the brochure we have brought together the information on the second phase of the programme in Latvia - on projects implemented, their products and achievements. Also stories of the project participants on their experience acquired during the projects are reflected.

More detailed information on accomplished and still active projects can be found on our web page www.piaa.gov.lv/leonardo/.
Already in the Council Decision establishing the Leonardo da Vinci programme, was proposed that programme is not going to be open only for the countries of the European Union and the European Economic Area but also for the candidate countries.

Currently there are 31 Member States in the Leonardo da Vinci programme:
- 27 European Union Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.
- Three countries of the European Economic Area (EEA): Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway.
- Candidate country: Turkey.

Leonardo da Vinci programme participant countries.
Project Types of Leonardo da Vinci programme

Within the programme framework project calls are organized every year by the National Agencies of countries involved in the programme, compliant with the procedures established by the European Commission. For achievement of the programme objectives, five types of the projects are established submitted by three types of procedures:

Procedure A
Decentralized project selection is done, organized by each of the programme participant country. Mobility projects can be submitted for such call. Experience exchange, raising of qualification level, training placements, acquiring of new technologies are organized within this type of the projects.

Procedure B
The project proposals are evaluated both by the programme participant country and by the European Commission. There are several project types:

- **Pilot projects** – projects for improving quality and for promoting innovation in vocational training, focused on development of new training approaches, educational programmes, training and methodology tools;
- **Language Competences projects** – projects for development of competence on foreign languages under the context of vocational training;
- **Transnational Network projects** – projects proposing development of transnational cooperation and experience exchange networks, in order to facilitate high quality project elaboration and development of vocational training.

Procedure C
Centralized project selection, carried out exclusively by the European Commission. Under this procedure research and analysis projects for development, updating and dissemination of reference materials are evaluated and selected.

The project proposals can be developed and submitted by legal entities – public or private institutions, companies, employer or employee organizations, educational and other organizations.
I. Mobility Projects

For the purposes of the Leonardo da Vinci programme the term “mobility” is explained as international work placement and experience exchange in a particular programme participant country made available for the people in vocational training – apprentices, students, new workers, trainers and teachers.

The Placement projects may last from 3 to 52 weeks, the Experience exchange projects – from 1 to 6 weeks.

Depending on project beneficiaries, the Placement and Experience exchange are divided into five sub-groups:

- **Placement projects:**
  1. people undergoing initial vocational training;
  2. university students;
  3. young workers and recent graduates;
- **Experience exchange projects:**
  4. human resource managers in companies, vocational training programme developers and trainers, careers guidance counsellors;
  5. language teachers and trainers of vocational training institutions.

Number of Projects and Beneficiaries

During the period from 2000 to 2006 various scale, Mobility projects were approved in the Leonardo da Vinci programme participant countries, in total providing opportunity for more than 245 000 individuals to gain international placement and exchange experience.

Total number of proposed and approved Mobility projects.
During the II Phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme in Latvia, 527 mobility projects with 3277 beneficiaries were approved. As the project implementation period is 2 years, the mobility projects approved in 2005 can be implemented up till 31 May 2007, projects approved in 2006 – till 31 May 2008. That means, the mobility projects of the calls for 2005 and 2006 will go on up to the mentioned period and results of the implementation of the mobility projects will be available only in September 2008.

Number of Mobility project proposals by project types.

- people undergoing initial vocational training
- university students
- young workers and recent graduates
- trainers exchange
- language trainers’ exchange

During the Leonardo da Vinci II Phase most popular projects have been trainers’ exchanges. In total during the period of six years 324 project proposals are received. Besides, during the last year the number of proposals have almost doubled (from 49 to 93 proposals). The lowest activity has been in preparing and submitting the projects on language trainers’ exchanges and university students’ placements. Less than 10 projects have been received of each of the type.

Number of approved beneficiaries in the Mobility projects.

- people undergoing initial vocational training
- university students
- young workers and recent graduates
- trainers exchange
- language trainers’ exchange

During the Leonardo da Vinci II Phase, the most popular projects have been trainers’ exchanges. In total, during the period of six years, 324 project proposals were received. Besides, during the last year, the number of proposals almost doubled (from 49 to 93 proposals). The lowest activity has been in preparing and submitting the projects on language trainers’ exchanges and university students’ placements. Less than 10 projects have been received of each of the type.
Since the year 2004, the number of beneficiaries to placement projects for people undergoing initial vocational training has significantly increased (from 130 to 350). Also the number of beneficiaries has grown in trainers exchange projects (from 100 to 270). The number of beneficiaries of placement projects for young workers, recent graduates and university students has slightly reduced.

In general, analysing the number of beneficiaries to Mobility projects, we can see that it has grown consistently during the six years period of the programme II Phase. From 2000 to 2006 the number of beneficiaries have almost tripled. If initially 456 beneficiaries have applied for the Mobility projects and 289 of them were approved, then during the last year of the programme (in 2006) from 1106 beneficiaries required 783 were approved.

Age structure of the beneficiaries involved in the projects.
Funding

During the period of six years for the implementation of exchange and placement mobility projects of the Leonardo da Vinci programme funding, the amount of EUR 4 847 539,00 has been allocated. Most amount – nearly EUR 1,8 million – was assigned for implementation of the projects on placement to people undergoing initial vocational training.

The total amount of the funding requested has increased consistently during the second phase. During the last two year period the amount of the funding requested for projects on placement of young workers and recent graduates has fallen dramatically – from EUR 600 000 to EUR 150 000, whilst funding for projects on trainers exchange has risen – accordingly from EUR 300 000 to EUR 680 000. The least amount of the funding demanded was for implementation of the projects on language trainers exchange.
Different from what was asked for, the biggest funding is allocated for implementation of the placement projects for people undergoing initial vocational training. In 2006 the amount of the funding has reached EUR 500 000. For implementation of the projects on trainers exchange EUR 320 000 were allocated in the last year of the programme II Phase.

Funding approved for the Mobility projects, EUR.

Project Promoters

As Leonardo da Vinci is a vocational education programme, it is natural that project applicants and promoters mostly are institutions of vocational education. As presented in the diagram, small and medium enterprises have received special financial support for development of the mobility projects. Projects have also been implemented by non-governmental organizations – societies and foundations.

The percentage of the Mobility project applicants.
Host countries
Within the framework of the mobility projects, Latvia has most actively cooperated with Germany – for about 40% of the projects chose for partnership some institution in Germany. The other most popular partner is Finland. From 2000 to 2006 joint projects have been carried out with all the Leonardo da Vinci programme participant countries. Recently as potential placement and experience exchange countries special interest have gained Turkey, Greece, and Italy.

Host countries of Mobility projects by Latvian promoters, percentage of number of projects.

Working Language
Working language of the mobility projects is chosen, coordinating the capacities of the cooperation partners and previous language qualification of the beneficiaries. English is the most often used language in the mobility projects – in nearly 60% of the projects.

Funding for language, cultural and pedagogical development is foreseen under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. That has enhanced learning and use of less popular languages as well, at least on conversational level.

The percentage of working languages used in the Mobility projects.
Sandra Sīle,
2nd year student of the Rural Tourism training programme of the Barkava Vocational School:

On April 2005, within the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility project I was on a placement in Spain for three weeks, together with other eight students of the Barkava Vocational School. One of the most important tasks during the placement was to obtain new abilities and skills. Moreover, the obtained experience will be of use not only for myself. I will have to share that with my course-mates. The acquired knowledge and proficiency will have to be conveyed to others.

During the placement I did not only learn, I also had to tell, show and teach the specifics of bread baking in Latvia. I had an opportunity to share knowledge on Latvian bread baking traditions, various types of dough and most popular dishes. Also I told about our culture and traditions of making bakery and confectionery products in our country.

Most of all I was interested in information shared by expert Spanish cooks, confectioners and bakers. I had opportunity to learn about things that were completely unknown to me before and to ask questions on what I was interested in.

Summary by types of the Mobility projects

**Placement of people undergoing initial vocational training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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*Project implementation period is 2 years, therefore data on number of the beneficiaries and the funding used in the projects of 2005 and 2006 is not available at the time of preparing this edition.*

**Placement for university students, acquiring higher vocational education**

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*Project implementation period is 2 years, therefore data on number of the beneficiaries and the funding used in the projects of 2005 and 2006 is not available at the time of preparing this edition.*
Didzis Andersons,

3rd year student of Information Technologies in the University of Latvia:

From 9 September to 9 December of 2005 within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility project I was on a placement in Austrian City Salzburg, in the company named "BlueChip Software". The key objective of the placement was to understand from inside how the western democracy works, as well as to get acquainted with the strict operational division of labour and impact of narrow specialization on the outcome of operational activities. These are the things one can never see during vacation trips...

Placement for young workers and recent graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>2001</th>
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<th>2003</th>
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Juris Hmeļņickis,

Manager of the Chromatography Laboratory of the stock company "Grindeks" a/s

I had an opportunity to take part in a placement programme in 2004 when during 9 weeks I worked in Germany, in the central analytic department of one of the oldest European pharmacy plants – MERCK KgaA. My responsibility was to develop an automatic regime chromatographic methods on computer. That facilitates and speeds up the work of analyses. In general it takes a fortnight to work out chromatographic tests, by means of the computer software it can be done in two days. It was a real trial for myself whether I could stand the stress, working with full capacity in a foreign country. Every holiday I tried to use the opportunity to visit the nearest towns – Frankfurt, Cologne, Heidelberg. It is quite possible that participation in the Mobility project is one of the reasons why now I am taking the doctoral programme in the Faculty of Chemistry of the University of Latvia.

International experience exchange for human resource managers, vocational training programme developers and trainers, careers guidance counsellors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005*</th>
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* Project implementation period is 2 years, therefore data on number of the beneficiaries and the funding used in the projects of 2005 and 2006 is not available at the time of preparing this edition.
Marina Bragare,
Adult Training Coordinator of Vangaži Town Council:

In 2005 I participated in a two week experience exchange in the United Kingdom, organized by the society "Seven Steps". As my direct responsibility in the town council is the coordination of the lifelong learning activities, I decided to participate in the programme with an aim to get acquainted with the experience of the UK educational institutions and municipalities, offering the lifelong learning activities to various age groups.

Preparing myself for the project, I purchased and studied English teaching materials, refreshed my knowledge on the British way of life and cultural traditions. The project partners had prepared detailed program for visiting various institutions, as well as free time spending alternatives. At all project stages I received extensive support both from the sending and the receiving organizations. At the end of the exchange programme the partners issued a certificate, that is attached to my personal file at work.

I can use the acquired knowledge and experience for execution of my direct responsibilities. When working together with my colleagues, I am able to motivate them to take part in similar programmes. As positive moment I can stress that my English language and British culture knowledge have advanced.

International experience exchange for trainers and language teachers of vocational training institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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</table>

* Project implementation period is 2 years, therefore data on number of the beneficiaries and the funding used in the projects of 2005 and 2006 is not available at the time of preparing this edition.

Silvija Kārkliņa,
Manager of the Language Training Centre, teacher of English language and literature.

In October of 2005 I had an opportunity to take part in a one week exchange project in Italy, in the Sicilian Social Health Research and Training Centre. During the project, together with the Italian colleagues we compared the English language training needs of the health care specialists in order to develop an English language teaching module for nurses. We also made contacts with various health care organizations in Italy.

The experience obtained fully complies with one of the main goals of the Leonardo da Vinci programme – to ensure availability and quality of adult training. The gained knowledge will be of use when creating new foreign language teaching programmes for health care specialists, as well as developing foreign language competence in English, especially in professional terminology for nurses and other health care specialists.
II. Pilot Projects, Language Competences
Projects and Transnational Network Projects

As indicated by the title, the Pilot projects are experimental projects, within framework of which various level vocational education programmes, professional standards, innovative training and methodological tools are developed. Similar work is done in the Language Competences projects – these are focused on learning and training of foreign languages by working people in their professional environment, as well as on development of training and methodological tools. Within the framework of Transnational Network projects, information on a particular issue of vocational education, being important in Europe, is collected, analyzed and disseminated.

The projects can be implemented by a group of partners – legal entities – from at least 3 countries (for language projects – 2 countries), yet, normally the number of partners is more. One of the partnership group is a project promoter, who, by entering into agreement on project funding with the Vocational Education Development Agency, takes full responsibility on achievement of the planned results.

Supported Projects

In general during the period of 2000-2006 the European Commission has supported 25 projects submitted by organizations, institutions and companies in Latvia. These are about 27% of the 92 submitted Procedure B project proposals. Among projects supported, 23 are Pilot projects and 2 – Language projects supported. The Transnational network projects submitted by the Latvian applicants have not received support in the II Phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Number of the Procedure B project proposals submitted and supported.

14 projects have been finalized till August of 2006. The achieved results have already been evaluated for 11 projects of those, 3 project promoters are still preparing the outcome reports, whilst implementation of 11 projects is still going on.

Successful proposals proportionally to submitted proposals, %
During the six year period in all the countries involved in the programme the European Commission has funded 182 projects. Of those only 1.4% were projects submitted by the Latvian institutions.

**Funding**

From 2000 to 2006 Latvian organizations have received EUR 5 119 123.50 funding for implementation of the Pilot projects and Language Competences projects. The largest financing allocated for a project was EUR 294 028, the smallest – EUR 94 036. The average funding per project has been EUR 204 765.

Grants allocated by the European Commission for projects of Latvian promoters

![Chart showing grants allocated by the European Commission for projects of Latvian promoters]

During the Leonardo da Vinci II Phase for supported projects in all programme participant countries, the European Commission has allocated almost 573 million euros funding. Projects submitted by the Latvian project promoters have received hardly 1% of the total funding allocated.

**Project Promoters**

During the period from 2000 to 2006 in the projects implemented by the Latvian participants, 197 organizations, institutions and companies have been involved. 25 of those are project promoters, 171 – project partners. In 24 projects within a partner group also other Latvian companies, institutions and organizations took part. In total 76 institutions and companies from Latvia and 121 from abroad have been involved in these projects. Four project applicants have received support for implementation of 2 projects.

**Foreign and Latvian project partners.**

![Pie chart showing foreign and Latvian project partners]
About 23 partners from the member countries of the Leonardo da Vinci programme have taken part in the projects implemented by the Latvian promoters. As shown on the diagram, countries where most of the project partners have been identified are Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Active cooperation has also been developed between the Latvian project promoters and institutions and organizations of Lithuania.

The most active project partner countries.

Any legal entity can submit a project proposal for the Leonardo da Vinci programme – public or private institutions, companies, employer or employee organizations, educational and other organizations. In Latvia also the private sector has actively used the programme offered opportunities – commercial companies, non-governmental organizations and private educational establishments in total have accomplished 64% of the projects.

Types of project promoters.

Project Results

Results to accomplished projects are assessed and rated by independent experts in the scale from 0 to 10. For the time being projects implemented by Latvian institutions have been evaluated comparatively high. The results were recognized as adequate for the relevant sector needs and functional for improvement of vocational education system on European level. The assessment varies in the range from 7 to 9 points. Most part of the projects has received a “8” point assessment.
Evaluation of project results (within scale 0-10)

- 9 (27%)
- 8 (64%)
- 7 (9%)

The outcome of the accomplished projects are various electronic and other type training tools, programmes, certification systems, professional standards, which are actively exploited in the countries involved and in other places in Europe. The products of some projects are used also in other countries in the world.

Types of project results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Result</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet sites</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching materials and modules</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactive teaching materials</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching programmes</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training modules</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications standards</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Future of the Programme

On 14 July 2004 the European Commission approved the idea of the new Action Programme in the field of Lifelong Learning. It is developed for the period from 2007 to 2013. The programme will comprise several already existing activities: school education – Comenius, higher education – Erasmus, initial and further vocational training – Leonardo da Vinci, adult education – Grundtvig.

Development of two new programmes is planned during the next period:

- **Transversal** programme – related to policy development, language training, information and communication technologies;
- **Jean Monnet** programme – focused on European integration.

Several amendments to the Leonardo da Vinci programme are also planned. Current mobility projects on placement of university students will be moved under the supervision of the Erasmus programme. At the same time pilot projects will strengthen their focus on transfer and exchange of innovative ideas between the partner countries and development of such ideas on European level.

In 2008 commencement of new partnership projects is planned within the Leonardo da Vinci programme, for support of training exchanges and preparation visits.

The key objective of the new programme is by means of plainness, integration and decentralization to support the achievement of the EU strategic goal, that is – to become the world’s most dynamic knowledge-based economy. The development of high quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, mobility, employability and competitiveness.