



Financial Intelligence
Unit of Latvia

Financial Integrity Newsletter

#8

January, 2025

A 2024 RETROSPECTIVE AND WHAT'S IN STORE FOR FIU LATVIA IN 2025

Toms Platacis, Head of FIU Latvia, shares the highlights

Interview with Lauma Paegļkalna, Ministry of Justice's Parliamentary Secretary:

“TODAY'S REALITY REQUIRES US TO BE FLEXIBLE AND SWIFT IN OUR RESPONSES TO LEGAL CHALLENGES.”

MORE IN THIS ISSUE:

Positive trends in FIU Latvia's public opinion poll on financial crime and money laundering

International sanctions coordinators gather in Riga

Latvijas Banka launches pre-licensing consultations for the new MiCA license



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Foreword

Financial crimes have an extremely high degree of harmfulness, and their eradication requires precise and infallible action from both policymakers and law enforcement, as well as an honest societal attitude. Since the previous MONEYVAL report in 2018, significant reforms have been implemented in Latvia, which have resulted in promoting public trust in the Latvian financial system and creating an investment-friendly environment. Therefore, there is reason to hope that Latvia will succeed in improving its assessment in the 6th MONEYVAL round. I would like to mention a few aspects that I consider most important.

In Latvia, a specialised court has been established for the effective examination of commercial disputes, economic, and financial crime cases, and has been operating for 3 years – the Economic Court. Since its establishment, the Economic Court's operations have been positively evaluated by strategic partners such as the European Commission, OECD, and the Foreign Investors Council. Additionally, on January 1st, 2025, the Justice Academy began its work. It's a unified continuing education and training center for judges, court employees, prosecutors, and prosecutor assistants, and it will ensure professional development measures for investigators in interdisciplinary matters that are crucial for the effective conduct of court proceedings.

Latvia has also substantially revised and improved the transparency of legal entities and legal formations. By the end of 2023, 88.83% of all registered legal entities had disclosed their ultimate beneficial owners. Moreover, the registration of new legal entities without revealing ultimate beneficial owners is no longer permitted, which is also carefully verified by the Enterprise Register.

In the eradication of criminal offences, the Ministry of Justice continues active work on both criminal sanction reform and ensuring effective criminal proceedings. It should be noted that nowadays, financial crimes no longer have clearly defined territorial boundaries. Therefore, it is important to continue working on regulatory frameworks, as well as investigating criminal offences not only at the national but also at the international scale. A significant contribution to Latvia's legal framework has been the introduction of European Union and Council of Europe legal acts and supervision mechanisms.

I would like to thank everyone who has worked to implement the recommendations from the previous MONEYVAL evaluation report. Thanks to those who, on their own initiative, have sought the best solutions for the effective operation of Latvia's system for preventing money laundering, terrorism, and proliferation financing. Your work has been irreplaceable in creating Latvia as a safe and friendly investment environment.



Minister of Justice
INESE LĪBIŅA-EGNERE

Terms, abbreviations, and definitions

AML/CFT/CPF – Prevention of money laundering and terrorism and proliferation financing

ERA – Academy of European Law

EJTN – European Judicial Training Network

EU – European Union

FATF – Financial Action Task Force

FIU – Financial Intelligence Unit

KNAB – Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of Latvia

Korupcijas novēršanas un apkarošanas birojs

MiCA – Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation

ML/TPF – Money Laundering and Terrorism and Proliferation Financing

MONEYVAL – Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism

NFT – Non-fungible token

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UN – United Nations

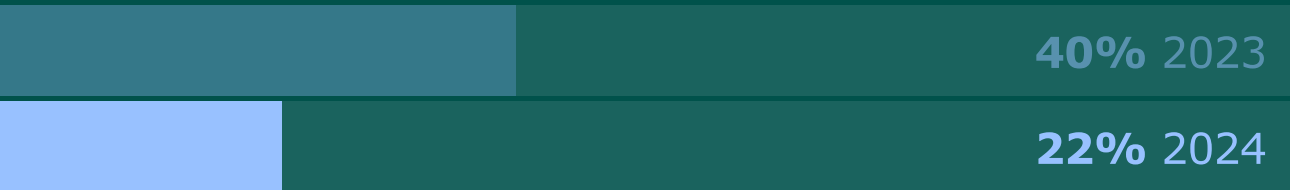
Public opinion poll on financial crime and money laundering (2024)

As in previous years, in autumn 2024, we surveyed residents of Latvia to gauge public perception of financial crime, money laundering, and their negative impact on the national economy and society.*

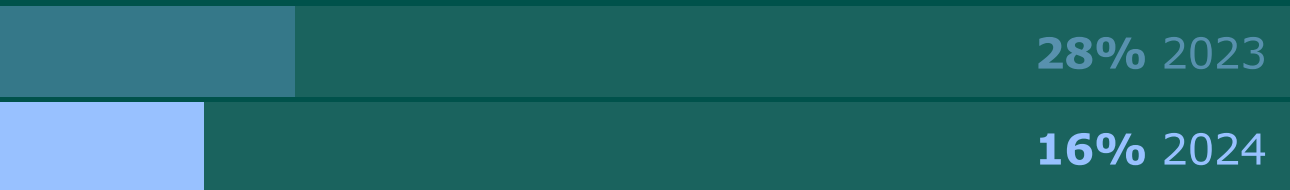
This infographic summarises the results of the survey and provides a comparison with the previous year's poll.

Latvians' tolerance toward financial crime and money laundering drops significantly

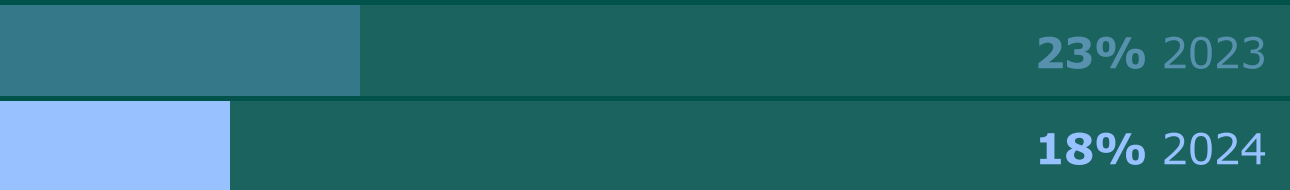
The proportion of people willing to commit financial violations for personal gain:



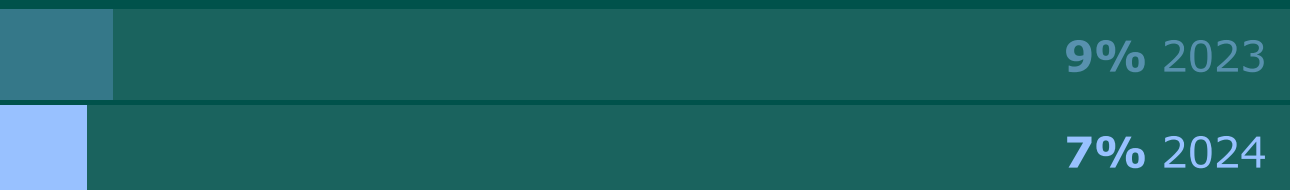
would purchase excise goods if necessary, knowing their illegal origin



would pay bribes/unofficial payments for their own or relatives' benefit



would evade taxes for their own benefit



would not object to buying/selling narcotic drugs in small quantities

The 2024 survey reveals that as public awareness of various financial crimes increases, tolerance and willingness to engage in them decreases.

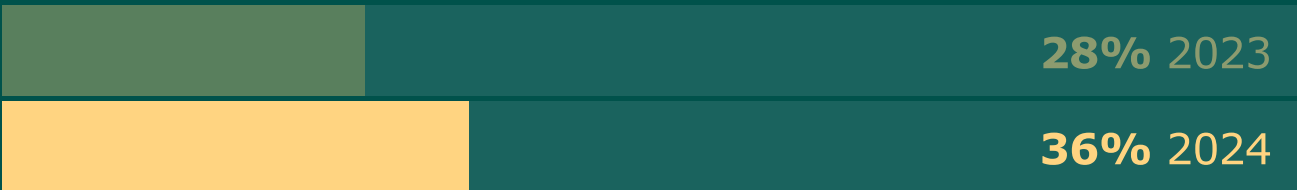
What (large-scale) illegal activities would people report to the authorities if they involved a relative or acquaintance?



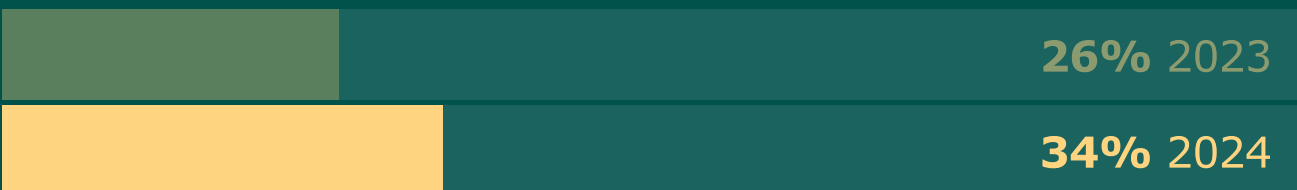
smuggling and illegal circulation of narcotic drugs



corrupt activities



tax evasion



smuggling and illegal circulation of excise goods

Respondents aged 34 and under are more likely to report all the above crimes

Public support for the fight against money laundering **continues to grow**

There are differing perspectives among residents of Latvia on the country's fight against money laundering, but there is more optimism compared to last year:

6%

think progress is good

↗ 2%
compared to 2023

32%

consider the situation to be satisfactory

↗ 5%
compared to 2023

42%

remain dissatisfied

↘ 5%
compared to 2023

Young people up to the age of 24 and people with higher incomes give more positive feedback.

More than three quarters of respondents see a need to fight money laundering in order to prevent:

Laundrying of foreign proceeds in Latvian financial institutions

84% ↗ 9%
compared to 2023

Injection of criminal proceeds into the economy, e.g. through fictitious businesses

83% ↗ 7%
compared to 2023

Injecting criminally obtained cash into the Latvian economy

80% ↗ 8%
compared to 2023

Unexplained wealth of individuals

80% ↗ 7%
compared to 2023

Public trust in foreign payment service providers is **decreasing**

Public scepticism about the benefits of foreign payment service providers is increasing, with more reserved attitudes this year than in the survey a year ago.

Respondents with an account on a foreign payment platform (e.g. Revolut, Paysera, Wise):



26%

private account

↘ 3%
compared to 2023



1%

business account

↘ 1%
compared to 2023



8%

own crypto assets

The younger and more financially secure the respondents, the more of them use foreign payment systems and have purchased cryptocurrencies.

A 2024 retrospective and what's in store for FIU Latvia in 2025

An overview from the Head of FIU Latvia,
Toms Platacis

2024 has been a year of new challenges for the FIU, with plenty to be proud of in what has been achieved. In addition to our day-to-day operations in financial intelligence, the year has been defined by two major priorities – taking over sanctions implementation functions, and beginning the MONEYVAL 6th round evaluation.



Toms Platacis

Head of FIU Latvia

Sanctions and MONEYVAL: Two major milestones of the year

I can confidently say that both processes have gone very well. **The integration of the FIU's new sanctions function has proceeded according to the developed plan and without significant complications.** And while of course there is always room to grow and improve efficiency, both myself and my colleagues see that centralising sanctions implementation at FIU Latvia was, indeed, the right decision.

Meanwhile, the MONEYVAL evaluation process is progressing as planned. The MONEYVAL assessment team's on-site visit has recently concluded, during which FIU supported their work. The evaluation process is both technically and substantively complex, but everything has proceeded according to plan, without

significant hiccups. We have learned a lot during this challenging evaluation process.

Currently, our forecasts regarding the MONEYVAL evaluation are positive, reflecting the tremendous work invested. Our efforts and successes in this field are why we applied to be the first country to be evaluated in the sixth round. **Latvia's mutual evaluation report is likely to be made public by the end of 2025.**

The security of Latvia's financial system is one of the country's priorities. Therefore, significant attention and energy were devoted to the MONEYVAL evaluation in 2024. We recognise that the stability and security of the financial system

are essential elements both nationally and internationally, which is why we actively work on identifying and managing risks, which helps to strengthen the reputation and trustworthiness of the country's financial sector.

A lot of work has already been done, but there is still much to be done. We will continue to collaborate closely with MONEYVAL experts to complete the written coordination phase of the evaluation. The findings of the MONEYVAL expert team will be presented at the joint FATF/

MONEYVAL plenary session, which will take place in June 2025 in Strasbourg. This plenary session will be the largest in MONEYVAL's history. While this brings a certain level of apprehension, as the evaluation results will influence us for the next ten years, it is also an extremely exciting moment.

Latvia takes a leadership role in the international AML community

In addition to the anticipated MONEYVAL evaluation, which we believe will reflect Latvia's and the FIU's efforts and hard work, **we are also proud to continue strengthening our international leadership position in the field of AML.**

We started 2024 with great momentum – just two weeks before the FIU officially became the competent authority for sanctions implementation, we successfully organised the international conference "Effective Sanctions: Goals for 2024". Together with industry experts, we discussed improving the implementation and application of sanctions within the European Union. The conference received widespread acclaim and recognition, and as a result, we plan to host a similar event in 2025.

The continuation of the year was marked by MONEYVAL, and we have received many words of praise for our decision to apply as the first country for the sixth round of evaluation.

The proactive approach and innovations demonstrate our leadership role in the international arena. **Experts from Latvia's AML prevention, Latvijas Banka, and the FIU Latvia's sanctions team are frequently**

invited to consult foreign colleagues and share examples of best practices.

We also frequently take a leading role in other international activities. For instance, chairing the European Union's representation in the Egmont Group and being elected to serve as the lead country for the goAML International User Group. We actively share our knowledge and support international partners by speaking at global conferences and offering best practice examples and insights regarding sanctions that we have gained in less than a year of leading this new function.

In any collaboration, it is important for us to receive feedback to continuously improve our work. Therefore, we regularly conduct surveys to assess how our international partners rate us.

We are pleased that for the third consecutive year, the average satisfaction rating has been excellent – ranging from 9.3 to 9.54 points out of 10. These results confirm that our efforts are appreciated and that we continue to successfully carry out our mission in the international arena.

Leveraging cutting-edge solutions **to enhance the effectiveness of intelligence work**

The FIU has always been very proactive in addressing future challenges. We were the first in the world to analyze money laundering risks tied to digital currencies and NFTs (non-fungible tokens). Every year, we publish a strategic analysis document, monitoring the use of digital currencies in Latvian society, as well as proactively overseeing the development of risks created by AI.

Some interesting additions to our technology package include a cryptocurrency tracking tool and an open-source data analysis tool, which have become integral parts of our daily work process.

We continue to train and improve our machine learning algorithms to minimise the amount of work that can be automated. The FIU introduced its first machine learning scenarios at the end of 2023, which help us perform three key tasks more efficiently:

- To identify signs of suspicious transactions in received threshold declarations,

- To facilitate the identification of individuals who are repeatedly mentioned. For example, this tool helps us merge individuals who appear twice, typically due to spelling errors, the use or non-use of diacritics, or data gaps. Given the large volume of data we work with daily, maintaining data integrity is crucial for us,
- To identify important information recorded in free-text fields that is not mentioned in a structured form in the reports. Often, description fields contain significant additional information, such as individuals, companies, accounts, or cryptocurrency wallets that are not included elsewhere in the report.

These improvements allow us to become more efficient by reducing unnecessary work and enabling our specialists to focus on tasks that require human intervention and cannot be automated.

Leaders in sanctions implementation in Europe and beyond

With great confidence, we can say that circumventing financial sanctions in Latvia is almost impossible, as the country has established a unified and effective sanctions implementation system, based on close cooperation between various institutions – financial supervisory authorities, law enforcement entities, the State Revenue Service, the FIU, and others. Within six to seven months since we began managing the sanctions function, we have succeeded in building a professional team, developing stable and

effective processes, and launching a website, with plans for its full integration soon. Moreover, we have successfully managed all requests that had accumulated during the migration process and ensured continuous operations and compliance with all relevant regulations.

To assess entrepreneurs' understanding of sanctions regulations and the FIU's role, as well as the challenges entrepreneurs face in ensuring sanctions compliance, we conducted a public

opinion survey at the end of 2024. We believe that the results will help us become even more effective and focused in our work, and provide valuable insights for further cooperation with entrepreneurs.

We look forward to the new year, where we will apply the knowledge and experience gained this

year to new ideas and initiatives. **Next year, we will also adopt a more proactive approach to public awareness, as it is important for society to understand that the implementation of sanctions is a critical national security issue.**

2025: A year of stability and strategic development

If 2022 was a year of change, 2023 a year of major decisions, and 2024 a year of new challenges, then we plan to make 2025 a year of stability and strategic development. Our goal is to continue the strategic course set several years ago and ensure that the changes made are sustainable and successful. In 2025, upon receiving the new MONEYVAL evaluation, we will also receive specific recommendations, which various institutions, both collectively and individually, will need to assess and implement in their strategies. As a result of this process, together we will be able to enhance the security and stability of Latvia's financial sector, strengthening our position on the international stage.

Overall, I see that we are moving forward in a positive direction. **We are becoming increasingly experienced and efficient, our ability to detect fraud is continuously improving, and as a result, we are uncovering more and more complex fraud cases.** In our core activities, we are also becoming more skilled – although you will never see the FIU's name in the press alongside uncovered financial crimes, it does not mean that we have not been involved in their discovery.

The most suitable approach to achieving the desired results is to continue performing our work with high responsibility and integrity.

I express great satisfaction with everything the FIU has accomplished this year, as well as with the successful collaboration with our partners. I look forward to the coming year, to continue what we have started and achieve new successes!

The Latvian Justice Academy – A sustainable and unified continuing education system for the judiciary

Interview

On 1 January 2025, the Justice Academy began its work – a unified continuing education centre for judges, court staff, prosecutors, and prosecutors' assistants, which will also provide professional development opportunities for investigators in interdisciplinary matters. According to the Judicial Council, the creation of such a unified training centre is crucial to promoting strong and competent court and law enforcement operations, ultimately strengthening public trust in the judicial system.

To learn more about the Justice Academy project, its development process, objectives, and anticipated activities, we invited the Ministry of Justice's Parliamentary Secretary, Lauma Paegļkalna, for a conversation.



Lauma Paegļkalna

Ministry of Justice's
Parliamentary Secretary

This interview has been edited for readability.

What is the Justice Academy, and what is its primary purpose?

The primary interest in creating the Justice Academy stems from society's need for quality judicial proceedings and court decisions – in short, a fair trial. Previously, judges' continuing

education was provided by the Latvian Judicial Training Centre. Separate training was organised for prosecutors and project-type courses were offered. However, this model was too fragmented.

It became clear that an institutional, state-level entity was needed to ensure competent judges and other judiciary professionals. The idea for a Justice Academy emerged and has now taken a tangible form.

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The Academy's objective is an effective, professional judiciary that receives sustainable continuing education.

Concurrently, we wish to provide a training model that brings together all judicial professionals – experienced judges, new judges and judicial candidates, court staff, prosecutors, and their assistants. The Academy's target audience also includes investigators in interdisciplinary matters who participate in judicial proceedings and whose competence is equally crucial for effective adjudication.

The Justice Academy is a separate, autonomous state institution, financed by the state budget. The Academy must be able to align the continuing education needs defined by the judiciary itself with societal needs observed and defined by legal policy makers. To illustrate, here are some examples.

Judicial qualification evaluation in Latvia occurs every five years. Judges may be sent for out-of-cycle evaluation if a need is identified. Through this process, the judiciary has the opportunity to recognise knowledge gaps among its professionals and signal the need for training in specific topics.

Regarding societal needs in the context of the Justice Academy – an excellent example is the inheritance reform that took effect on 1 January

2025. The reform alters foundational inheritance aspects and processes, and the judiciary must acquire knowledge about operating within the new legal framework. Competent decisions in the inheritance context represent a societal need that makes providing such knowledge to the judiciary a state responsibility.

Societal needs encompass many other aspects beyond new legal frameworks. The geopolitical context, hybrid threats, financial sector development, artificial intelligence, digitalisation, cybersecurity – these are all aspects that demand judicial continuing education to maintain effectiveness.

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Today's reality requires us to be flexible and swift in our responses to legal challenges.

Moreover, through the Academy's operations, we aim to foster a supportive environment and provide appropriate conditions for sustainable judicial development. Ensuring the rule of law is connected with long-term activity – a judge is appointed for lifetime. To enable a judge to update and acquire new knowledge throughout their career, such an opportunity must be provided. The Academy will cultivate an understanding of a learning culture as part of professional practice. Accordingly, the Justice Academy's mission is to be a support point while respecting the fundamental values of the judiciary.

Another aspect of the Academy's mission relates to Latvia's membership in the European Union. Each Latvian judge is also a European Union judge, which requires understanding and knowledge of belonging to the European Union's legal space.

Overall, it is important to understand that the Justice Academy is not a new educational institution preparing new lawyers. The Academy offers lifelong learning that supplements the existing knowledge of judicial representatives.

How was the judiciary previously educated in the case of legal reforms?

In various ways. Great appreciation must be expressed to the Latvian Judicial Training Centre for its contributions, considering the needs of involved parties and offering the most contemporary education possible. However, as a non-governmental organisation, the centre's resources were limited. Therefore, it is crucial that the Justice Academy has state budget funding, ensuring its operations are not dependent on fluctuating factors.

What has been accomplished so far, and what are the next steps in project implementation?

The project is extensive and has been in development since 2021. The Academy's establishment involves creating an entirely new institution, including programme and content development. The Justice Academy is institutionally under the purview of the Cabinet of Ministers, as it will provide training not only for those under judicial supervision. Functionally, the institution operates under the Judicial Council's umbrella, which requires harmonising two different jurisdictions.

Currently, a consultative council with various experts is actively identifying and analysing the needs of involved parties. Legal policy makers play a crucial role in this process, as they are responsible for recognising societal needs, which also determine the directions of judicial training. Equally important is the judiciary itself, as ensuring a high-quality judicial corps is its primary task.

The Academy will also offer for a fee training opportunities to other legal professionals, such as advocates, court bailiffs, and notaries. There are topics that broadly affect not just judges – take the aforementioned inheritance reform, for example. With the Justice Academy, we want to offer educational opportunities to a wider circle of interested professionals.

Regarding the Justice Academy's physical form, active construction and space adaptation are currently underway. We are paying great attention to ensuring that the Academy's training is not limited to lecture formats.

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Crucial to learning content is discussion, and to foster such discussions, an in-person learning environment is essential. It must also be safe to encourage free communication, dialogue, and debate.

Planned are also training sessions to broaden the perspectives of judicial professionals, such as judges and prosecutors learning together, or judges with varying levels of experience collaborating.

The Justice Academy will also include training classrooms for court proceeding simulations, which are crucial for new judges, new prosecutors, and judicial candidates. However, such training is equally valuable for judges with extensive experience, as it allows them to evaluate their courtroom behaviour – an observation based on my own judicial career. Yes, audio recordings from court sessions are available and can assist in self-analysis, but training sessions are often filmed, providing additional growth opportunities as judges can observe themselves from an external perspective.

Moreover, training often involves simulating particularly complex court proceedings, which provides judges with valuable experience. In reality, court clients can be provocative, requiring high emotional resilience from judges and other judicial representatives. Therefore, we plan to continue providing the ongoing support supervisions that help those working in the judiciary avoid professional burnout.

What are the currently known planned activities of the Justice Academy?

We are already offering judges the opportunity to enhance their knowledge in hybrid warfare and cybersecurity matters, which are extremely critical topics. Similarly, following the Jēkabpils offender case, we are focusing intensively on the issue of violence. Violence is highly latent, almost invisible. The fact that a victim says everything is fine now does not necessarily mean it is, and one must be able to verify this. This topic involves numerous non-legal aspects – psychological, emotional, mental health, and attachment-related issues where knowledge is crucial for all those working with violence. This also includes orientation in children's rights.

In collaboration with Latvijas Banka, we have developed a training programme on financial market issues. I am confident that the Financial Intelligence Unit of Latvia will also be an excellent collaborative partner for the Justice Academy in educating judges, for instance, on financial fraud and money laundering. Of course, judges themselves are experts in these topics, but the sector's perspective is incredibly valuable in judicial work. Collaboration will certainly manifest through guest lecturers at the academy – ensuring education is provided not only by judicial professionals but also by experts from various competent authorities who can offer domain-specific knowledge. It is essential that judges consider specific sectoral issues before they reach their desks.

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It is also important to provide judges with skills in using various digital tools to streamline information processing and their work processes overall.

We will gradually expand the training content, accustoming judges to the availability of such content. We will certainly create a digital library providing access to, for example, video lectures that learners can listen to at their convenience. When organising in-person training, we will ensure timely announcement so that judicial professionals can plan their attendance.

Is there demand for the Justice Academy within the judicial community, and are its representatives involved in its creation?

There is demand. Previously, the Latvian Judicial Training Centre was unable to meet all training needs – attendance rates among judges are extremely high. Judicial professionals are currently actively participating in the Justice Academy project's consultative council, discussing the necessary training plans.

Are there similar projects elsewhere in the world?

Yes, such academies exist in many places, and in some countries, this is a long-standing tradition. We have met and consulted with training institutions from other countries. For example, in the Netherlands, there is a highly developed judicial training school. If someone ever wants to become a judge, they have a portfolio with tasks and achievable results, and the prospective judge implements a specific training programme. Training also continues whilst holding a judicial position.

Highly developed judicial education institutions exist in Italy, France, Sweden, Spain, Czechia, Slovenia, and Portugal. I also previously participated in a conference presenting modern digital tools used in Italian and French judicial schools. Of course, the institutional organisation of these schools varies between countries. They are often under the jurisdiction of Ministries of

Justice, sometimes existing as separate institutions.

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In creating the Latvian Justice Academy, we have studied models from other countries both comprehensively and in terms of how various specific aspects are organised.

In creating the Latvian Justice Academy, we have studied models from other countries both comprehensively and in terms of how various specific aspects are organised. We have examined examples from the United Kingdom and Australia regarding artificial intelligence usage, whilst in the American model, we have studied the climate change issue project, as this is a critical aspect that our institution must also consider.

We plan to engage in international projects as well. For instance, in the United Kingdom, there is a judicial mentoring programme that connects professionals from different countries. We will continue to be a partner in the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), which is the primary platform for training and experience exchange among European judicial professionals. We will certainly also work with the Academy of European Law (ERA), which is the leading training institution in Europe.

It is extremely important that Latvia is active internationally. I have personally met with the EJTN Secretary General Ingrid Derveaux and discussed how the Latvian Justice Academy could become an international training hub that brings together learners from across Europe. EJTN organises training precisely in this manner – selecting a member state and providing training on a specific theme that can be attended by judicial representatives from other countries. We will have a highly contemporary and multifunctional educational institution with the ability to adapt spaces to audience size and needs, so I would like Riga to be available for international training.

Such collaboration is also important from the perspective of the European Union and international law, as it will allow us to strengthen Latvian judges' and prosecutors' sense of belonging to the European legal community.

International sanctions coordinators gather in Riga, Latvia

On December 5, 2024, Latvia and the United States co-hosted an international meeting of sanctions coordinators and experts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riga, bringing together representatives from the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, European Union institutions, 15 EU member states, and Ukraine.

The event provided an opportunity not only to strengthen transatlantic cooperation, but also to coordinate positions and discuss next steps in further constraining Russia together with like-minded countries.

Key outcomes and discussions included:

- Strategic coordination of economic sanctions targeting Russia's ability to finance its military operations, with a focus on identifying and closing potential loopholes in existing restrictions.
- Comprehensive review of current sanctions' effectiveness, highlighting their significant impact on Russia's economic infrastructure and military capabilities. The participants noted that while sanctions are working, continued multilateral pressure is crucial to ultimately halt the war.
- Exploration of new economic pressure mechanisms, including targeted export

controls and financial restrictions aimed at reducing Russia's revenue from critical sectors such as energy exports. Particular emphasis was placed on developing sophisticated strategies to prevent sanctions evasion.

The meeting underscored the collective commitment of participating nations to support Ukraine through coordinated economic measures, with the ultimate goal of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity and compelling Russia to cease its aggressive military actions.

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The unprecedented set of comprehensive sanctions we are coordinating with our allies and partners is intended to end Russia's unlawful and cruel war against Ukraine. We can witness that sanctions are working, but our ultimate goal is to finally stop this war of aggression and restore a rules-based international order, achieving peace, security, and justice.

Andžejs Viļumsons, Latvian Foreign Ministry State Secretary

KNAB and Transparency International LATVIA conference seeks ways to reduce corruption

On 9 December, International Anti-Corruption Day, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau (KNAB) together with Transparency International LATVIA (“Sabiedrība par atklātību – Delna”) organised a conference to discuss corruption and its impact on Latvia.

The conference brought together experts from various fields to discuss how to reduce corruption risks and strengthen the anti-corruption capacity of public institutions.

The conference featured three panel discussions on the following topics:

- **Public perception of corruption:** Academics and researchers analysed what factors shape public perception of corruption in Latvia and how to improve the situation.
- **Protecting companies from corruption:** Private sector representatives shared their experiences on how companies can put in place effective anti-corruption mechanisms. The first results and recommendations of the corporate integrity self-assessment tool developed by the Zero Tolerance to Corruption initiative were presented.

- **Public administration reforms:** The discussion looked at how cutting red tape, digital transformation and making government more efficient can help fight corruption.

The conference concluded that the fight against corruption is a long-term process that requires the involvement of the whole society – public authorities, the private sector and citizens.

The central bank of Latvia offers **fast-track for EU MiCA license acquisition**

Latvijas Banka has announced the launch of pre-licensing consultations for crypto-asset providers looking to apply for the new MiCA (Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation) license, which has just gone into effect across the EU.

The MiCA license is a prerequisite for any crypto-asset service provider looking to offer their services in the EU. While it can be obtained in any EU country, each country has its own requirements, application procedure, and accompanying fees.

Latvijas Banka has launched pre-licensing consultations free of charge, which helps applicants better prepare for the licensing process, thus significantly speeding up the application evaluation time and service providers' time-to-market. This fast-track process, combined with a competitive 0.6% supervision fee and supportive innovations environment, makes Latvia an attractive destination to receive the MiCA license.

The pre-licensing process offers individual consultations with Latvijas Banka experts, ensuring guidance on the viability of applications, regulatory compliance, and document readiness. Latvijas Banka emphasizes accessibility and

responsiveness, ensuring prompt, human-centred communication with an average response time of 48 hours.

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Latvia hosts a regulatory environment that is open to innovation, aligned with EU standards, and committed to fostering a fintech-friendly business environment. Latvijas Banka has created a framework that balances flexibility with responsibility. Our efforts focus on streamlining licensing processes and reducing barriers to entry. Our dedicated team offers personalised, rapid support prioritizing direct, professional feedback within hours rather than months-long waits.

Santa Purgaile, Deputy Governor of Latvijas Banka

More information about the pre-licensing consultations can be found at bank.lv.