



Communication Strategy for the Euro Changeover in Latvia

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1. Summary

Latvia's strategic goal is on 1 January 2014 to introduce the euro as the legal tender. The introduction of euro should be smooth and according to the Latvia's National Euro Changeover Plan (hereinafter – the Plan). Until the final decision of the Council of the European Union on Latvia's membership in the euro area, measures are performed that designed to prepare for the currency changeover. The awareness campaign will begin in on 1 May 2013 and will become the most intense three months before the euro introduction day. The overall goal of the Communication Strategy for the Euro Changeover in Latvia (hereinafter – Communication Strategy) is to increase the public support for the introduction of euro as a result of the euro changeover process. For this purpose, the whole society should be informed about the benefits of the euro introduction. The goal of the Communication Strategy is also to inform all Latvian inhabitants about the euro changeover activities and the process focusing on raising awareness of specific groups about the practical process of the euro changeover.

Euro communication activities and messages are oriented towards the euro benefits and practical aspects of the euro changeover because these are the issues that inhabitants and the business community have the biggest interest in. The objective of the Communication Strategy is to provide the general public with timely and accurate information about the euro banknotes and new euro coins, their safety features, as well as the practical issues about where to exchange lats to euro, how long it will be possible, how to follow prices in euro, how to compare prices and to be protected against unreasonable price increases addressing complaints to the Consumer Rights Protection Centre (hereinafter – CRPC). For the business community it is important to receive timely information about the legal framework of the euro changeover, adjustment of information technology systems and requirements during the changeover period. For risk groups – socially less vulnerable groups it is important to get specific information, given their limited opportunities to receive information.

The Communication Strategy will be mainly focused on socially vulnerable groups, because this part of the society receives information indirectly and this information is not necessary in their daily work, so it might be received late. Employees of public institutions, local authorities, the financial sector and industries are looking for the information about the euro changeover more actively and receive it by performing their duties, so it can be assumed that this part of the society will help to transfer information and explanations to other groups. While drafting the Communication Strategy experience of other countries, as well as recommendations of the European Commission (hereinafter – the EC) were taken into account.

The Communication Action Plan¹ is the practical result of the Communication Strategy. It summarizes proposals, practical advice and daily experience of all the institutions involved in the euro project with their audience. Communication activities will be varied, ranging from seminars, trainings, discussions, forums, a variety of public events, brochures and informative materials to interactive games, questions and answers on social networks, contests and other educational activities.

¹ Sections 7 and 1 of the Latvia's National Euro Changeover Plan are available here: http://www.eiro.lv/eng/the_euro/euro_changeover_in_latvia/latvias_national_euro_changeover_plan.

2. Background

2.1. Road towards the euro

On 20 September 2003 there was a referendum held in which Latvian inhabitants with 67% majority voted for Latvia's accession to the European Union (hereinafter – the EU). On 1 May 2004 Latvia became a full-pledged member of the EU and at the same time a member of the Economic and Monetary Union with suspended membership – until the country meets the Maastricht criteria for the euro introduction. On 30 December 2004 the peg rate of the lats to the euro was set: EUR 1 = LVL 0.702804 and it became effective as of 1 January 2005. On 2 May 2005 Latvia joined the Exchange Rate Mechanism II with already existing lats exchange rate to euro and ensuring the band of fluctuation $\pm 1\%$, which is constant up to now.

To start working at the euro changeover process, in summer of 2005 a Steering Committee² was established with five subordinated working groups. The work of the Steering Committee is monitored by the Cabinet of Ministers. Working groups developed the Plan, which was approved in early 2006 and is constantly being updated. The latest updated Plan is always available on www.eiro.lv³.

In order to join the euro area EU Member States must comply with the convergence or Maastricht criteria for price stability, government budget deficit, exchange rate stability, size of the government debt and long-term interest rates. The Latvian government has done everything necessary for the country to meet these criteria and purposefully approach the day when euro will be introduced in Latvia.

In Latvia the euro introduction day is set 1 January 2014. If Latvia meets the criteria and the decision is positive, we will become the 18th Member State of the euro area.

2.2. Public opinion

Successful euro changeover is based on information and education of the whole society. It is important to find out views and knowledge of different groups of society about the euro changeover process, keep track of changes in opinions and attitude of people, record problems in information exchange, as well as to respond effectively improving the content or channels of communication.

² Approved with Prime Minister's Decree No 308 of July 18, 2005 "On Establishing a Steering Committee", available on: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=112765>

³ http://www.eiro.lv/eng/the_euro/euro_changeover_in_latvia/latvias_national_euro_changeover_plan

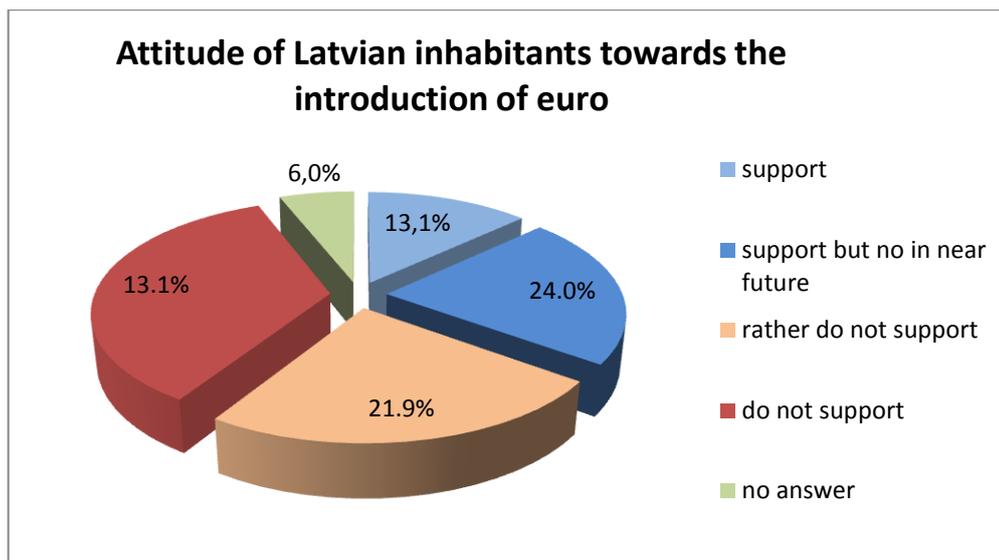


Figure 1. Survey of "Latvijas Fakti" about the attitude of inhabitants towards the euro.

The survey carried out by the market and social research agency "Latvijas Fakti" in early September 2012 shows that the euro introduction is supported by 35% of Latvian inhabitants. The lowest support for the euro introduction is among elderly people. Among regions the highest support is in Vidzeme – 40.1% of respondents, in Riga the euro introduction is supported by 39.7%, in Kurzeme – 33.5%, in Zemgale – 30.3%, but the lowest support to the euro introduction is in Latgale – 23.3%. The survey involved 1009 Latvian inhabitants between 18 and 74 year old.

In the EC Eurobarometer survey "Introduction of the euro in the more recently acceded member states" (2011) and the survey carried out by "Factum" at the request of the Bank of Latvia "Money and bank system in Latvia" (May 2011) as the main arguments forming positive attitude of inhabitants towards the euro introduction were mentioned more convenient payments settlement (45% of respondents mentioned this as a positive argument), economic situation in Latvia (16%) and national and European identity (15%), but negative attitude towards the euro introduction is formed by – economic situation in Latvia (37% of respondents mentioned this as a negative argument), attitude towards lat (22%) and national and European identity (16%). Speaking about the awareness, in May 2011 23% of inhabitants believed that they were informed enough about the lat changeover to euro, but 55% admitted that they were not informed enough, 14% were not informed, 5% were not interested in this issue, and 3% found it difficult to answer.

Promotion of public awareness and knowledge about the euro introduction, advantages of the single currency, as well as practical aspects, how the new money will look, how lats will be exchanged – these questions should be discussed more actively in public, thus making people to be more confident that the changeover from lat to euro will be well-organised and smooth. Reduction of negative attitude and lack of information are an important pre-condition for a successful euro changeover process in Latvia. Therefore it is important to carry out regular and constant public opinion polls before the euro introduction day and after 1 January 2014 including questions about attitude, knowledge and self-assessment of public awareness.

2.3. The euro introduction timeline

The country has set a strategic goal to introduce the euro as the new legal tender on 1 January 2014. To achieve the goal the following steps should be made:

- At the beginning of 2013 the Latvian government will address a request to the EC and ECB about extraordinary convergence assessment for the accession to the euro area;
- The EC and the European Central Bank will prepare a convergence report on Latvia's macroeconomic indicators for 2012;
- In June 2013 the European Union Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) shall give its recommendations – will invite Latvia to join the euro area;
- The European Council will make a political decision and invite Latvia to the euro area (all 17 euro area Member States shall vote for it);
- In July 2013 (approximately a week after the invitation) ECOFIN will make the final decision on Latvia's accession to the euro area and set the conversion rate according to European Council Regulation (EC) No 2866/9 of December 31, 1998. It will be the moment when it will be officially announced that the euro changeover will happen in Latvia.

In view of the euro changeover procedure and based on the Plan, in the Communication Action Plan there are three phases set with specific Communication Strategy measures designed for each of them:



Figure 2. Euro communication phases.

The first phase or preparation period: 1 January 2012 – 1 May 2013

During this period, measures are being implemented reducing concerns of inhabitants and contributing to the overall public support for the euro introduction. Inhabitants are being introduced with the benefits of the single currency in the EU and Latvia, information is provided about the EMU and experience of other countries in the euro introduction. The expected high media interest in Latvia's readiness for the euro introduction and possible decision of the EU institutions should be taken into account.



Simultaneously, preparatory work is done for the partnership in the intensive communication phase – reaching out to and engagement of potential partners, introduction with the process of the campaign and agreements on particular ways of cooperation, as well as preparation of second-phase measures, including information seminars for information intermediaries (multipliers) – employees of public institutions and local authorities, representatives of youth organisations, pensioners federation and others. There is active cooperation going on with the professional associations in planning the intensive phase of the euro project.

The second phase or intensive period: 1 May 2013 – 14 January 2014

Emphasis is put on practical issues – money security, the euro changeover process, organisation of public education and awareness activities – mandatory period of dual display of prices, campaign "Fair euro introducer", seminars for cashiers, accountants, librarians, businessmen, social workers and other target groups. During this period an active survey of public opinion is carried out in order to make adjustments for more efficient communication.

Following the decision on Latvia's accession to the euro area information will be provided actively about the period of dual display of prices in lats and euro, design and security features of euro banknotes and coins, practical possibilities of money exchange and the parallel circulation period.

The third or final period: 14 January 2014 – 31 December 2014

Provision of information about the evaluation of the euro changeover process, progress of the dual price display period, information about the campaign "Fair euro introducer", communication of identified infringements and explanation of the situation, opportunities for the free of charge cash exchange and euro stabilisation measures.

After the third phase each institution shall provide information about the euro in the field of their competence.

3. Goals of the Communication Strategy

The main goal of the Communication Strategy is to ensure increase in inhabitants' support for the introduction of euro and strengthen support of Latvia's inhabitants as the members of the single currency area for the active role of Latvia in future economic decisions of the EU. For this purpose, the whole society should be provided with the information about the benefits of euro introduction, justifying the need for the changeover. The Communication Strategy aims to inform all Latvia's inhabitants about the activities related to the lat changeover to euro in Latvia, focusing on the information of each group about the practical arrangements of the introduction of euro.

In the Communications Strategy and Communication Action Plan special attention will be paid to the socially less vulnerable groups, which might have difficulties to access or perceive the information about the introduction of euro. In the communication strategy special attention will be paid to the children and students, as well as the following socially less vulnerable and difficult-to-reach groups – pensioners, people with physical or mental

disabilities, people who are in prison, lonely people living in remote areas and non-Latvian inhabitants who do not have access to or do not use communication channels in the official state language. For the named target groups special communication activities are designed because of the experience of other countries shows that employees of the public administration sector, financial sector and business community receive information about the introduction of euro both directly while carrying out their duties, and indirectly being in a socially active position.

Within the framework of the goal of the Communication Strategy all financial and non-financial institutions and businesses should be proactively informed about the work needed to ensure business continuity during the euro changeover. The Law on the Introduction of Euro provides for general requirements related to the euro changeover, as well as in euro project working groups in collaboration with non-governmental organisations guidelines are developed on issues, which are essential to businessmen – accounting, cash register operations, taxation, price display, exchange rate application and other areas. These issues are important not only to ensure direct activities, but also for the overall public education and awareness, because they cover a large number of people, who are also a kind of communicators in their small social groups – families, friends, and communicating on social networks.

Goals of the Communication Strategy should be achieved by explaining the euro changeover process in order to minimise concerns of inhabitants, promote confidence in the new currency and change attitude towards the introduction of euro:

- To communicate on economic issues related to the introduction of euro, Latvia's membership in the euro area, impact of the euro changeover on the economic situation in our country, inflation indicators, standards of living of the general public, labour market, encouraging people to think in long-term categories;
- To provide the society with information about practical issues in order to promote knowledge about the euro changeover process and information sufficiency. In the society it should be clear how the lat changeover to euro will happen, that people will be able to convert money in time, how to use new coins and banknotes and recognise counterfeits, how not to be deceived when receiving the change, how to compare prices and other issues;
- To talk about the design of the national currency as the continuation of the national identity aspect on the obverse of euro coins.

4. Target Groups of the Communication Strategy

The target group of the Communication Strategy for the euro changeover is all Latvian inhabitants, but special attention will be paid to socially less vulnerable groups with different kinds of difficulties and problems to receive information about the lat changeover to euro, difficulties to perceive information or physical challenges to exchange money.

In general, in the Communication Action Plan measures and activities are planned for the following target groups: banks, bank customers; unemployed, librarians and library



visitors; people with special needs (with visual, hearing, speech, movement disorders, as well as with mental health problems); households and all socially, economically, and politically active inhabitants; cashiers (in banks and trading companies); persons in prison and persons under the supervision of the Probation Service; journalists; NGOs; pensioners; children, pupils, youth; consumers; sales companies and other economic operators; public administration institutions; local governments and local government authorities; tourists.

4.1. Socially less vulnerable groups

Taking into account experience of other EU countries in introducing the single currency, in the Communication Strategy special attention is paid to the following groups – pensioners, people with special needs (with physical or mental health problems), people who live far away from residential areas, people in prison, and non-Latvian inhabitants who receive information in Russian. All of these target groups are subject to higher risk of insufficient information, which in turn can contribute to unfounded fears and rumours, therefore the Communication Strategy provides for specific and special measures, communication channels and ways of information presentation for each of these groups.

Pensioners (seniors) as a target audience should be taken into account separately for several reasons. First, it refers to their payment settling habits – in everyday operations pensioners use more cash and less non-cash payments online. Second, pensioners use less internet media, social networks to get information. Therefore emphasis should be put on selection of appropriate channels and tools to reach this target group. Third, many retired people have experienced material losses in their lives related to currency reforms, which can lead to lack of confidence in the euro changeover. For older people it is more difficult to adapt to changes, they often have problems with vision, hearing, which also influences the speed and accuracy of capturing the information.

According to the Latvian Central Statistical Bureau, in Latvia in 2012 there are slightly more than 582 thousand pensioners. Many of them live alone, have limited access to the mass media, many people find it difficult to move, or they live far away from residential areas. Pensioners make up a large part of the society, so the Communication Strategy involves extensive cooperation with pensioners' organisations, non-governmental organisations, participation of euro experts in activities for older people, training of employees and specialists of their representative organisations, seminars for social workers, librarians, employees of local government authorities, bank cashiers who in their everyday work will meet this target group directly and will be able to help with informative materials, as well as explain and give practical assistance.

Pensioners will be invited to participate in discussion forums, city/town festivals and other public events, where information will be provided on the lat changeover to euro. For this target group special information and explanatory materials will be provided about the recalculation of pensions.

People with special needs are a special target group, where obstacles for these people to read, hear and understand information about the introduction of euro and its practical progress should be taken into account. According to data from the Ministry of Welfare, in Latvia there are almost 149 thousand people with disabilities, including 7507 children. 7494 people have lost their vision, but 40,000 people have a variety of vision problems and serious disorders. In Latvia there are 1954 people with hearing disabilities, but 1-4% of the

population or slightly more than 100 thousand people of different age have impaired hearing, i.e. difficulties to hear or severe hearing impairments. More than 60 thousand people suffer from mental disorders, but 17,815 are permanently in medical institutions under professional supervision.

In collaboration with organisations of people with disabilities informative materials and brochures in Braille will be prepared for these target groups, information will be recorded in visual and audio format, as well as informative materials will be drafted in simplified language. For people with special needs it is planned to make a video with sign interpretation for posting on social networks and websites of institutions, to train specialists of representing organisations, as well as to provide other support in special events. Special information will be prepared for blind and visually impaired people about the recognition of banknotes.

Difficult to reach people are single people or families who live at a distance from residential areas, in certain isolation from both the mass media and public institutions. Although in the Communication Strategy it is stated that a letter will be sent to each household with full information about the introduction of euro and its practical aspects, but there is a possibility that people may become worried about upcoming changes, as well as information received may not be clear enough or may be received late. For people in this target group it is important that they receive information in as different places as possible where they still could be reached: when shopping (stores), paying fees (bank, local government, post office), looking for news (library, school, recreation centre), getting medical services (hospital, family doctor, social worker); therefore attention will be paid to the preparation and training of employees of these institutions about euro issues, as well as to the placement of information in public places in a form of posters and similar materials. There will be close cooperation with employees of local government authorities who know best the problems of people in their territory, and, if necessary, can help with the delivery of information and practical assistance.

Persons in prison are people who serve their sentence in prison or are under the supervision of the Probation Service. In Latvia there are 12 prisons with 6500 inmates in 2012, under the supervision of the Probation Service – 6800 people. Physical isolation from the rest of society makes it difficult to receive information, as well as causes uncertainty and anxiety about what will happen with savings after release, as well as uncertainty about how payments will be made with new euro coins and banknotes. Provision of information to this target group will be ensured through close cooperate with the authorities in charge of prisons.

Non-Latvian inhabitants are a separate target group because they account for a large part of society in Latvia. Majority of Russian-speaking community actually uses only written or broadcasted media in their native language. According to census data, in 2011 ethnical distribution of the Latvian population was the following: 60.5% Latvians, 26.0% Russians, 3.5% Belarusians, 2.4% Ukrainians, 2.2% Poles, 1.3% Lithuanians and the remaining 3.5% consisted of Jews, Gypsies, Germans, Estonians and others. The share of Russian-speaking minority in Latvia could make about 30%.

The Communication Strategy envisages to use the communication channels that are used every day by the Russian-speaking community and to provide informative materials also in Russian upon request, including materials for special target groups.

4.2. Special target group – children, pupils and students

The target group includes pre-school children, pupils and students, between the age of five and twenty, who will be informed through specially prepared campaigns and materials about the euro changeover. In this target group focus will be on the visual appearance of new euro coins and banknotes, as well as the conversion of prices. In addition, if this target group is well-informed, it will promote awareness and positive attitude towards the introduction of euro also in other groups, in their families, including helping their grandparents. The younger generation is more open and more positive to changes. Young people perceive the introduction of euro as a benefit, because it will make travelling more convenient, there will be cheaper opportunities to get education in other European countries.

According to data of the Latvian Central Statistical Bureau, in 2012 88.2 thousand children attend pre-school institutions, 205.4 thousand attend schools, 12.8 thousand – evening schools, and 35.8 thousand children and young people attend vocational schools. In Latvia there are 937 educational institutions and 80 youth centres. According to data of the Ministry of Education and Science in 2011 total number of students was 113 000. In total this target group is made of 455.2 thousand children, students and young people. Information should be prepared for each age group and in quality appropriate for their development, children's attention span should be taken into account and work should be carried out with teachers of kindergartens, schools and universities, who can be a support for persons in supplying information.

For children and students special cartoons are being prepared, methodological materials are being developed for teachers, seminars and trainings will be provided for teachers, youth organisation leaders, students and youth specialists in local governments. A variety of knowledge and drawing competitions will be organised for children, pupils will be invited to attend educational exhibitions on euro. For pupils a separate section will be set up on the website www.eiro.lv, as well as interactive games will be developed and special souvenirs with the euro campaign logo will be prepared.

4.3. Businessmen and local governments

An important target audience is businessmen, businesses and people working for these businesses, their management, clients and customers, or consumers in general. Sales and service companies, as well as financial institutions will be most directly involved in the currency changeover process. This target group should be provided with extensive information about the upcoming changes that will affect business operations, mainly – cash registers, taking into account requirements of particular industries. For businessmen seminars will be organised, as well as information will be prepared about accounting, taxation, price display and other issues.

A communication and awareness campaign oriented towards this target group has been launched timely so that companies have enough time to prepare for successful introduction of euro. An active dialogue is being held with professional associations participating in euro changeover processes and activities.

The target group includes both public and private sector service providers and sales companies. Each of them should be sufficiently informed to carry out necessary preparatory work in time and plan costs associated with the euro changeover process. Special information



provision channels are also envisaged for retail chains, which will also be used to prepare the end-user for the currency changeover process.

Banks not only play an important role in the currency exchange process, but also serve as a source of information for their customers, who indirectly through banks' information channels (websites, online banks, etc.) will receive detailed information about the euro changeover process. Banks and retail chains will also play the key role in late cash withdrawal from circulation.

Cashiers of banks and sales companies are a group of professionals for whom it is important to have detailed knowledge about the design and security features of banknotes and coins. For this group direct communication in professional seminars and training materials are important.

Managers, employees, lawyers of local governments – specialists addressed by people on various issues, including issues of the introduction of euro. That is why special training and seminars are envisaged for these multipliers, as well as cooperation is planned in town/city festivals, regional forums, reflecting these events on websites of local governments and other informative publications. Necessary informative materials will be delivered to local governments – leaflets, posters. In collaboration with local governments a variety of public awareness events will be held within the framework of town/city festivals and other events conducted by local governments in order to inform the society about issues related to the introduction of euro.

4.5. General public

Journalists should be included in a separate group because the mass media and journalists, who report on economic issues, play an important role in public information. Journalists are actively following the introduction of euro and government decisions on the euro changeover target date, as well as continuously analysing risks and benefits in order to provide the society with objective and current information. It is important to provide prompt and adequate information to the mass media. At all stages, it is important to inform journalists first of all. It is an important target group – foreign journalists that will receive necessary information. Aiming to disseminate positive information about Latvia's assessment and leading to the improving tourists and investments inflow, there will be received positive feedback – positive Latvia's society attitude regarding the euro introduction. Thus there will be received support for the active Latvia's role in upcoming EU economical decision making processes.

Households – according to Latvian statistical data in 2011 there were 888.4 thousand households. The Communication Strategy envisages sending informative materials to each household about the euro changeover process and design and safety features of euro coins and banknotes. It is planned to send to each household 2 conversion cards to help get used to new prices and reduce the possibility of price increase by fraudulent businesses.

Librarians in their everyday work often meet with inhabitants of their neighbourhood or residential area, part of which makes the above-mentioned socially less vulnerable groups, so it is important to educate them early on euro issues. Seminars will be organised in libraries throughout Latvia, including Riga. Libraries will be provided with informative materials for the general public.



Tourists should be informed about the currency exchange in Latvia, as well as a message should be given to them that now tourism in Latvia has become more convenient and cost-effective, because in the future payments will be allowed in euro. Information about the euro changeover in Latvia will be placed in the international airport “Riga”, Riga Central Railway Station, Riga International Bus Terminal, and other places with the largest influx of visitors. Information about the design of Latvian euro coins and other issues related to the introduction of euro in Latvia will be published primarily on the internet – website of the Latvian Institute, Latvian government website www.latvija.lv, Facebook, as well as national tourism website www.latvia.travel.lv.

5. Main Messages of the Communication Strategy

In the Communication Strategy for the euro changeover it is planned to include two blocks of messages to communicate both the benefits provided by euro to the Latvian economy and society in general, and for each target group, as well as to inform the society about practical aspects of the euro changeover process.

The main message to justify the need to introduce euro is – this is the opportunity to integrate deeper into the European Union getting various economic benefits. In turn, to communicate practical arrangements of the introduction of euro statements regarding the fair and transparent currency changeover process will be announced.

Since these messages themselves contain complex information, below in the text particular, narrowed issues, which need to be announced during the euro changeover communication campaign, are described:

- Latvia confirmed its readiness to join the European Monetary System in a referendum on September 20, 2003 when with majority of votes (67%) it was decided to join the EU and the EMU. The introduction of euro proves that the Latvian economic and fiscal policy is on the way to stable and sustainable economic growth.
- The introduction of euro will keep savings of Latvian inhabitants. Latvian lat was pegged to euro already on 1 January 2005. The lat exchange rate was fixed for all these years at the rate 1 euro = 0.702804 lats. The introduction of euro is a currency exchange not a monetary reform, so it will not cause decrease in savings of inhabitants. The euro conversion rate will be formally announced in July 2013, and as can be seen from experience of Estonia and other euro area countries – it did not change.
- On Latvian euro coins there will be symbols which are important for the Latvian statehood and history and which were chosen in a public opinion poll in 2004 – the portrait of a Latvian folk-maid from the pre-war five lats coin of the Republic of Latvia and coat of arms of Latvia. After the introduction of euro the Bank of Latvia will also mint commemorative euro coins of topics which are relevant to Latvia.
- From the euro introduction day euro banknotes and coins will become the legal tender in Latvia. Lat banknotes and coins will be gradually withdrawn from circulation and

replaced by euro. The conversion of non-cash lats to euro will happen automatically – as of the euro changeover date.

- Two weeks after the euro introduction day will be the period of parallel circulation of lats and euro. During the parallel circulation period lat and euro will be both legal tenders in the territory of Latvia.
- As of 1 January 2014 all state benefits, scholarships, pensions and other payments to individuals, as well as salaries will be converted at the official conversion rate and paid in euro.
- During the first 6 months after 1 January 2014 the lat cash changeover to euro will be free of charge at the official conversion rate in all Latvian commercial banks, 1 month – at individual state joint stock company “Latvijas Pasts” service points. As of the euro introduction day for an unlimited period of time it will be possible to exchange lats to euro free of charge in the Bank of Latvia in Riga, and its branches in Liepaja and Daugavpils.
- “Latvijas Pasts” will participate in the money conversion process because in many residential areas in Latvia there are no bank branches, but there are postal service points. This is for convenience of people to avoid unnecessary expenses while travelling to distant places to exchange money in bank branches.
- For inhabitants the most convenient money conversion process will be non-cash conversion which will be done automatically on 1 January 2014 – all the money in lats in bank accounts will be automatically and free of charge converted to euro. If cash savings are put on bank accounts in time, people will save time and travel expenses, which may arise due to extraordinary visits to the bank. The bank account number will not change.
- In order to better prepare the society for the currency changeover and for people to be able to become gradually familiar with new prices a 9 month long period is envisaged when prices of all products and services will be displayed both in lats and euro. Dual display of prices will begin 3 months before the introduction of euro (1 October 2013) and will expire 6 months after the introduction of euro (1 July 2014). It will be mandatory for all traders and service providers. Traders will be able to display prices in both currencies for a longer period of time. Recommended period is from the day when the exchange rate is fixed by the EU Council until 1 year after the euro introduction day.
- The state with its own example will encourage traders and service providers to express new prices in euro strictly in accordance with mathematical rounding principles. Increase in prices of consumer goods in the euro area after the introduction of euro was only 0.2 to 0.3%, which is a modest one-month average inflation that people do not feel in their everyday activities.
- Measures are envisaged to prevent and minimise the opportunity for market participants to use the currency changeover to cover the price increase – monitoring of prices of goods and services in Riga and regions 1 year before the introduction of euro

and a year after the euro changeover date, i.e. from 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2014, and the campaign “Fair euro introducer”, which will be launched in July 2013 and will continue until mid-2014. The campaign “Fair euro introducer” is aimed at protecting consumer interests and encouraging businessmen to sign a memorandum of good will on correct price conversion. Special stickers with the symbol of the campaign will be made for placement in trading and service provision places, thereby helping consumers to identify honest businesses. Inhabitants will be encouraged to actively keep track of price changes and inform the CRPC about dishonest businesses.

- SEPA (Single euro payments area) is a single European currency with a single set of payment instruments. With the introduction of euro the society will be able to get all the benefits offered by single non-cash payments – SEPA credit transfer, SEPA direct debit payment and SEPA card payment. With these three SEPA payment instruments any customer anywhere in Europe will be able to make non-cash payments as quickly, easily and securely and as domestic payments can be made now. It will be enough with one card and one account to make payments anywhere in Europe under the same technical and legal conditions.
- In changing prices from lats to euro the mathematical rounding principle provided in the draft Law on the Introduction of Euro will have to be taken into account. Sums of money after converting lats to euro shall be rounded to the nearest cent, taking into account the third digit following the point. If the third digit following the point is from 0 to 4, the value of the cent shall remain unchanged. If the third digit following the point is from 5 to 9, then the cent shall be rounded up increasing by one.
- During the euro changeover period increased attention will be paid to security issues. Inhabitants and businesses will be informed about money security features and possible deception and how to avoid it. In all credit institutions there will be enhanced security and preventive measures taken to ensure the collection of money.

6. Communication Channels

The Communication Strategy is aimed at providing objective information about the EMU and the euro to the population of Latvia, providing information about the euro changeover process, new euro coins and banknotes, non-cash euro conversion, as well as promoting public awareness of the benefits of the euro changeover.

Therefore a wide range of communication channels has to be used in the implementation of the Communication Strategy and Communication Action Plan, ensuring objective and comprehensive information to all groups of the society. The scope of communication channels and their particular use shall be evaluated constantly taking into account dynamic development of the internet mass media – increasing possibilities and usability to ensure that in the intensive phase channels are used as effectively as possible.

A road to secondary information providers – associations, unions, social services and state institutions with a wide range of clients – also should be found. Providing information to wide society and involving various partners a multiplying effect should be achieved. It will



ensure effective and successful communication with the society covering all the biggest groups, but in particular the socially vulnerable part of the society – pensioners, children and pupils, unemployed, people with physical or mental disorders, lonely people, as well as people in prison or living far away from residential areas.

Planned communication channels are as follows:

- **mass media** – national and regional newspapers, periodicals, television, radio, internet websites;
- **environmental advertisements** – stands, posters, environmental installations, placement of the euro sign symbol in city environment;
- **partnership with the mass media** – probably for more effective communication a partnership could be established with the Latvian Television, Latvian Radio, national newspapers (in Latvian and Russian), as well as Internet portals;
- **informative measures** – seminars, information day measures in cities (for example, on the Europe Day, 9 May), lectures for specific target groups, press conferences, informative exhibitions, town/city festivals, competitions, forums and other public events;
- **special measures** – exhibitions of the European Commission and European Central Bank on the Economic and Monetary Union, euro banknotes and coins, a press conference devoted to the introduction of euro, an official ceremony of granting the Euro Star, the ceremony of withdrawing the first euro banknote from the ATM;
- **direct contacts** – individual meetings and information exchange, discussions with field associations and non-governmental organisations;
- **training** – seminars for businesses, training programmes for bank and shop cashiers, training for lecturers, pupils and students who can disseminate received information to other interested persons;
- **internet** – internet website about the euro changeover (www.eiro.lv), internet website of the non-cash euro payment project – National SEPA Latvia internet website (www.sepalatvija.lv); information on websites of public administration institutions, bank websites, public internet websites;
- **social media** – euro communication account in social networks Draugiem.lv and Twitter, as well as placing information in the Facebook account of the Latvian Institute;
- **informational help-desk telephone line** – free-of-charge help-desk telephone line where any interested party will be able to get answers to questions related to the euro changeover, inform about noticed violations related to unfair increase in prices;
- **information centres** – the Bank of Latvia Visitors' Centre “Money World”, European Union information desks;
- **information intermediaries** – libraries, drugstores, hospitals, out-patient treatment institutions, NGOs, associations, local governments, planning regions and districts, educational institutions, post office departments, sales and service provision places, airport, stations, banks, State Social Insurance Agency regional departments, etc.;

- **regional forums** – large informative events will be organised for all target groups in each of the regions in Latvia: Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, Latgale and Riga.

7. Organising and Financing the Implementation of the Communication Strategy

The Communication Strategy is the basic document for the implementation of the euro changeover communication. The Communication Strategy has been developed and is being implemented according to the Communication Action Plan given in Annex 1 to the Plan “Action Plan for Introduction of the Single European Currency in Latvia”. The Communication Strategy has been developed by the Public Awareness and Communication Working Group which is one of the five working groups of the Euro Project Steering Committee.

The Public Awareness and Communication Working Group (PACWG) represents all the institutions which are responsible for the implementation of the Communication Strategy and the Communication Action Plan. The following ministries and institutions are represented in the working group: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Economics (MoE), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Financial and Capital Market Commission (FCMC), Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Ministry of Culture (MoC), Ministry of Welfare (MoW), Bank of Latvia (BoL), Secretariat of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Saeima, Ministry of Transport (MoT), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD), State Chancellery (SC)* and non-governmental organisations: *Europe Direct information centres, European Commission Representation in Latvia (ECR), Employers’ Confederation of Latvia (LDDK), Association of Commercial Banks of Latvia (ACBL), Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Latvian Traders Association (LTA), Latvian Food Retailers Association (LFRA), National Association for Consumer Protection (PIAA), Consumer Rights Protection Centre (CRPC), Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Tourism Development State Agency (TDSA).*

More precise information about responsibilities and membership of each institution and NGO is given in the Communication Action Plan and Annex 1 to the communication strategy.

The institutions represented in the working group will use all available information channels to disseminate information about the euro changeover, including their websites, their own events, and information of their employees. All the institutions implementing the euro communication process will use the single Communication Strategy, thereby ensuring a *one-voice* principle in the communication with the society. For this purpose, a material will be drafted with the most frequently asked questions and answers to these questions, which will be distributed to all communication and public relations staff of the involved institutions, regularly updated and improved to facilitate daily communication with the society.

Sources of required financing for the implementation of the Communication Action Plan are as follows:

- Latvian government budget (distributed centrally through the strategy of the MoF for communication activities implemented by all public administration institutions);

- Budget of the Bank of Latvia;
- Financing of the European Central Bank;
- Financing of the European Commission according to the concluded strategic partnership agreement.

In view of the experience of other new euro area Member States, to communicate with the society about the changeover from lat to euro the amount of necessary funding is calculated on the basis of the number of inhabitants, namely, 1 euro per capita for communication measures. Necessary government funding for the euro communication is 2 million euro or 1.4 million lats, of which in 2013 it is planned to spend 1 376 720 Ls and in 2014 – 23 280 Ls. The EC Grant Agreement envisages covering up to 50% of these costs.

In the implementation of the Communication Strategy additional support should be provided to initiatives of cooperation partners which envisage financial contribution – implementation of informative measures, information dissemination, coordinated production and distribution of informative materials using the design of informative materials, design elements and content approved within the framework of the Communication Strategy.

8. Calendar of Communication Activities

8.1. Regular activities (2012-2014)

To carry out media monitoring regarding the introduction of euro, as well as related topics – the euro area, euro area Member States, the euro area crisis. Monitoring is intended to clarify which issues are not yet completely clear to the society and the mass media, which issues the society has particular interest in, to react proactively and give accurate answers, information and initiate new publications or interviews.

To ensure daily cooperation with journalists giving interviews, answering questions, and sending press releases about current events and news regarding the introduction of euro.

To update regularly the website www.eiro.lv informing the society about current events, news, upcoming events related to the introduction of euro and to answer submitted questions. To ensure placement of information in Latvian, Russian and English.

To communicate actively with the society updating the latest information about the Euro Project via the euro account in the social network Twitter. To promote the increase in the number of followers of the account.

To ensure operation of the information help-desk phone, to update regularly public information, to collect questions of inhabitants and use the collected information to specify communication activities.

To provide existing information help-desk phones with the latest information about the euro changeover process in order to inform consumers – Consumer Rights Protection Centre, National Association for Consumer Protection. To find out which issues people consider the most topical in order to use this information to specify communication messages.

To carry out regularly public opinion polls about issues related to the introduction of euro. To use results and conclusions of public opinion polls to adjust communication activities, as well as to provide public information about particular results of public opinion polls.

In cooperation with the European Commission Representation in Latvia to organise regularly lectures involving Euro Team lecturers.

To participate in public events, seminars and discussions on the euro theme organised by other organisations, to present the latest activities and achievements within the framework of the MoF euro project, and to ensure increase in the overall awareness regarding the euro area and the introduction of euro.

To monitor announced procurements and to coordinate related communication activities, to cooperate with all stakeholders and ensure joint action to achieve communication objectives.

If during the implementation of the Communication Strategy a need arises to make adjustments to the Action Plan or add new activities, target groups and communication channels, then it will be done in the working process.

8.2. Planned communication activities 2012-2014

Month	Messages	Communication activity	Responsible institution	Cooperation partners
January 2012	Latvia continues the road towards the introduction of euro	Update the Communication Strategy	MoF	PACWG
February		Update information on the website eiro.lv	MoF	
March		Update the Communication Action Plan Euro Project Manager starts working Initiated negotiations with the European Commission	MoF	
April		Created account in the social network Twitter eiro_lv Regional seminar in Madona "What kind of euro do we expect to have?"	MoF BoL	 MoF
May		Confirmed funding for communication activities Regional seminars in Mazsalaca, Skulte and Penkule "What kind of euro do we expect to have?"	MoF BoL	 MoF
June		Cooperation with the EC regarding the Partnership Agreements	MoF	
July		Concluded Partnership Agreement with the European Commission	MoF	
August		Start to establish the Euro Communication Bureau, the Euro Communication Projects Manager starts working Regional seminars in Aizkraukle and Naujene "What kind of euro do we expect to have?"	MoF BoL	 MoF
September	Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria	Preparation of procurements Preparation of the Grant Agreement Questions and answers to the Cabinet of Ministers	MoF MoF MoF	 MoE

		Approve the Communication Strategy	PACWG	
		Regional seminars – Kuldiga, Ludza “What kind of euro do we expect to have?”	BoL	MoF
		Discussions on euro-related topics in the mass media and public	BoL, MoF	
October	Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria	Initiated work at the announcement of procurements Prepare the Grant Agreement for signing Regional seminars – Kraslava, Smiltene “What kind of euro do we expect to have?” Discussions among businessmen in “Dienas Bizness”	MoF MoF BoL MoF	MoE MoF LDDK
November	Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria	Process of procurement tenders Prepare question and answer materials for the communication with the society and press Press release or opinion on the introduction of euro Seminar for businessmen and employees of public administration institutions Create a section about the introduction of euro on websites of all involved institutions	MoF MoF MoF MoF MoF	
December	Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria	Finalise procurement tenders Cooperation with social partners, other institutions involved in the introduction of euro Press release about convergence criteria Prepare informative materials for communicators of the EU issues (Europe Direct, EU	MoF MoF MoF MoF, BoL, MoFA	

		information desks)		
January 2013	<p>Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy</p> <p>Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria</p>	<p>Qualitative survey</p> <p>Update and promote www.eiro.lv</p> <p>Update the CoM website</p> <p>Start work of the informative help-desk phone</p> <p>Develop a conceptual solution for public relations</p> <p>Conclude the Grant Agreement</p> <p>Ensure operation of the info help-desk phone</p>	<p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>SC</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p>	
February	<p>Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy</p> <p>Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria</p>	<p>Create a euro section in portals Draugiem.lv and Facebook.com</p> <p>Prepare ECB communication materials about the design and counterfeiting features of euro banknotes and coins</p> <p>Prepare press folders for journalists</p> <p>Media training</p>	<p>MoF</p> <p>BoL</p> <p>MoF, BoL</p> <p>MoF, BoL</p>	Euro Team lecturers
March	<p>Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy</p> <p>Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria</p>	<p>Training of high-level specialists</p> <p>Develop corporate communication and action plan for public information</p> <p>Develop a plan of advertising and technical solutions</p> <p>Training of librarians about the introduction of euro in all libraries in Latvia</p> <p>Training of managers, lawyers and other employees of local governments</p> <p>Training of LPF specialists</p> <p>Develop the content of informative materials</p>	<p>BoL</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoC, BoL, MoF</p> <p>MoEPRD, BoL, MoF</p> <p>MoW, MoF, BoL</p> <p>MoF</p>	<p>Euro Team lecturers</p> <p>Euro Team lecturers</p> <p>Euro Team lecturers</p>

April	<p>Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy</p> <p>Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria</p>	<p>Public opinion poll</p> <p>Start preparation of polygraph materials</p> <p>Develop a plan for the delivery of informative materials</p> <p>Start training specialists of youth organisations and youth specialists in local governments</p>	<p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoES</p>	Euro Team lecturers
May	<p>Role of the introduction of euro in the Latvian economy</p> <p>Latvia's goal – to meet Maastricht criteria</p>	<p>Training of cashiers of shops, currency exchange points etc.</p> <p>Euro days within the framework of town/city festivals</p> <p>Prepare methodological materials for teachers</p> <p>Start working at making an educational cartoon for children and 1-12 grade pupils</p>	<p>BoL</p> <p>MoEPRD</p> <p>MoES</p> <p>MoES</p>	
June	<p>Latvia on the road to the membership in the euro area</p>	<p>Complete establishing the Euro Communication Bureau</p> <p>Start placing advertisements in the mass media</p> <p>Presentation of educational cartoons and methodological means</p>	<p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoES</p>	
July	<p>Latvia joins the euro are</p> <p>Euro changeover activities</p>	<p>Official ceremony devoted to the decision on official admitting to the euro are in Brussels</p> <p>Start an information campaign in the mass media about the introduction of euro (radio, thematic pages in national and regional newspapers)</p> <p>Placement of informative materials in divisions of state joint stock company “Latvijas Pasts”, banks</p> <p>Placement of environmental advertisements</p>	<p>EC, ECB</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p> <p>MoF</p>	<p>MoF, BoL, MoFA</p> <p>BoL</p> <p>BoL</p> <p>MoE, BoL</p>

		Organise regional forums	MoF, MoEPRD	Local governments
		Participation in town/city festivals	MoF, MoEPRD BoL	ECB
		Information sets about euro banknotes and coins for clients of credit institutions		ECB
		Start training employees of credit institutions	BoL	
		Approve the memorandum of “Fair euro introducer”	MoE	
		Press release about “Fair euro introducer” and invitation to businessmen	MoF, MoE	
August		Organise regional forums	MoF, MoEPRD	BoL
		Participation in town/city festivals	MoF, MoEPRD	Local governments
		Start the campaign “Fair euro introducer” in the mass media	MoF, MoE	CRPC
		Informative materials for NGOs, consumers rights protection institutions	MoF	
		Informative materials in Russian and English	MoF	
		Training of representatives of organisations of people with special needs	MoW	Apeirons, Sustento, LAD, LSB
		Prepare and disseminate informative materials to people with special needs	MoW	Apeirons, Sustento, LAD, LSB
		Information to clients of the SSIA and SEA – recipients of pensions and benefits	MoW	SEA, SSIA
		Information employees of public institutions and authorities, BoL via intranet of each institution about the introduction of euro		

		Trip of journalists to the mint	BoL	
September	Beginning of the active information campaign	Place the euro symbol in the city environment	MoF	BoL
		Start working at holding regional forums	MoF	MoE, BoL
		Seminars for cashiers about counterfeiting features of euro coins and banknotes	BoL	
		Press release about euro security features	BoL	MoF
		Events for children and pupils – cartoons, competitions, delivery of informative materials to schools	MoES, BoL	
		Public opinion poll	MoF	
		Press release about the results of the poll	MoF	
		Direct mail to households about the introduction of euro	MoF	
		Information for persons in prison and under the supervisions of the Probation Service	MoJ	
		Information for recipients of social services and assistance	MoEPRD, MoW	
		Record euro communication activities in photos and videos (until February 2014)	MoF, BoL	All involved institutions
October		Start an information campaign in the mass media about euro coins and banknotes	BoL	ECB
		International conference about the introduction of euro	BoL	ECB, MoF
		Euro Star granting ceremony	BoL	ECB
		Press conference	BoL	ECB, MoF
		Public opinion poll	MoF	
		Press release about the results	MoF	

		and conclusions of the poll Place posters at the biggest transport junctions in order to inform tourists about the introduction of euro in Latvia	MoT	MoE
November		Direct mail to all households about the design and security features of euro banknotes and coins, as well as 2 conversion cards Public opinion poll Open the ECB exhibition about euro banknotes and coins	BoL MoF BoL	ECB ECB
December		Public opinion poll Press release about the results of the poll Official ceremony of the introduction of euro Time countdown in the New Year's Eve	MoF MoF CoM CoM	MoF
January 2014	The new currency – euro becomes valid in Latvia	Official ceremony of withdrawing the first euro banknote from the ATM Press conference about the introduction of euro	CoM CoM	
February		Public opinion poll after the euro changeover date	MoF	
March		Media relations Ensure operation of the info help-desk phone	MoF	
April		Operation of the info help-desk phone	MoF	
May		Operation of the info help-desk phone	MoF	
June		Operation of the info help-desk phone	MoF	
July		Operation of the info help-desk phone	MoF	
August		Operation of the info help-desk phone	MoF	

9. Evaluation of Strategy Implementation Results

Evaluation of the Communication Strategy and the Action Plan in the time period before the introduction of euro, as well as at least six months after the introduction of euro shall be done on a regular basis. Evaluation is done through analysis of implemented measures and public opinion polls:

- Centralised qualitative research and regular quantitative surveys of people about awareness and attitude of various groups of the society;
- BoL public opinion polls – twice a year, media monitoring;
- As well as comparison of the Latvian research data with the Eurobarometer survey of attitude towards euro in new EU Member States which is done once a year.

Results of survey analysis are a tool on the basis of which the working group updates the Communication Action Plan.

Work of the Public Awareness and Communication Working Group shall be reported to the Steering Committee by the Head of the Working Group. The MoF and the BoL shall coordinate the communication campaign confirming all information and communication activities. The implementation of the Communication Strategy within the framework of the euro project shall be supervised by the Euro Project Manager.

I Responsibilities of institutions represented in the working group:**Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)**

Provides general information about the euro changeover process to diplomatic corps in Latvia, as well as Latvia's honorary consuls to foreign countries, in cooperation with its subordinated agency "Latvian Institute" regularly prepares and disseminates a fact sheet on euro changeover processes in English and includes topics of the campaign in the agenda of seminars for Latvian regional mass media. The MoFA also disseminates information through 31 EU information desks in all Latvia subordinated to the MoFA.

Ministry of Economics (MoE)

Deals with issues pertaining to non-financial corporations and consumers, at the same time ensuring linkage with non-governmental organisations and professional associations within the scope of its operations. Ensures price monitoring and implementation of the campaign "Fair euro introducer".

European Commission Representation in Latvia (ECR)

Provides support to the euro communication implemented by public administration institutions in Latvia and ensures dissemination of existing informative materials in the EU House, Europe Direct information centres and publishing of information on the ECR website, as well as provides support in lecture organisation on the euro changeover in Latvia using the DG ECFIN established network of Euro Team lecturers. Currently the ECR is responsible for the EIROINFO phone – 67211111 which has been taken over by the ECR in order to ensure continuity of the project and maintenance by the beginning of active euro communication, when the MoF will decide on taking over the EIROINFO phone. Now the EIROINFO phone number is forwarded to the phone of the knowledge, negotiation and art room of the EU House and it operates on working days 10:00-18:00 and Saturdays 10:00-14:00.

Europe Direct information centres

Provide support to the euro communication implemented by public administration institutions in Latvia and ensure dissemination of existing informative materials in the EU House, Europe Direct information centres and publishing of information on websites of Europe Direct information centres.

Ministry of Finance (MoF)

Acts as a coordinator among the institutions involved in the preparation of the Communication Strategy and implementation of the Communication Action Plan. The Ministry provides information to subordinated institutions. In cooperation with the Bank of Latvia and the Ministry of Economy the MoF informs the society about changes in the fiscal and monetary policy and economic developments. According to the Communication Action Plan, prepares and disseminates printed materials, develops and maintains Internet website www.eiro.lv, ensures the implementation and coordination of the informative campaign, as well as the dissemination of information through the channels that already are at the disposal of the Ministry (Ministry's website, subordinated institutions). Ensures partnership with the European Commission.

Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)

Ensures methodological support in the development of informative materials for students and teachers; coordinates the dissemination of informative materials to educational institutions and coordinates different measures targeted at pupils, students and youth promoting active involvement of pupils and students in the euro changeover process.

Ministry of Welfare (MoW)

Ensures dissemination of information, provides information to socially vulnerable groups etc., deals with coordination and activity planning according to the target audience, paying special attention to issues related to state social insurance, as well as monitors the preparation of information and transfer of information to persons with special needs.

Bank of Latvia (BoL)

Informs about the cash and non-cash changeover procedure, including the conversion rate, design and counterfeit security features of euro banknotes and coins, changes in payment systems, monetary policy developments. Informs about the institutional framework of the EMU, single monetary policy of the euro area and issues related to operations of the European System of Central Banks. According to the SEPA project communication plan on behalf of the National SEPA working group maintains the website www.sepalatvija.lv. Ensures partnership with the European Central Bank.

National Association for Consumer Protection (PIAA)

Acts as a coordinator for cooperation with non-governmental organisations, through its regional units provides information to consumers on the website, via informative phone. According to the placement of regional units organises educational events and seminars about the euro changeover process and experience of other countries in this field.

Consumer Rights Protection Centre (CRPC)

Ensures control of the mandatory period of dual price display and control of the protection of related consumer rights, communication with consumers and businessmen, in cooperation with the MoE implements measures oriented towards the promotion of public awareness about positive aspects of the euro changeover, participates in the organisation of information days in Latvian cities/towns with participation of local government representatives, professional associations, social services, schools and volunteer organisations.

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development (MoEPRD)

In order to ensure public awareness in regions provides local governments and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG) with information prepared within the framework of the communication campaign.

Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

Monitors the translation of administered public utilities tariffs into euro ascertaining that the rounding is done according to the mathematical principles provides in the Law on the Introduction of Euro. During the mandatory period of dual price display the PUC publishes on its website approved tariffs for administered public utilities both in lats and euro. Sends to the mass media information about the tariffs of some of the most important public utilities in lats and euro. As regards the tariffs independently set by service providers, the PUC requests necessary information in order to control the translation of those tariffs into euro.

Ministry of Transport (MoT)

Organises information desks in divisions of the state JSC “Latvijas Pasts” to provide information about the euro changeover, especially in regions. Facilitates information of foreign tourists and travellers about the euro changeover related issues ensuring the placement of stands in the airport, port, railway station and other strategic points where a large number of tourists are concentrated.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Ensures the dissemination of information prepared by the Steering Committee via its subordinated institutions, e.g. State Probation Service, regional units of the State Land Service. Specific information is provided directly to businessmen in departments of the Register of Enterprises, whereas the Latvian Prison Administration ensures the dissemination of information to persons in prison.

Tourism Development State Agency (TDSA)

Ensures information of foreign tourists and travellers about the euro changeover in Latvia disseminating information to tourism operators abroad, as well as on the national tourism website www.latvia.travel.lv.

State Chancellery (SC)

The State Chancellery as the body responsible for the coordination of the work done by communication units of public administration institutions and the implementation of the Government's communication policy ensures information exchange among all ministries, as well as organises cooperation with the Prime Minister's Bureau in the implementation of particular euro communication activities, provides general information to the society via its information channels, including within the framework of Councils of the Memorandum between Non-governmental organisations and the Government, the National Tripartite Cooperation Council.

Ministry of Health (MoH)

Disseminates information prepared within the framework of the communication campaign via its information channels, including medical treatment institutions and family doctors.

II Communication strategic partners:**Local governments and LALRG**

In cooperation with the MoEPRD ensures information dissemination in regions covering groups (also remote) living in particular territories. Local governments can inform about the main issues related to the euro changeover also those persons who are less interested in economic processes in the country and who are little involved in civic processes, but are more interested in economic and practical issues in the territory of their local government.

Private institutions – commercial banks, enterprises, “Latvijas Pasts”, supermarkets etc.

Take part in the implementation of the communication campaign informing their employees and clients about topical euro changeover-related issues, ensuring the process of mandatory dual price display period, take part in the campaign “Fair euro introducer”.

Professional associations

Associations and representatives of the NGO sector (Association of Commercial Banks of Latvia, Employers' Confederation of Latvia, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, etc.) provide a link with specific target groups and the most active representatives of such groups. Organise and take part in discussions devoted to the euro changeover process in Latvia.

Information mediators

All individual and group efforts spared to get and disseminate information about the euro changeover shall be supported while implementing the Communication Strategy for the euro changeover. The Public Awareness and Communication Working Group will pay special attention to survey and information of secondary information sources to achieve a megaphone effect or a situation when several voices repeat the same announcement. It creates an information network where each information provider passes on its message and helps to ensure awareness of broader public about the particular issue. Secondary information providers and partners are associations, organisations (especially those taking care of the protection of socially less vulnerable inhabitants, rights, inhabitants with special needs), as well as public institutions with a wide range of clients (State Revenue Service, State Social Insurance Agency, “Latvijas Pasts” etc.), local governments.

It should be taken into account that the request for information and its dissemination will increase with the euro changeover date coming closer. All organisations are welcome to involve in euro changeover communication activities if they wish so.

Institutions represented in the working group use all available information channels for the dissemination of information about the euro changeover. Their websites are used both for placing direct information and displaying links to other information sources.

The communication campaign is being coordinated with key communication partners – the European Commission and the European Central Bank.

Communication Activities for Target Groups

No	Target group	Resp. institutions	Communication product / activity	Communication channels / partners
1	Banks, bank customers	BoL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set of information about euro banknotes and coins for bank customers; • Set of information about euro non-cash means of payment (SEPA); • Training of specialists about euro banknotes and coins for further provision of information to banks, sales businesses 	Banks, Association of Commercial Banks of Latvia
2	Unemployed	MoW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions – answers on websites of the SSIA and SEA (procedures for the recalculation of unemployment benefit etc.); • Informative materials about the euro changeover process 	SEA departments in Latvia, websites of the SEA and SSIA, SSIA regional departments
3	Librarians, library visitors	MoC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of librarians; • Informative materials about the euro changeover process 	Libraries
4	People with special needs (with impaired hearing, vision, speech, mental health, physical disorders)	MoW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative materials, including in Braille; • Training of specialists or organisations representing people with special needs 	Apeiron, Sustento ⁴ and member organisations, in particular Latvian Association of the Deaf and un Latvian Society of the Blind
5	Communicators of EU issues (Europe Direct, EU information desks)	ECR, MoFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate informative materials about the euro changeover in Latvia; • Training 	Europe Direct, EU information desks, European Union House
6	Inhabitants (socially, economically and politically active)	BoL, MoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative campaign in the mass media (TV, radio, thematic pages in national and regional newspapers, internet portals); • Environmental advertisements; • National event “Euro days” – within the framework of EU days; 	TV, radio, national and regional newspapers, Internet portals; “Latvijas Pasts” divisions, supermarkets, central and local government institutions, BoL, www.eiro.lv

⁴ Latvian umbrella body for disability organisations, see <http://www.sustento.lv/section/show/4?page=1>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoL Visitors' Centre "Money World"; • EC and ECB exhibition about the EMU and euro banknotes and coins; • Social media; • info help-desk phone 	
7	Prisoners, former prisoners, law breakers	MoJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative materials; • Educational/informative events 	Prisons, reform centres for juveniles, departments of the State Probation Service, Prison Administration
8	Households	MoF, BoL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative materials about the euro changeover; • Conversion cards; • Informative materials about the design and security features of euro banknotes and coins 	Direct mail
9	Journalists ⁵	MoF, BoL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular press releases, press conferences, interviews; • Electronic informative materials about the euro changeover; • Press folders; • Training; • Representative materials; • Trip of journalists to the ECB, mint; • Visits of foreign media to Latvia about the euro changeover 	www.eiro.lv , www.sepalatvija.lv , e-mail, press conferences, special events
10	Ministries, public administration institutions and capital companies	MoF, BoL, all ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General information www.eiro.lv, www.sepalatvija.lv; • Informative materials about the euro changeover 	Institutions responsible for public information; www.eiro.lv , www.sepalatvija.lv
11	Cabinet of Ministers	MoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular (semi-annual) informative reports on the euro changeover; • Briefings of ministers about euro changeover activities and latest news 	CoM
12	Saeima	MoF, BoL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular informative reports on the euro changeover; • Briefings of deputies about euro changeover activities and latest news 	Saeima
13	Coin collectors	BoL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets of Latvian euro coins 	BoL, associations of coin collectors
14	NGO	MoF,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate informative 	Non-governmental

⁵ Journalists of national and regional newspapers, radio, TV.

		BoL, CoM, MoW	materials about the euro changeover in Latvia	organisations
15	Local governments and their inhabitants (as well as recipients of social services/ assistance)	MoEPR D, MoW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative materials about the euro changeover; • Informative stand in city/town festivals; • Training of heads of local governments (possible spokespersons in local governments) 	Electronic media, direct communication. Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Association of Large Cities of Latvia, local governments, NGO (maintaining shelters or soup kitchens)
16	Consumers	MoE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and consultations (informative help-desk phone, PIAA regional representative); • Informative materials 	CRPC website and informative help-desk phone, PIAA and CRPC, PUC ⁶
17	Pensioners and recipients of social benefits	MoW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion cards; • Questions – answers on websites of the SSIA and SEA (procedures for the recalculation of pensions and social benefit etc.); • Training of LPF specialists; • Informative materials 	SSIA website, SSIA regional departments, Latvian Federation of Pensioners, other organisations of pensioners
18	Saeima Public Relations Office Visitors' and Information Centre	BoL, MoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of specialists 	Informative help-desk phone
19	Pupils, students, youth, children	MoES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational cartoons; • Electronic interactive games; • Knowledge and initiative competition for universities; • Scientific works of pupils and students about the euro topic; • Interactive games on the portal www.draugiem.lv; • Visits to EC and ECB exhibitions about the EMU and euro banknotes and coins, a competition based on it 	Educational institutions, websites, methodological associations of teachers, universities. National Centre for Education, youth organisations, youth centres in local governments, Agency of International Youth Programmes
20	School teachers	MoES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodological tool for teachers; • Training means; • Presentation of training means in regions 	MoES, methodological associations of teachers
21	Sales companies/ service sector	BoL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of specialists for further provisions of information about euro 	Latvian Direct Selling Association (LDSA), Latvian Traders Association (LTA)

⁶ And regional departments of the National Association for Consumer Protection: in Gulbene, Liepaja, Ogre, Cesis, Riga, Salacgriva, Daugavpils, Jelgava.

			banknotes and coins to sales companies	
22	Tourists	MoE, MoT, MoFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters at transport junctions (airport, railway station, bus station, port); • Information prepared by the Latvian Institute in a NewsLetter form for foreign journalists and tourism operators; • Informative materials in foreign languages • Constant publications on www.facebook.com; • National tourism portal www.latvia.travel.lv 	Airport, railway stations, bus stations, ports, Latvian Institute, embassies of Latvia abroad, TDSA, local governments
23	Businessmen	MoE, MoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of businessmen about changes in accounting etc.; • Campaign “Fair euro introducer”; • Guidelines for non-financial corporations about correct calculation of prices; 	Latvian Investment and Development Agency (LIDA), Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Employers’ Confederation of Latvia (LDDK), banks
24	Cashiers	BoL, MoF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars in towns about the euro changeover process and the design and counterfeiting features of euro banknotes and coins; • ECB handouts for cashiers 	Local governments, chains of supermarkets, Latvian Traders Association

Logo of the Euro Changeover Campaign

All institutions involved in the euro changeover campaign – public and private institutions, as well as social partners – shall use a common design logo and slogan.

The euro logo design and slogan competition was launched in the end of 2006. In April 2007 the winner was announced – a sun with a euro symbol in the middle which seems as drawn by child's hand, but the slogan is *eiro.lv* which relates to the Internet address of the website www.eiro.lv.



Figure 3



Figure 4

During the campaign according to the financing resource it might be possible to use several logotypes. The European Commission offers one version of the design and logo for the euro changeover campaign to all new Member States (*One currency, many possibilities*), but the ECB also has its own design and slogan (*The euro, our money*) to offer, which will be used in its informative materials.

