

Latvia and Switzerland signed a Scholarship Fund Agreement for science development within the framework of the Swiss-Latvian cooperation programme



On Monday, July 5, Head of the Swiss Contribution Office for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania *Christina Grieder* and Deputy State Secretary in European Union Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund Affairs *Aleksandrs Antonovs* signed a Scholarship Fund Agreement within the framework of the Swiss-Latvian cooperation programme.

The purpose of the Scholarship Fund is to increase scientific capacity of Latvian scientists and facilitate sustainable scientific cooperation between Latvia and Switzerland. Total financing available for Scholarship Fund activities will be 1.85 million Swiss francs or 850 thousand lats, which is 100% Swiss contribution.

“The Ministry of Finance approves the financial support for the science provided within the framework of Latvian-Swiss cooperation programme. Science development is one of significant factors for the recovery of Latvian economy and improvement of national competitiveness,” underlined the Minister of Finance Einars Repše.

The Scholarship Fund will be allocated to two activities. One of them will be scholarships for doctoral programme students to implement research projects in Swiss partner universities and for new researches who will continue researches after the doctoral programme. While the second supportable activity is short-term visits of Latvian and Swiss researchers who will act as mentors for doctoral programme students/new researchers who received scholarships within the framework of Scholarship Fund.

The duration of scholarships will be from 6 to 24 months for doctoral programme students and from 6 to 18 months for researches after the doctoral programme. Average planned amount of 6 month scholarship for doctoral programme students is 25 000 Swiss francs or 11 500 lats, however the amount of 6 month scholarship for researches after the doctoral programme – 40 000 Swiss francs or 18 400 lats. The duration of short-term visits will be up to five days. Per one short-term visit it is planned to allocate up to 2 500 Swiss francs or 1 150 lats.

It is planned to organise sub-project open calls once per year till 2014. **The first open call is planned in September 2010.**

The Scholarship Fund is implemented within the framework of Swiss Scientific Exchange Programme which forms a part of Swiss financial contribution to new EU Member States. Latvia is one of eight EU Member States participating in this Programme.

The Scholarship Fund will be implemented by the Swiss institution the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities; however the implementation of the Fund in Latvia will be coordinated by the Education Development State Agency (EDSA).

See actual information about the Scholarship Fund on the EDSA home page www.viaa.gov.lv or Latvian-Swiss Cooperation Programme home page www.swiss-contribution.lv.