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With signing the contract on fire safety measures the commitment period of the Swiss contribution is completed

On Wednesday, February 1, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and Swiss government signed the last project agreement on the support for fire safety measures in local government general education institutions, thus committing ~33 million lats or 100 % of the Swiss programme financing to Latvian six months before the end of the commitment period.



The Project Agreement was signed by Mr. Aleksandrs Antonovs, Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance of Latvia and Mr. Urs Bühler, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Switzerland.

“Signing of the last project agreement is an important reference point in the Swiss-Latvian cooperation programme’s implementation period, because with it Latvia has attracted to projects all of the available Swiss financing before the end of the commitment period. It is important because it made the financing available to target groups earlier,” says Deputy State Secretary of the MoF Aleksandrs Antonovs.

Since the school bus project was completed with savings, an opportunity arose to allocate Swiss financial assistance to improve fire safety measures in education institutions. In total within the framework of the project it is planned to improve fire safety systems in 138 local government education institutions, taking into account the fact that municipalities, especially in less-developed regions, does not have sufficient amount of resources to renovate education institutions. Boarding schools are the most exposed to risks because in these institutions children and youth stay at night, therefore these institutions were chosen as a priority target group.

On behalf of Switzerland the contract was signed by Swiss Confederation representative Urs Bühler, and he emphasised: *“Swiss financial assistance to new European Union Member States, including Latvia, is meant to reduce economic and social disparities in the EU, but at the same time it is a great opportunity to strengthen mutual relationship between Switzerland and Latvia.”*



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Total financing of the project is planned ~ 1.63 million lats, including 245 thousand lats of national co-financing. It is planned to start installation of fire safety systems in schools in 2nd quarter of 2013. The project promoter will be the State Regional Development Agency.

Director of the SRDA Maris Krastins admits: *“It is a great pleasure that successful cooperation with Swiss Confederation continues, especially because the new project as well will be implemented in education institutions and regions of Latvia. The goal of the new fire safety project is to achieve maximum effect so that children in education institutions where they are 24 hours a day would feel safe.”*

In total with Swiss financial assistance 12 projects are being implemented in Latvia in such fields as regional development, court modernisation, environment improvements, education and research, private sector and NGO sector. Two of the projects have already been accomplished – the school bus project and the project preparation facility.

Since the implementation of first projects was started in mid-2009, current reimbursement amount received from Switzerland (41% of total funding) is considered as very good. Information received from Donor states prove that Latvia is the first among 12 Beneficiary states in terms of reimbursements received from Switzerland.

Swiss programme funding is available to Latvia from 2007 till June 2012 with a possibility to implement projects till 2017.