

European Commission approves Latvia's Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Latvia was formally adopted by the European Commission on 12 December 2014. It outlines Latvia's priorities for using around € 1.5 billion of public money that is available from 2014-2020 (nearly € 1.08 billion from the EU budget and nearly € 500 million from national funding).

The main focus is to improve the competitiveness of Latvian farmers and rural enterprises by improving their infrastructure and providing consulting and training services. At least **3 600 farmers will receive support to modernise and restructure** their farms, with a view to increasing their market participation and orientation as well as diversifying their production. The programme will facilitate the **conversion to organic farming** and the **development of existing organic farms**, with the aim of having at least **2 700 ha of farmland under organic farming**. The programme will support the development and implementation of **34 Local Action Groups, covering around 65% of the rural population**. This LEADER approach is expected to create at least **200 new jobs in rural areas**. **An additional 140 new jobs** will be created by supporting diversification and SMEs. Significant support will be provided to **risk management covering almost 5% of farms**. Support will also be made available to restore farms which have been damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events. This will include introducing appropriate prevention actions.

Quote from EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan: *"One of the great strengths of our Rural Development concept is that we have core priorities, but it is up to each Member State or region to design programmes which suit their situation. For example, Latvia is opting to give particular priority to more environmentally-friendly management of forest and agricultural area along with increase of the competitiveness of Latvian farmers and rural enterprises by improving their infrastructure and providing consulting and training services. More than half of the rural population should benefit from improved services and infrastructure and improvements brought by the implementation of local development strategies."*

Support under [Rural Development](#) (RD) is the 2nd Pillar of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#). It provides Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage, at either national or regional level, multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States. The new [RD Regulation](#) for the 2014-2020 period addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities. Programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. To better coordinate actions and maximise synergies with the other European Structural & Investment Funds ([ESIF](#)), a [Partnership Agreement](#) has been agreed with each Member State, highlighting its broad strategy for EU-funded structural investment.

For [details in Latvian](#)