



## **Finance Minister Janis Reirs: Latvia is invariably among the leaders in terms of investing funds of the Swiss programme**

On Wednesday, March 25, in the Ministry of Finance (MoF) the seventh annual meeting of the Latvian-Swiss Cooperation Programme was held. Representatives of the MoF, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in Latvia discussed the progress of the Swiss cooperation programme. Finance Minister Janis Reirs acknowledged achievements of the Swiss programme.

*“I consider the implementation of the Swiss programme is successful. Project results are better than initially planned, thus giving more benefits to citizens. Latvia is invariably among the leaders out of 10 beneficiary countries in terms of investing funds of the Swiss programme. Within the framework of the cooperation programme projects have been implemented bringing real and tangible results to the Latvian citizens. I am satisfied and thankful to Swiss colleagues for the successful implementation and support provided to Latvia,”* indicated Finance Minister Janis Reirs.

Financing of the Swiss programme in amount of 47 million euro is available from 2007, and 80 % of the available financing have already been invested in Latvia. Implementation of projects will continue until mid-2017.

With Swiss support 12 projects are being implemented in such fields as regional development, court modernization, improvement of the environment, support to private and non-governmental (NGO) sector, as well as education and research. Five projects have already been successfully completed.

Thanks to the bus project for already four years at least 7000 pupils are being transported to and from schools with 110 purchased busses. Through the NGO fund 1.68 million euro were invested to implement targeted measures for children, youth and seniors. The court modernization project gave the possibility to install video conference equipment in all Latvian courts, thus participants of the case can participate in the hearing from another city or country.

Within the Micro Lending Programme 1084 loans to micro enterprises and self-employed persons were issued for business start-up or development, thus in total at least 2500 jobs have been maintained and created.

Within the framework of the Scholarship Fund for already five years Latvian doctoral students and new scientists have a possibility to carry out researches in Swiss scientific institutions. As well as through the project of activities of Swiss researchers for already four years Swiss lecturers have been giving lectures on various topics in Latvian universities. 115 boarding-schools have been equipped with automatic fire-safety systems, thus safe environment has been provided to at least 6000 children. Since 2014 across Latvia 17 new multifunctional initiative centres for young people are open, and by the end of 2015 five more will be open.



On Wednesday, March 24, the Swiss delegation participated in an on-the-site project visit in the Bauska District. They attended the Ozolaine Elementary School, where pupils are transported by the school bus purchased with support of the Swiss programme, Pamusa Special Boarding-School where an automatic fire-safety system has been installed, and the Bauska District Court where video conference and audio recording equipment has been installed, as

well as two companies that have received loans within the framework of the Micro Lending Programme.

After the visit to the Bauska District and annual meeting representatives of the Swiss delegation acknowledged achievements of Latvia in terms of project implementation and investments of funds. *“We are happy to see in practice positive changes in lives of Latvian citizens supported by the Latvian-Swiss Cooperation Programme. Busses make the everyday life of children easier, businessmen are provided real possibilities to develop, young people and seniors can develop in different targeted measures. This is the most successful result of the Latvian-Swiss cooperation.”*