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Guidelines on Societal Integration of Riga for 2019–2024

Riga, 2019

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Abbreviations used in the document

EU – the European Union

EEA – the European Economic Area

IKSD – the Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Department of the Riga City Council

LVA – the Latvian Language Agency

LD – the Welfare Department of the Riga City Council

NG – Policy Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy for 2012-2018

NGOs – non-governmental organisations

PAD – the Department of City Development of the Riga City Council

Guidelines – Guidelines on Societal Integration of Riga for 2019– 2024

OCMA – the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs

Programme – Riga City Societal Integration Programme for 2012–2017

RCB – the Central Library of Riga

RD – the Riga City Council

RIIMC –the Education and Information Services of Riga City

RSD –the Riga Social Service

SAN –the Public Relations Unit of the Riga City Council

SWOT – analysis of strengths and weakness, opportunities and threats

Introduction

To implement a targeted societal integration policy in Riga and to develop it as an action line of municipal policy, in 2012, “Riga City Programme for Societal Integration for 2012–2017” (hereafter also – the Programme) and “Action Plan for 2012-2014” and, later, also “Action Plan for 2015–2017” were elaborated to enact the programme. To continue the work that has been started and to deal with the current societal integration issues, a planning document for the next period is needed – “Guidelines on Societal Integration of Riga for 2019–2024” (hereafter – the Guidelines). The need for the Guidelines is determined also by the national and municipal level policy-planning documents; likewise, international requirements have been taken into account in designing the document.

In Latvia, the most important national level policy-planning document on societal integration is “Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy for 2012–2018” (hereafter also – NG), as well as “Plan for Implementing the National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy for 2019–2020”, which was elaborated to ensure continuity in reaching the aims and performance indicators defined in NG. In developing the Guidelines, integration policy aims, basic guidelines and values set in NG have been taken into account, i.e., civic participation and responsibility, preservation of the Latvian culture and singularity of ethnic minorities, openness to diversity and tolerance against difference, inclusion of immigrant groups, and societal cohesion.

In the context of planning municipal development, societal integration as an action line for reaching long-term development aims has been defined in the planning document “Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030”. The concrete activities in this action line and in others related to the process of societal integration and the performance indicators thereof are defined in “Development Programme of Riga for 2014–2020”. The document states that “the overarching aim of societal integration in the capital city is to promote the development of cohesive society, in which the values of a democratic state are complied with and a stable sense of belonging to Riga is developed, ensuring high level of involvement and cooperation of members of society”¹.

The Guidelines define societal integration is defined as a **dynamic two-way process, which comprises various areas in the life of society** (culture, education, civil and social) **and in which diverse groups of residents are actively and responsibly involved**, through cooperation improving their quality of life, reinforcing the sense of belonging to Riga and developing it as a contemporary and inclusive city. The main **principles** of integration policy are respect, participation, tolerance, breadth of views, civil responsibility, open sense of belonging to Riga and cooperation.

The **aims** set for the integration policy of Riga is to create pre-conditions for active and diverse involvement and cooperation of residents’ groups in various areas of

¹ Rīgas attīstības programma 2014. – 2020.gadam (2014). Rīgas domes Pilsētas attīstības departaments. Apstiprināta ar Rīgas domes 27.05.2014. lēmumu Nr.1173. Available: http://www.rdpad.lv/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Attistibas_programma.pdf (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

life, allowing them to develop their social, cultural and civic resources, to develop relationships, based on mutual understanding and respect, and increase the quality of their lives in contemporary, inclusive and multi-cultural urban environment.

Diverse resources are necessary to allow residents to become actively and responsibly involved in shaping the life of municipality and community, as well as their own lives, to participate in various events, to cooperate both informally and on the institutional level. These are also social and communication skills, language proficiency, intercultural competence, accessibility of information, supportive environment, and infrastructure. Likewise, it is important to provide to all residents equal opportunities for becoming involved in the public life, to receive all types of education, culture, sports, social inclusion and other services provided by the municipality. The role of the municipality in this process is to ensure, in compliance with its competences and functions, that the principle of equal opportunities is abided by and to create circumstances that facilitate integration processes. Therefore, in the context of integration policy, the measures aimed at increasing the residents' capacity and the measures aimed at improving the urban environment and all types of infrastructure for activities that promote integration, as well as measures aimed at residents' interactions and cooperation are equally important.

Societal integration is a horizontal policy in the sense that it comprises various areas of life – education, culture, civic participation, development of social contacts, knowledge and the use of the Latvian language, social inclusion, and others. In the Guidelines, **the action line for developing the societal integration policy** has been defined in accordance with the vision of integration and policy aims rather than with the institutional basis or functions of the cooperating institutions. Taking into account the national and municipal level normative basis for integration policy, international requirements and recommendations, assessment of the societal integration policy thus far and the recommendations provided, six action lines for development are included in the Guidelines:

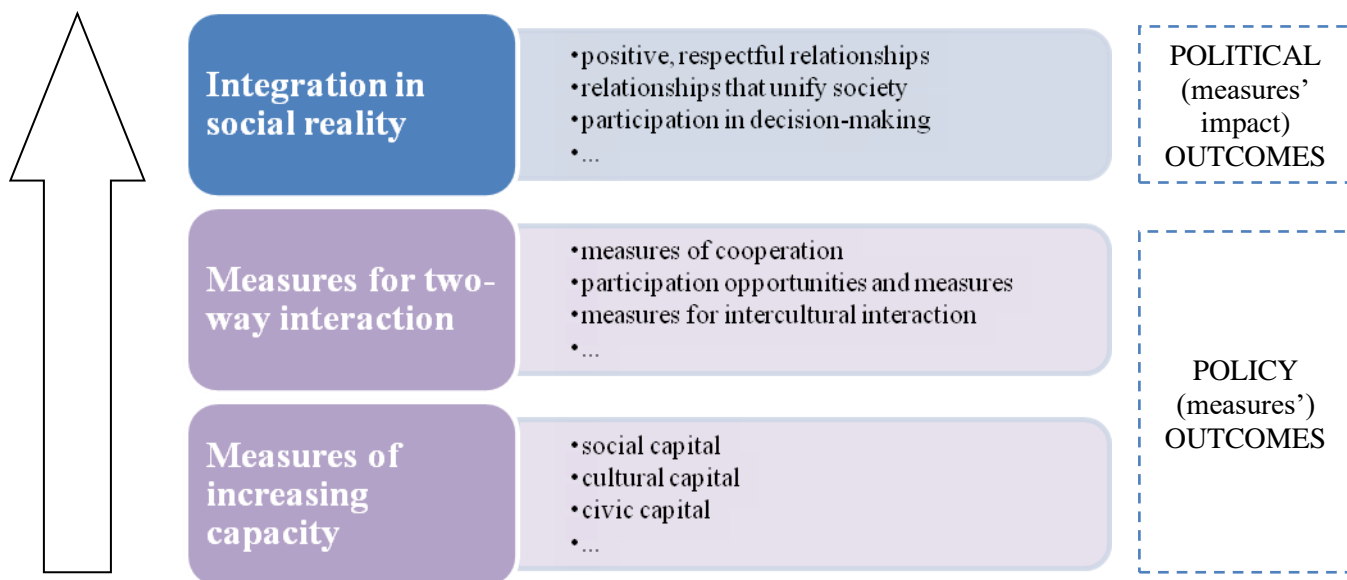
- **civic participation and cooperation;**
- **intercultural dialogue and tolerance;**
- **official language;**
- **social inclusion;**
- **accessibility of information;**
- **accessibility of urban environment and integration measures.**

It follows from the horizontal principle of societal integration policy that the implementation of the policy is ensured by an extensive range of institutions of Riga municipality and institutions of cooperation. The circle of parties implementing the measures is even broader – these are non-governmental institutions and institutions of education and culture, providers of social services, etc. The types of integration measures and support instruments for implementing them, including various project competitions, are equally diverse. Within the municipality of Riga, the implementation of integration policy is ensured, in a targeted way, by the Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Riga City Council (hereafter – IKSD), Projects and Society Integration Division. On

the municipal level, IKSD is responsible for developing, implementing and updating policy-planning documents.

The Guidelines are structured as follows: Part 1 describes the normative and institutional basis of the societal integration policy, its links to international, national and municipal legal acts and policy-planning documents; Part 2 provides an analysis of situation in the area of societal integration in the municipality of Riga, presenting an overview of achievements; Part 3 characterises the situation in all six action lines for development and action lines to be supported; Part 4 defines the planned policy outcomes for each direction of development, their performance indicators and assessment methodologies; it is followed by SWOT analysis of the societal integration area, and in conclusion – the procedure for supervising and evaluating the programme is provided.

The Action Plan for implementing the Guidelines is an integral part of the documents. The measures of the Action Plan are structured in accordance with the action lines for development set for the integration policy. The planned outcomes, their performance indicators and data sources for assessing and collecting these indicators have been defined for each measure. In developing the societal integration policy, measures and activities that directly apply to reaching the aim of integration policy and facilitate this process are separated from measures that do have a direct impact on it and rather apply to the general development of the particular area. Societal integration measures that are implemented by IKSD and cooperating institutions (structural units and subordinated institutions of RD) can be classified into two basic groups (see figure), which are not hierarchically subordinated.



The first group of measures includes **measures for developing integration capacity** or the development of the social, cultural and civic capital of the target groups of integration policy. The aim of these measures is development of all kinds of competencies and intangible resources, ensuring accessibility of information and urban environment. This group of measures may have also the so-called closed or homogenous target groups, for example, only the citizens of third countries learn the Latvian language;

only children with special needs learn how to develop social skills; only teachers learn how to develop intercultural dialogue in education, etc. Measures aimed at creating integration space also should be included in this group; this is understood as the accessibility of spaces where interaction can take place, for example, expanding the activities of centres of culture, construction of sports grounds, accessibility of education institutions to residents of the neighbourhood, etc.

The second group includes those measures that are aimed at **two-way interaction** between residents and particular target groups, **the integration process in action** – for such activities and principles as cooperation, participation, pro-activity, contacts between different social, cultural and civic groups. In this group of measures, it is important to ensure contact between various target groups of integration policy, here the so-called closed or homogenous groups of participants are not advisable, in difference to the first group of measures.

The outcomes of both groups of measures, which, essentially, are the outcomes of the implemented policy, reveal directly and indirectly **the impact of integration policy on social reality** and are to be measured as the outcomes of integration politics. The social reality is the observation field for the outcomes of integration policy where the policy outcomes are recorded in accordance with the policy performance indicators defined in the Guidelines.

The Guidelines comprise functions that fall within the municipal competence in accordance with the law “On Local Governments” and do not include matters, the resolution of which are within the competence of ministries, other institutions of public administration, or other municipalities.

1. The Normative and Institutional Basis for the Policy of Societal Integration

Over the last decade, integration policy in Europe and elsewhere in the world takes a significant and stable role in the policy-planning and development documents, and in life. International documents underscore the two-way process of integration policy and the ability for several groups of residents to co-exist. On the level of the European Union (hereafter – the EU), the societal integration policy is mainly aimed at the integration of immigrants and refugees. The policy-planning documents of Latvia and the municipality of Riga, however, take a broader perspective on this issue compared to international documents, including a range of integration measures also for diverse social, ethnic and age groups, who might experience difficulties in full integration into the life of society on the national or the municipal level.

1.1. Documents and normative acts in the area of societal integration

International documents in the area of integration offer the definition of the integration process, principles of integrations and the necessary plans of measures; it is also underscored that the development and implementation of immigration policy on the EU level is a matter within the competence of national governments (immigration services, police, and other state institutions). Providing support to newcomers and their integration, which includes the provision of language courses, accessibility of education, solving housing issues and ensuring other support measures, in turn, predominantly is within the competence of local governments.

The Latvian national level policy-planning documents highlight the following aspects in the area of societal integration: the sense of belonging to the state, the richness of the Latvian language, intercultural dialogue, participation, as well as cooperation and trust among residents.

Municipalities have an important role in facilitating the process of integration. Documents that regulate the competence of local government underscore a municipality's role in promoting societal cohesion, cooperation and participation both in preserving the traditional cultural values and facilitating intercultural dialogue, as well as in accessibility of information and urban environment. The Guidelines is the second municipal level policy-planning document in the area of societal integration.

<p>International documents in the area of integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “A Common Agenda for Integration: Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union” ○ European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals ○ Action Plan of the European Commission for Integration of Third-Country Nationals ○ The Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue ○ The European Charter of Local Self-Governments ○ The network of large cities in Europe EUROCITIES Charter on Integrating Cities
<p>National documents in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030.

the area of societal integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The National Development Plan for 2014 –2020 ○ Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy for 2012–2018
Documents that regulate municipal competence in the area of societal integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Law “On Local Governments” ○ The Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030 ○ The Development Programme of Riga 2014-2020

A more detailed insight into the documents referred to above is provided in the Annex to the Guidelines.

1.2. The Institutional Basis of the Policy for Societal Integration

In Latvia, the policy of societal integration on the national level has been within the competence of the Ministry of Culture since 2011; however, also other institutions of public administration have responsibility for integration issues, within the framework of their functions, among others, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Welfare, as well as institutions subordinated to them.

On the municipal level, in Riga **the Education, Culture and Sports Department of the Riga City Council** is responsible for developing integration policy planning documents; in the implementation of the policy, however, the majority of municipal structural units and their institutions are involved, among others, the Riga City Council Welfare Department (hereafter – LD), institutions of education, and many others.

To ensure facilitation and coordination of the process of societal integration, including the participation of non-governmental organisations in the activities of the municipality and city’s life, **IKSD Projects and Society Integration Division** has been established.

It has the following **objectives**:

- to develop, implement and update planning documents for societal integration;
- to create and coordinate support programmes to support initiatives aimed at societal integration and facilitation of participation;
- to ensure support and measures for strengthening capacity to non-governmental organisations and to involve them in the development and activities of the municipality of Riga.

IKSD Projects and Society Integration Division uses various mechanisms of support and participation to ensure the process of societal integration within the municipality of Riga. Its main **action lines** are as follows:

- to organise various project competitions for non-governmental organisations and institutions of RD in the area of societal integration, among others, to promote volunteer work;
- to participate in the implementation of national and international level societal integration projects;

- to provide to non-governmental organisations (hereafter – NGOs) administrative, informative and capacity-reinforcing support, ensuring and coordinating the work of the NGO House and the diversity of activities held therein, as well as compliance with the NGOs' needs;
- to search for and use constantly new forms and ways to facilitate participation and meaningful cooperation between the municipality, NGOs and residents;
- to promote international cooperation and to represent the municipality in international fora; including the international network of large cities EUROCITIES.

2. Characteristics of the Status of Societal Integration in the City of Riga

2.1. General characteristics of Riga's residents

The socio-demographic indicators of Riga's population reveal an extensive and diverse spectre. In accordance with the data provided by the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (hereafter – OCMA) on 01.01.2019 the population of Riga amounted to 696 986². Of these, 443 528 are working-age inhabitant, 103 655 are children below the age of 15, whereas 149 803 residents are above the working-age³.

The largest ethnic groups in Riga are: Latvians – 309 596; Russians – 258 116; Belarusians – 25 226; Ukrainians – 25 429; Poles – 12 516; representatives of other ethnicities – 40 668 residents⁴. 528 467 Latvian citizens are registered in Riga, as well as 116 003 non-citizens of Latvia, 98 refugees, 91 stateless persons, 125 persons with an alternative status and 52 202 nationals of other countries (including the EU citizens, third-country nationals)⁵.

In December 2018, in total 53 048 foreigners with permanent resident permits were registered in Latvia (of these 48 295 – third-country nationals and 4753 citizens of the EU/ EEA)⁶ and 42 104 with temporary residence permits (of these – 28 774 third-country nationals and 13 330 citizens of the EU/EEA)⁷. Statistical data show that the largest part of foreigners (55%) has settled in Riga. The majority of third-country

² OCMA statistical data (01.01.2019.) Available:

https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/backup/ISPV_Pasvaldibas_iedzivotaju_skaitis.pdf (viewed on 04.06.2019.).

³ OCMA statistical data (01.01.2019.) Available:

https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/backup/ISDG_Pasvaldibas_darbaspeja.pdf (viewed on. 04.06.2019.).

⁴ OCMA statistical data (01.01.2019.) Available:

https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/backup/ISPN_Pasvaldibas_pec_TTB.pdf (viewed on 04.06.2019.). Note: 5293 residents have not indicated their ethnicity.

⁵ OCMA statistical data (01.01.2019.) Available:

https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/backup/ISPP_Pasvaldibas_pec_VPD.pdf (viewed on 04.06.2019.).

⁶ OCMA statistical data (31.12.2018.) Available:

<https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/2015/S%20PUA%20izversts%20uz%2031.12.2018%20DN%2053048.pdf> (viewed on 02.05.2019.).

⁷ OCMA statistical data (31.12.2018.) Available:

<https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/2015/S%20TUA%20izversts%20uz%2031.12.18%2042104.pdf> (viewed on 02.05.2019.).

nationals are from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. During recent years, the share of third-country nationals from Uzbekistan, China, India and Kazakhstan has increased. For this group of newcomers, the main reasons for residing in Latvia are investments in immovable property, family reunification and work, as well as studies⁸.

23 674 non-governmental organisations are registered in Latvia, i.e., associations and foundations, of which 10 032 are registered in Riga⁹. Results of a study conducted in 2017 show that, in total, there are 324 associations of ethnic minorities in Latvia, of which 188 (58%) are registered in Riga¹⁰.

In 2010, the municipality of Riga initiated for the first time the research “Societal Integration in Riga”, to identify residents’ attitude towards various aspects of the process of societal integration in the city of Riga and clarify experts’ opinion on what should be done to improve the situation. The study was conducted repeatedly in 2014 and 2017.

The results of the 2017 study¹¹ show that **the sense of belonging to Riga** is very high – 81% of the respondents feel that they are “very strongly” or “strongly” affiliated with Riga¹². Rigans have a sense of belonging to Riga mainly because they have grown up or spent their childhood here, live and work in Riga, have established their families, and obtained education. Experts believe that the residents’ local patriotism should be promoted. Experts see municipal financial and intangible support to neighbourhoods as the way to do it¹³.

The results of the study regarding the **satisfaction of Riga’s residents with the municipal services provided in various areas** show that residents use most of all education and culture services by attending schools, institutions of interest-based education, libraries and culture centres. Satisfaction with the services provided by these institutions is very high¹⁴. A trend can be observed in society that residents are becoming more aware not only of their right to receive qualitative services and support from the municipality but also their understanding of their responsibilities towards the municipality and the State increases.

The assessment of the **level of public trust** in various **municipal institutions**, made in a study, allows concluding that most often the Rigans trust institutions of education (81% of all surveyed residents of the city), the Riga City Municipal Police (73%), the Riga Social Services (hereafter also – RSD) (62%) and IKSD (60%). The greatest increase in trust, compared to 2010, is observed with respect to the Riga City

⁸ Trešo valstu pilsoņu situācijas izpēte Latvijā 2017. Nodibinājums „Baltic Institute of Social Sciences” (2017), 136.lpp. Available: http://www.biss.soc.lv/downloads/publications/BISS_Petijuma_zinojums_2017.pdf (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁹ Lursoft data <http://www.lursoft.lv/lursoft-statistika/Sabiedrisko-organizaciju-biedribu-un-nodibinajumu-sadalijums-pa-Latvijas-novadiem-pilsetam&id=50> (viewed on 27.05.2019.).

¹⁰ Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts (2017). Pētījums „Mazākumtautību līdzdalība demokrātiskajos procesos Latvijā”. Available: [https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedribas_integracija/Petijumi/Mazakumtautibu%20lidzidaliba%20petijuma%20zinojums%202017\(1\).pdf](https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedribas_integracija/Petijumi/Mazakumtautibu%20lidzidaliba%20petijuma%20zinojums%202017(1).pdf) (viewed on 29.10.2018.).

¹¹ Pētījums „Sabiedrības integrācija Rīgā. Rīgas iedzīvotāju aptauja”. Pētījuma rezultātu atskaite 2017.gada jūnijs – septembris. Kantar TNS, 2017.

¹² Ibid., 22.lpp.

¹³ Ibid., 9.lpp.

¹⁴ Ibid., 118., 120.lpp.

Municipal Police and IKSD, which, in experts' opinion, had been fostered by the strategy of public communication implemented by these institutions.

The fact that, since 2010, the proportion of those residents, who trust people, is gradually growing is a positive indicator¹⁵. Moreover, the research results that characterise **the social distance** reveal that tolerance and trust in diverse groups of society have increasing gradually – the proportion of those Rigans, who, generally, would wish to and would be ready to be in contact with the majority of population groups included in the study has increased. Residents are ready to establish the closest contacts with various ethnic groups and persons with functional disorders. The most negative attitude still is observed with respect to drug addicts, people belonging to sects or non-registered religious organisations, alcoholics and homosexually oriented persons¹⁶.

The civil participation of Riga's residents is characterised by various activities that residents engage in – **participation in NGOs, performing voluntary work, involvement in decision-making, participation in various public events** with the purpose of influencing their situation. Changes in the level of participation are not even. The number of those Rigans, who have performed voluntary work, has significantly increased, which proves that voluntary work develops in general. In this respect, the alignment of the national legal regulation played an important role in this process, – in 2015 “Law on Voluntary Work”¹⁷ was adopted; in the previous planning period, its absence was seen as one of the most significant restrictions for the development of this area. Residents are more actively participating in public discussions. The indicators regarding residents' involvement in the NGOs work remain unchanged – 14% of Rigans in the period from 2014 to 2017 have participated in the work of an NGO¹⁸. In assessing this indicator, the new forms of civic participation should be taken into account, for example, informal associations, establishment and activities of small interest and support groups, including such in social networks' environment. This trend is also characterised by the survey results on community cooperation for problem solving. Thus, for example, 49% of Rigans together with their neighbours have participated in improving their houses, yards and the neighbourhood environment, every tenth Rigan (9%) has participated in organising festivals of their street or neighbourhood, whereas 17% have participated in such festivities¹⁹.

As regards the process of societal integration, two-thirds of the respondents (60 %) continue to believe that **societal integration should be managed and controlled** by the state and the municipality. At the same time, a trend can be observed that this indicator is decreasing in favour of the opinion that **integration happens on its own** and requires no management (in 2017, 37% of the surveyed Rigans supported this opinion). Experts, who were interviewed in the study, believe that the task of the state and the municipality is to create a legally aligned and benevolent environment, in which new NGOs could emerge, the existing ones could operate and residents' self-organisation could develop²⁰.

¹⁵ Ibid., 59.lpp.

¹⁶ Ibid., 13.lpp.

¹⁷ Brīvprātīgā darba likums. 18.06.2015. Latvijas Vēstnesis 127(5445). Available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/275061-brivpratiga-darba-likums> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

¹⁸ Pētījums „Sabiedrības integrācija Rīgā. Rīgas iedzīvotāju aptauja”, 11.lpp.

¹⁹ Ibid., 18.lpp.

²⁰ Ibid., 14.lpp.

97% of Rigans believe that everyone should know **the official language**. To characterise their Latvian language proficiency, 56% of Rigans note that they speak Latvian freely, for 41% it is the native language. The use of the Latvian language in various life-situations is revealed by the following data: 38 % of Rigans use Latvian mainly or only at home, at work – 27%, in communicating with friends, acquaintances – 25%, at state and municipal institutions – 57%, on the street and in shops – 31% of the respondents. The majority of residents (74%), whose native language is not Latvian, are informed about the free-of-charge Latvian language courses offered by the municipality, and 11% of Rigans belonging to this target group have attended the courses during the last three years. Experts consider that the demand for official language training courses is high. In the future, focus should be on organising the Latvian language course in accordance with the language usage needs of the target group and the level of knowledge, creative and innovative solutions should be introduced for expanding the linguistic environment, using new approaches to teaching in the learning process that would promote and maintain the residents' motivation to master the language²¹.

Over the last years, in the context of integration, the matter of internal and, in particular, **external migration** gains relevance. The majority of surveyed residents of Riga (89%) do not plan to move from Riga to live elsewhere in Latvia or outside Latvia in the coming year, only 10 % of respondents have such plans²². Pursuant to the study of 2017 “Societal Integration in Riga”, comparing the indicators of 2017 to those of 2014, a trend is observed that more frequently in the circle of Rigans' friends, relatives or acquaintances there is someone who has moved to Latvia for permanent residence (from 9% in 2014 to 19% in 2017). The survey results regarding Rigans' attitude towards persons who move to live in Latvian from other countries reveal that 28% of respondents believe that this process has a positive impact on local residents' lives, whereas 19% believe that the impact is negative; however, 48% are of the opinion that immigrants from other countries do not influence the life of locals. Generally, Rigans' attitude towards immigrants is gradually becoming more positive. Experts, in turn, hold that the immigration process in Riga is inevitable because the population in general is decreasing in the country, leading to lack of labour force²³. This is confirmed by the OCMA statistics on the increase of residents with permanent and temporary residence permits in the state in general. This means that such environment and circumstances should be created that would facilitate the newcomers' integration and the awareness of the local society of societal integration, intercultural communication and development of relationships based on mutual respect.

2.2. Achievements in the Area of Societal Integration from 2010 to 2018 in the Municipality of Riga

Until 2010, matters of societal integration were not viewed as an independent action line of municipal policy in the city of Riga. Some activities to facilitate the process of societal integration were conducted in the area of education, culture and welfare. Since

²¹ Ibid., 15., 77.-81.lpp.

²² Pētījums „Sabiedrības integrācija Rīgā. Rīgas iedzīvotāju aptauja”, 94.lpp.

²³ Ibid., 92.-93.lpp.

the beginning of 2010, facilitation of societal integration, designing the strategic planning documents of this area and implementation of the content thereof is within the responsibility of IKSD Projects and Society Integration Division. An extensive range of measures was implemented within the framework of policy development defined in **the Programme**, elaborated in 2012.

Participation opportunities in the municipality

Various participation mechanisms are ensured on the municipal level. In the reporting period, the following **participation mechanisms** were available:

- the annual residents' forum **“Riga Resounds – Residents Speak, Think, and Do!”** as well as **thematic small or neighbourhood fora** for discussing issues that are topical for the municipality and the residents in the areas of societal integration, belonging and civic participation;
- **The Memorandum on Cooperation of the Municipality and NGOs**, renewed in 2013, currently already 144 organisations have joined it. Organisations – signatories of this document – are ensured access to the RD electronic document management system “ePortfelis”, which gives the possibility to follow constantly the relevant new normative documents within the municipality;
 - **public discussions** on Riga's spatial plan, detailed plan and public discussions on planned constructions;
 - Section **“ Society's participation”** on the internet site of the Riga Municipality for providing e-services www.eriga.lv , where information is placed for anyone wishing to participate electronically in public and open discussions in the municipality's portal;
 - possibility to participate in the **sittings** of RD and its permanent committees;
 - possibility to participate in the work of **RD Advisory Council on Matters of Societal Integration** and **RD Advisory Council of Non-governmental Organisations of Persons with Disabilities**.

In the reporting period, the Municipality of Riga ensured an extensive range of **project competitions for NGOs** in most diverse areas – in the area of societal integration, including promotion of civil participation and mutual cooperation, promotion of societal integration, tolerance and prevention of discrimination, ensuring learning of the Latvian language, support for voluntary work, useful and creative leisure time activities, including organisation of integrative camps, organisation of cultural and intercultural events, organisation of grass-root sports events in various neighbourhoods or for people with special needs. Since 2015, project competitions to support neighbourhood initiatives and to strengthen the capacity of youth organisations are organised. Some competitions are open also to municipal institutions, which help to ensure broad involvement of the city's residents and coverage. To increase the **participation of residents of Riga's neighbourhoods** in dealing with the urban development issues, an internet webpage www.apkaimes.lv operates, and, since 2015 IKSD implements Programme of Neighbourhood Initiatives and Participation. During the reporting period, in total, 470 projects have received support.

The NGO House functions since 2013, ensuring educational, advisory and informative support to NGOs. In its five years of operation, the NGO House has become

the cooperation platform for the city's associations, foundations and the municipality. Since its opening, it has been visited by 120 thousand persons, more than 550 organisations have participated in events organised by themselves or by the municipality, more than 8500 events have been held by organisations. 225 organisations work regularly there, for a large part of them, this is their permanent place of operations.

In the municipality, **Riga Youth Centre “Kaņieris”** works in a targeted way with youth organisations. To promote the sustainability of youth organisations and increase the qualification of persons involved in their work, since 2015, a new instrument of financial support has been made available – “Competition of projects for strengthening the capacity of youth organisations”, in the framework of which annually 12- 14 projects are supported, aimed at training members of the organisation, maintaining infrastructure for working with youth and promoting recognisability of organisations.

Development of the voluntary work movement is promoted on the municipal level, events for promoting voluntary work are supported and organised. The municipality also participates in the annual national-level campaign “The Volunteer of the Year”, honouring the best volunteers and organisations of Riga. To facilitate more extensive use of volunteer work in municipal institutions, a handbook for municipal employees was prepared – “Organisation of Volunteer Work in Municipality”²⁴. In 2017, in RSD community centre “Ābeļzieds” a new job was created – **client service specialist for coordinating volunteer work**, the duties of which included coordinating and attracting volunteers to the community centre with the aim of ensuring, in the future, also coordination of volunteer work of other day centres and institutions.

Among the achievement in the area of civil education, the extensive involvement of the students of educational institutions in the events for celebrating the **centenary of Latvia** deserves to be mentioned, as well as the project “Little Citizen”, which for several years has been implemented by the Civic Alliance of Latvia, directly aimed at researching volunteer work and promoting participation. The Education and Information Services of Riga City (hereafter – RIIMC) offered a programme of professional continuous education to primary school teachers “Development of Civic Participation Skills in Study Process” on ways of promoting among students more informed civic actions, going beyond personal decisions.

Availability of information in the municipality

The number of specialised municipal **internet sites** has increased, providing information not only in Latvian but also in Russian and, in some cases, also in English, for example, the Municipal Portal of Riga, the webpage of IKSD and the Department of City Development of the Riga City Council (hereafter – PAD) comprise sections in Latvian, Russian and English, whereas the informative portal of the Riga City Council “riga.lv” and the webpage of LD include information in Latvian and in Russian. Information in easy language is ensured on the webpage of LD. Accessibility of

²⁴ Available:

http://old.iksd.riga.lv/upload_file/IKSD_pievienotie/0_2015/10_2015/brivpratigie_aktuali/Brivpratiga%20darba%20organizesana%20pasvaldiba.pdf (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

information has been facilitated by ensuring access to the internet free of charge in public spaces, by improving the municipal internet sites.

Municipal structural units and companies also use **social networks** extensively and actively communicate with residents both informing about current matters and solving and eliminating problems identified by the residents.

Alongside the internet, the municipality uses extensively various channels for distributing information, ensuring **information free of charge in various venues**, appropriate for the planned target group: in the executive authorities, visitors' centres, social and cultural centres, the Central Library of Riga (hereafter also – RCB) and its branches, departments of the Municipality of Riga as well as other municipal institutions. Information free of charge is ensured also through the use of **outdoor advertising** – advertising poles, public transport stops, large format stands, outdoor banners. Informative materials about some measures, oriented also towards the city's visitors, are available in foreign languages. Information is disseminated in accordance with the habits of receiving information in various target groups and age groups.

The Public Relations Division of the Riga City Council (hereafter – SAN), as well as other structural units of the Council, provide informational support for various NGOs activities, by placing information on the webpage of the municipality and in social networks, sending out press releases to mass media and placing information in radio news.

Since 2010, regular **population surveys** are conducted, using a uniform methodology. The population survey outcomes are one of the data sources for evaluating the results of integration policy. The existing survey methodology provides quantitatively measured data on residents' attitude and assessment with respect to the majority of development directions and sub-directions in integration programme: possibilities of participation in the municipality; voluntary work; integration of newcomers, civic upbringing; facilitating intercultural dialogue and promotion of tolerance; the Latvian language; accessibility of information in the municipality; culture; sports, leisure time activities; social inclusion.

The implemented international projects resulted in the publication of “**Handbook (Guide) on Services Provided by the Municipality of Riga for Foreigners**”²⁵, which provides the most essential information needed when moving to Latvia, in three languages.

Education

Achievements of the reporting period:

- since 2011, more than 10 000 adult Rigans have gained and updated their knowledge of the language at **the courses of the Latvian language** supported by the Municipality of Riga;

²⁵ Available: http://www.integration.lv/uploads/files/informativie-materiali/2013/rd_celvedis1_lv.pdf (viewed on 29.10.2018.).

- **experience-sharing seminars** were held on the use of the Latvian language for professional needs, on the Latvian identity and culture, the identity of ethnic minorities, intense **professional continuous education courses for teachers** were held for pre-school teachers and teachers of institutions of general education, in cooperation with RIIMC, the Latvian Language Agency (hereafter – LVA) on bilingual training, issues of tolerance, cultural diversity and promotion of intercultural dialogue;
- support provided for teachers’ experience sharing and continuous education on integrating the children of re-emigrants and newcomers in institutions of general education;
- since 2014, the municipality of Riga grants financing to remunerate teachers who **teach the Latvian language to students who have re-emigrated and to newcomers**. These students may take two additional classes per week to learn the language individually for one school year in addition to the classes envisaged in the curriculum;
- in the framework of international projects, **two studies have been conducted to research the situation with respect to the inclusion of children of newcomers and re-emigrants in institutions of general education in Riga**²⁶, and methodological study materials have been developed for working with these children and their parents;
- institutions of pre-school education planned and organised their daily life to promote and, as the result, attain **positive attitude towards the Latvian culture, traditions**, to develop in the child and his parents civic awareness, children in minority pre-schools learned cultural traditions, customs, actively researched and implemented measures that allow children to study the values of each ethnicity;
- **support measures** for pre-school children and pre-school teachers for working with newcomers were regularly implemented
- **environmental accessibility** in municipal institutions of education was gradually improved. Currently, almost half of the municipal institutions of general education are fully or partially adapted for the students with special needs, thus, out of 114 institutions of education 21 have been fully adapted but 32 – partially adapted. When institutions of education undergo renovation or reconstruction, the matters of environment accessibility are taken care of.
- project “Improving the teachers’ professional competence in delivering study curricula in linguistically heterogeneous environment” has been initiated to improve teachers’ professional competence, ensuring acquisition of pre-school curriculum and **integrated acquisition of the Latvian language in linguistically heterogeneous environment**, in accordance with the competence-based curriculum and requirements on contemporary education process
- five working groups of institutions of pre-school education functioned, including the working group “**On integrating the families of ethnic minority students in the Latvian society** and acquisition of the Latvian language as the second language”. Families with Russian as the native language see the acquisition of the Latvian language in the pre-school period as being promising; therefore, taking into account parents’ wishes and the initiative shown by institutions of pre-school education, from 1 September 2018, in ten groups in minority institutions of pre-school education the language for acquiring the study curriculum has been changed.

²⁶ Available: http://www.integration.lv/uploads/files/informativie-materiali/2017/training_booklet_lv.pdf (viewed on 29.10.2018.).

As the result of measures that have been implemented:

- the awareness of teachers, students and their parents of the substance and directions of the process of integration has increased;
- the number of measures of integrating nature has increased, involving children from several Latvian and minority educational institutions, as well as teachers from both pre-school institutions and the stage of general education.

Culture. Sports. Useful leisure time activities.

Achievements of the reporting period:

- **organisation of free-of-charge cultural events** has been expanded, and participation fee has been decreased for socially vulnerable target groups;
- pre-conditions and resources have been created **for societal participation in folk art movement** and the process of Song and Dance Celebration, support provided for the functioning of artistic and folk groups;
- to promote **activities by ethnic minorities**, residing in Riga, **to promote their national traditions**, the Municipality of Riga regularly organised events allowing the amateur art groups of ethnic minorities to safeguard and demonstrate their ethnic identity;
- a programme for supporting leaders and specialists of amateur art groups has been implemented. In Riga, 275 folk art groups that receive municipal support are active, with approximately 10 000 participants, including 25 children's groups, 16 seniors' groups, 27 folk art groups of ethnic minorities (Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Polish, Lithuanian, Estonian, German, Jewish). IKSD supported eight amateur art groups from Strazdumuiža Club of the Latvian Society's of the Blind;
- **improvements regarding environmental accessibility** have been made – in several cultural institutions (Palace of Culture “Ziemeļblāzma”, VEF Palace of Culture, the Culture and Arts Centre “Mazā Ģilde”), ramps were constructed, platform lifts, elevators were installed, bathrooms were adapted for people with special needs;
- **infrastructure for following sportive and healthy lifestyle on daily basis** was created in the neighbourhoods of the city: 50 sports grounds and playgrounds were created, including 13 at institutions of education²⁷, grounds for active recreation, two stadiums and seven skating-rings. Infrastructure for winter sports has been created at six institutions of education, ensuring operation of skiing courses and skating-rings²⁸, during the winter season, public skating-rings are open also in the centre of Riga. All newly built infrastructure is publicly accessible and adjusted to various target groups and is available to residents free of charge;
- every year, **sports activities in various kinds of sports** for all target audiences – children, adolescents, adults, seniors and disabled persons, **contests** have been organised

²⁷ Sports grounds are publicly accessible at Riga Secondary School No. 45, Riga Daugavgrīva Secondary School, Riga Classical Gymnasium, Iļģuciems Secondary School, Riga Secondary School No. 72, Riga Hanzas Secondary School, Riga Secondary School No. 49, Rīga Ostvalds Secondary School, Riga Secondary School No. 31, Riga Jugla Secondary School, Riga Secondary School No. 84, Centre for Children and Youth “Laimīte”, for Children and Youth “Daugmale”.

²⁸ Infrastructure for winter sports has been created at for Children and Youth “Laimīte”, for Children and Youth “Daugmale”, Riga Daugavgrīva Secondary School, sports school “Arkādija”, Riga Annīņmuiža Secondary School and Riga Secondary School No. 84.

for athletes with a certain rating, as well as grass-root sports contests, open to all interested persons;

- **summer** and other holiday camps have been ensured regularly, the most important organisers of which are municipal institutions of education as well as NGOs and religious organisations;

- operation of **22 centres for leisure time activities** has been ensured, these have been established on the basis of educational institutions founded by the municipality and offer to children and adolescents of the neighbourhood opportunities for spending their leisure time both during the school year and during holidays.

- The newest of the centres for leisure time activities was created in 2018 in one of the most distant neighbourhoods of Riga – in Bolderāja, Riga Secondary School No. 19.

- **projects of leisure time activities** have been supported; these allowed children and adolescents belonging to different age groups to engage in regular sportive, creative activities and activities linked to researching the city and outdoor activities throughout summer. Activities took place not only in the city centre but also in more distant neighbourhoods.

During the previous planning period, **decentralisation of cultural events** has evolved in neighbourhoods – the diversity of cultural activities has extended to the neighbourhoods of Riga. For example, the principle of operation for Riga mobile cultural space “Strops” is to change its location each year. In the summer of 2017, cultural spaces were located in Ķengarags and Mežaparks; in the summer of 2018 – in Ķengarags and Ziepniekkalns. In the course of a year, the visitors of “Strops” could enjoy a programme of 70 various activities, including cultural educational events, poetry readings, concerts, performances, activities for children, meetings with artists, sportive activities and various other events. The data of Riga’s population survey, conducted in 2018, show that 89% are satisfied with the offer of cultural events in Riga. 33% of Rigans have attended culture and entertainment events in their neighbourhood, whereas 73% have done it elsewhere in the city.

Social inclusion

An extensive range of problems is included in this action line, comprising all important groups receiving social assistance and services – families with children, persons with special needs, children in out-of-family care, homeless persons, long-time unemployed, groups at risk of social exclusion, as the result:

- **educational events** and **support groups for parents** are organised, strengthening the functionality of a family and raising the value of children in society;

- **development of a family-like model of institutions for out-of-family care** continued;

- integration measures were implemented for **persons with special needs**: individual social rehabilitation programmes were elaborated for children with special needs, involvement of the clients of a group house (apartment) into the labour market was facilitated, likewise, employment support services were provided to persons with disability;

- the **number of carers was increased** in institutions of long-term social care and institutions of social rehabilitation for adults, the number of service recipients with

dementia has increased, provision of services of a social boarding-home to persons with limited self-care abilities was started;

- in cooperation with NGOs, services of a social rehabilitation centre for **the homeless** were provided, phone consultations were ensured, and society was informed about the available support for homeless persons;

- measures for improving accessibility of health care for persons under the risk of social exclusion were implemented, knowledge about healthy lifestyle and disease prevention was improved;

- **urban infrastructure** was improved and **environmental accessibility was increased** for persons with special needs, in total, over the reporting period, improving or adapting 52 homes;

- in the period from 2015 to 2018, in Riga, 18 adult persons with mental disorders have moved from a long-term social care institution, financed by the state, to group apartments/ houses.

In the framework of the project competition “Cooperation with non-governmental organisations”, **regular support was provided for NGOs’ measures** with respect to social, health promotion and disease prevention issues, and the accessibility of social, health care and employment services was promoted in Riga, in general, supporting 70 NGOs’ initiatives in 2018. The functioning of health cabinets was ensured, where clients could receive advice on various health issues, disease prevention and healthy lifestyle.

In the previous period, large investments were made for facilitating service accessibility and ensure social assistance and services to groups of recipients. By promoting **inter-institutional cooperation**, events of integrative nature were organised, these were attended both by residents of social care centres and pupils of pre-school institutions and students of institutions of general education. The involvement of NGOs in solving social issues was promoted.

Able-bodied RSD clients who were not working were involved in **events for maintaining, renewing and mastering work and social skills**. A grants programme was prepared and launched – “Facilitating employment of groups under the risk of social exclusion”; in cooperation with the Agency for International Programmes for Youth the project “KNOW and DO” was implemented. Support was provided for social entrepreneurship projects that facilitate the employment of socially excluded groups.

The measures implemented in the area of social inclusion have been the grounds for improving the situation in the following aspects:

- a network of social care centres has been developed, facilitating social integration of persons with special needs;

- the diversity of services for children in out-of-family care has increased;

- the share of non-working able-bodied clients of Riga Social Service has decreased;

- services aimed at societal integration have been developed for young persons who are out of work, education and vocational training;

- cooperation between the municipality and employers has been facilitated, fostering the development of social entrepreneurship and employment of groups under the risk of social exclusion.

Measures for promoting social integration have been implemented also in the **field of education** – in the previous planning period, several new special education programmes were launched; courses organised for young teachers on working with students with deviant behaviour, special needs, learning difficulties; continuous professional training events were organised for teachers and advice provided to teachers on working with special-needs children; advice was provided to parents of children in institutions of pre-school education on violence among peers, aggressive behaviour.

Since 2018, a social pedagogue is working at the advisory centre at the Riga Institution of Pre-school Education No. 13 “Ābecītis”; it is planned that a social pedagogue will work also at the advisory centre at the Riga Institution of Pre-school Education “Mārdega”.

Schools – development centres, in cooperation with RIIMC, in 2017–2018, were offering diverse courses to teachers of schools of general education on working with special-needs children, training in eight programmes was ensured to 80 groups.

To assess the outcomes in reaching the defined aims, in 2018, the implementation of the **Societal Integration Programme of the City of Riga for 2012–2017 and the Action Plan was evaluated**²⁹. The evaluation identified the current situation in various areas, the impact of the implemented measures on reaching the aims defined in the Programme or on resolving the issues, as well as the desirable action lines for development in integration politics and measures that would facilitate the further process of societal integration in Riga. The conclusion made in the evaluation was that in the largest part of development directions, notwithstanding the achieved outcomes, work should be continued. It is determined also by the fact that societal integration is a policy of process rather than that of an outcome. To have a constant process of societal integration, it should be provided constantly with resources and pre-conditions for development. **Special attention** should be paid to such action lines for development as **civic participation, development of voluntary work, integration of newcomers, facilitating participation and sense of belonging among the residents of neighbourhoods, developing the identity of neighbourhoods and of the city’s resident, promoting interaction between various ethnic, cultural and social groups, fostering tolerance and intercultural interaction**. It is also underscored in the evaluation that the work that promotes accessibility of all kinds of information, development and decentralisation of infrastructure for education, culture, sports and leisure activities, creating the possibility for all societal groups to be active and providing the platform for contacts between diverse ethnic and social groups should be continued.

²⁹ Available: <https://integracija.riga.lv/media/recentevents/ot3R2mAKiQfxC81PJw7bN5mHTYidqPeo.pdf> (viewed on 08.06.2019.).

3. Characteristics of Various Action Lines for the Development of Integration Policy

3.1. Civic participation and cooperation

There are **diverse forms of civic participation – political participation** (involvement in the activities of political organisations, participation in local government elections), **participation in NGOs, engaging in voluntary work, donating**. In recent years, new forms of civic participation can be observed, for example, **residents' fora, the use of social networks, informal associations** on the basis of shared interests and needs, forming small communities as local support instruments in various areas. Activities of civic participation create an interface between the residents and the power, in the context of the Guidelines – between the residents and the municipality. In ensuring an effective course of this process, events of **civic education** have an important role. In view of the broad field of civic participation and cooperation, which is determined by the diversity of forms of civic participation, the following sub-lines are included in this action line:

- **NGOs' activities and the involvement of residents in the municipal decision making;**
- **voluntary work;**
- **initiatives of neighbourhood communities.**

Residents of Riga have been ensured various **opportunities to participate** in the municipal work: participation in advisory councils, public discussions, sittings of branch committees, using RD electronic document management system “ePortfelis” to organisations-signatories of the Memorandum on Cooperation, etc. Active cooperation with non-governmental organisation is on-going to facilitate closer involvement of society in preparing the decisions by the Municipality of Riga and assessing them. The results of evaluation of the Societal Integration Programme of the City of Riga for 2012–2017, the involvement of **residents and NGOs in the municipal life** has increased, understanding thereby participation in project programmes, public activities, including public discussions, voluntary work. The data of population survey in Riga of 2017 prove that, since 2014, participation in public events has significantly increased (from 29% in 2014 to 59% in 2017), as well as in public discussions (from 10% in 2014 to 20% in 2017). At the same time, pursuant to the regular uniform sociological survey of the residents of Riga of 2018³⁰, only one-third of the residents of Riga (34%) are satisfied with the possibility to participate in and express their opinion on the urban development planning measures and processes of decision making. The evaluation of this indicator in its dynamics since 2013 shows that it has not changed significantly and remains with the limits of 34–36%. Both everyday experience and the data of various surveys show that residents have little knowledge about the possibilities to influence processes within the municipality, often lack faith in their own ability to influence the municipality's decisions, and also distrust the power.

³⁰ Pētījums „Rīgas iedzīvotāju apmierinātība ar pašvaldības darbību un pilsētā notiekošajiem procesiem”, SKDS, 2018.gada aprīlis –maijs.

To facilitate the sense of belonging to the state, the city and the neighbourhood, as well as to inform and educate the residents of Riga about the issues of societal cohesion, competitions for financing are organised for non-governmental institutions and municipal institutions, involving the residents of Riga. Since civil society is the pillar and the foundation of a democratic society, residents' education and involvement needs to be promoted, ensuring equal opportunities and achieving not only the resident's ability to criticise and demand particular services and benefits but also, by their actions, be co-responsible for the processes within the municipality, focusing, in particular, on neighbourhoods.

The data of a population survey show that the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood has increased among Rigans (in 2010, 53 % of the residents felt very closely or closely affiliated with their neighbourhood, in 2017 – 63%). As the results of population survey data of 2017 show, 4% of Rigans have participated in “Neighbourhood Fora” and 2% of Rigans – in the residents' forum “Riga Resounds – Residents Speak, Think, and Do!”

The survey data, which characterise the involvement of residents in NGOs' activities, show that the situation in this area has not changed since the survey of 2010. The results show that 14 % of residents are involved in NGOs, moreover, these, predominantly, are higher- or medium-level managers with great interest in politics, thus, persons who engaged in civic and political activities. The main obstacles to participating in NGOs, in the opinion of the respondents themselves and the experts interviewed in the study, is busy schedules and lack of time, followed by lack of interest, knowledge or information about NGOs and their activities. The fact that the share of residents, who consider NGOs' activities ineffective or senseless has significantly decreased (in 2010 this was the opinion of 13% of respondents, whereas in 2017 – only 5 %), is a positive indicator. According to the analysis of residents' motives to engage in public activities, the research data show that it is the ability to help someone, spending one's time usefully, the wish to have a well-maintained environment, the ability to influence process and decision making. These motives should be taken into account when planning measures aimed at promoting the civic participation of residents.

The Riga NGO House provides informative, administrative, educational, advisory and other types of support to non-governmental organisations. Its operations should be continued, reinforced and expanded, in view of the fact that NGOs' activities are a constantly changing process – new NGOs constantly appear, others discontinue their activities, this means that support for increasing the administrative capacity of NGOs should be ensured constantly.

Special attention is paid to **youth participation** and involvement in activities ongoing within the municipality. The youth centre “Kaņieris” performs the functions of a resource centre for youth organisations, ensuring not only opportunities of participation and information services but also offers diverse programmes of informal education, based on the interests on young people, thus promoting the competitiveness of young people in the labour market and better integration in society. Notwithstanding this, the general capacity and sustainability of youth organisations should be assessed as insufficient. One of the most significant tasks for the next planning period is to continue the work that has

been already launched – to facilitate reinforcement of the capacity and sustainability of youth organisations, thus creating pre-conditions and possibilities for delegating to them some functions of the municipality and at the same time resolving the issues related to insufficient resources (financial, infrastructure, human resources, etc.) for ensuring comprehensive work with youth within the municipality.

Civic upbringing is one of the most important elements in a responsible society and the foundation for the development of the state. It is important **to instil in young people in the process of education** civil responsibility and patriotic attitude towards the state in general. The process of learning and upbringing in all institutions of education comprises measures by which patriotism and civic awareness can be fostered. An important area in the work of civil education is developing a sense of belonging to one's state, city, neighbourhood and a united cultural space. Already on the pre-school level, one of the main tasks is to facilitate the development of a child's positive attitude towards himself, other persons, environment and the State of Latvia. In the pre-school age, children are open to everything new, good, a child's self-awareness develops. Also in the stage of general education it is very important to form students' knowledge and understanding of issues and processes that are important for the state and society, here important role is played by the upbringing work, events and projects that are not directly linked to the study subjects, interest educations and professionally oriented programmes of education, the work of student and parent self-governance, the school environment, microclimate, the general civic culture of the school, etc. Teachers play a decisive role in the development of a students' personality, and teachers' professional skills need to be developed regularly.

In the context of participation, **newcomers** are a specific target group within the municipality of Riga. Migration is a natural process in the contemporary world, which is more or less typical of all countries. The comparison of the survey results of 2017 and 2014 reveals the trend that more often there is someone who has come to Latvia for permanent residence in the circle of Rigans' friends, relatives or acquaintances (from 9% in 2014 to 19% in 2017). According to the data of the State Education Information System, since 2013, every year approximately 300 foreign students from various countries of the world attend municipal institutions of education in Riga. The number of students varies every year; however, foreign students in institutions of education are a daily reality. Taking into account immigration trends and expert opinion, in Latvia and, in particular, in Riga, such environment should be created that provides an opportunity to newcomers to integrate faster and more successfully in the local society. Greater contribution by NGOs could be expected in the process of integrating newcomers. NGOs should be the intermediaries between the newcomers, the state and the municipality, helping the newcomers to integrate within the society and labour market. In Latvia, only a few organisations are oriented towards working with newcomers; however, they do not receive regular financial support, therefore all measures for newcomers are one-off campaigns in the framework of particular projects. Organisations of ethnic minorities focus more on the preservation of their ethnic identity and cultural events, less so – in integrating their compatriots, who have just now or recently arrived in Latvia, in the local society.

An essential part of residents' participation and, at the same time, also a resource that contributes significantly to the development of society is **voluntary work**. It provides opportunities to residents to implement their ideas, demonstrate their skills, provide support to those in need of it and also to improve the quality of their own lives. Voluntary work can offer extensive opportunities for integrating into society groups under the risk of social exclusion, improving their skills and facilitating their personal growth.

In recent years, **development of the movement of voluntary work** is observed; however, the municipal institutions still do not make sufficient use of voluntary work as a resource that could help to achieve the objectives set by the institutions, including improvements to the quality of services provided. Predominantly, volunteers are involved in various project activities, and most often the cooperation between an institution and a volunteer ends with the completion of the project, which is not followed by sustainability. The data of survey of Riga's residents also reveal a changing situation in the area of voluntary work, proving that **the involvement of Rigans in voluntary work is growing**. The data of 2017 show that during the last three years 21% of Rigans have worked as sin 2014, this indicator was 7%). Most often voluntary work is performed in the following areas: environment and nature protection, maintenance; care for seniors, persons with special needs and children; culture and art events; activities for children and youth; collecting, producing and distribution of clothes and other goods in shelters, social centres; protection and care for animals; collecting monetary donations for charity.

During the last five years, the municipality has focused more on activating **neighbourhood communities** and **supporting their initiatives**. This work should be continued so that residents through affiliation to their closest neighbourhood would be able and willing to participate in shaping and promoting the development of the city in general. In the new planning period, these initiatives should be continued and new forms of supporting neighbourhood initiatives and cooperation on various levels should be sought for.

Action lines to be supported:

- continuous municipal support for the NGO sector (infrastructure, advisory support) as one of the main driving forces for the processes of societal integration;
- measures of civic upbringing and education, in particular, for the target group of young people;
- development of voluntary work, in particular, in such areas as providing social services and inclusion of newcomers
- promoting involvement and a sense of belonging of neighbourhood residents.

3.2. Intercultural dialogue and tolerance

Intercultural dialogue, as defined by the White Paper of the Council of Europe, is “an open and **respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage** on the basis of mutual understanding and respect”. The measures implemented in this action line for development provide the possibility to maintain the traditions, symbols of **the tangible**

and intangible culture of Latvians and ethnic minorities, to safeguard and cultivate cultural heritage, develop creative work, thus reinforcing one's own ethnical identity and culture and getting to know other cultures. In this action line for development, **pre-conditions and resources** are created for society's involvement in the movement of folk art and the process of Song and Dance Celebrations, support is provided to **the activities of art and folklore groups, including groups of ethnic minorities**, programmes of culture projects are implemented.

This action line for development pertains also to measures aimed at increasing **the professional competence in facilitating intercultural dialogue and promoting tolerance of the specialists** involved in providing educational, cultural and social services.

The Programme assessment results show that public tolerance towards various societal groups has increased. The monitoring data on Rigans' attitudes of 2017 reveal a positive trend. Since 2010, the Rigans have become more open towards representatives of other ethnicities, including Jews and Roma, representatives of other races, persons with mental disorders, persons with different religious affiliation, persons with homosexual orientation, persons who have served a sentence, addicts. In the survey of 2017, 28% of Rigans believed that people moving to live in Latvia would have a positive impact on the life of locals, whereas 48% believe that this impact would be neutral. Comparison with the survey results of 2014 reveals a positive trend in this matter, which, to a certain extent, can be explained by the fact that the share of Rigans, who have in their social circle persons, who have emigrated from Latvia, re-emigrated or have come (immigrated) to Latvia for permanent residence during the last five years, has increased.

In the previous planning period, significant resources have been invested in the development of intercultural dialogue, establishing contacts between various ethnic and social groups, several measures have been implemented to attain the planned outcomes. Support is provided for organising joint events for various groups of ethnic cultures, thus facilitating interaction and understanding between representatives of various cultures. In the survey of Rigans held in 2018 "Satisfaction of the inhabitants of Riga with the activities of the municipality and the processes on-going in the city", 74 % of respondents noted that they were satisfied with the opportunities for joining hobby groups, groups of amateur art for children, and 56 % of the surveyed Rigans were satisfied with the offer of these opportunities for adults.

Similarly to the area of civic upbringing, also in the area of developing intercultural dialogues, measures in the area of education contribute significantly. Predominantly, the intercultural dialogue between schools of ethnic minorities and Latvian schools is promoted in out-of-class work and events of interest-based education. The foundations for the understanding of the diversity of cultures and values in Latvia are laid also in subject classes. Pupils of pre-schools and schools of ethnic minorities learn the Latvian national traditions and celebrate festivities, learn Latvian songs and dances, and achieve good results in school contests and participate in the Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebration. Out-of-class sports events and contests, in particular, should be seen as very integrating activities, irrespectively of the fact that they are not directly aimed at promoting the intercultural dialogue, but pupils of various ethnicities

participate in these on equal terms, which creates a sense of unity in the participants. Observations show that Latvian schools are less open to cultural diversity. A special collaboration between various institutions of education, including Latvian and minority schools, has not developed in the city. Also in this area, organisation of educational events for teachers on cultural diversity, issues of tolerance and intercultural dialogue, etc. should be continued that would allow teachers to apply their knowledge in working with young people both in the formal process of education and outside it.

The specialists of both pre-school and school education departments, in characterising the current situation in the area of intercultural dialogue, explain that the general level of tolerance is gradually increasing in society – people get to know the world, become more open to the different. However, these changes do not happen fast. In recent years, individual work has been conducted with schools and pre-schools that have to integrate children coming from a totally different cultural environment, speak neither Latvian nor Russian, and sometimes also – English. Part of society still lacks understanding of the substance and directions of the process of societal integration. This leaves an impact on children and hinders creating a benevolent, inclusive environment in school. Already during the previous planning period, support measures were provided both for learners (newcomers) as well as schools and pre-schools for integrating the newcomers, i.e., support was provided for teachers' experience sharing and continuous education on integrating the children of newcomers in institutions of general education. In the period of 2019-2024, in view of the growing external migration, activities aimed at providing support to the children of newcomers, parents and teachers working with these target groups should be continued.

Action lines to be supported:

- preservation of the identity of various ethnic, cultural and other groups;
- supporting the activities of amateur art groups;
- facilitating tolerance and development of intercultural dialogue;
- development of teachers' competence in creating intercultural dialogue as well as supporting teachers who work with students – newcomers.

3.3. The official language

Proficiency in the official language is one of the pre-conditions for a successful process of societal integration. The action line for development “Official language” includes measures linked to **teaching the Latvian language to various target groups and using it** irrespectively of belonging to a particular ethnic or social group. Alongside organising courses of the Latvian language for various groups of residents and specialists, this action line includes also measures aimed at providing support to teachers for **using the bilingual methodology** in general education and **support measures to newcomers for learning the Latvian language**.

The survey data of Riga's residents on the knowledge of the Latvian language reveal that the share of Rigans who speak fluent Latvian has not significantly changed since 2010 (52% in 2010 and 56% in 2017), which suggests that problems linked to insufficient proficiency in Latvian among residents persist. It needs to be underscored

that problems of this kind cut across several action lines policy development, including participation in the making and implementation of municipal decisions, involving NGOs and residents in the municipal work, accessibility of information, education, and social inclusion. Compared to 2014, no significant changes are seen also in the indicators that characterise the share of residents, whose knowledge of the Latvian language has improved, i.e., 43 % of the respondent whose native language is not Latvian believe that their knowledge of the Latvian language has improved. At the same time, demand for the Latvian language courses continues to be high – 65% of the respondents would attend the Latvian language courses free of charge.

In the previous planning period, **a support system for integrating the children of newcomers** in institutions of general education was created. An in-depth study of the situation in Riga's schools of general education as regards working with newly arrived students, including third-country nationals and persons under international protection, was conducted in 2014 and 2017 by the association "Education Development Centre", in cooperation with the Municipality of Riga. The authors of the study provided extensive descriptions of experience and proposals for various target groups – teachers working with the children of newcomers, members of administration of educational institutions as well as state and municipal institutions³¹. To facilitate acquisition of the curriculum and students' integration in the study process, the Municipality of Riga has been allocating additional financing for teaching Latvian to students, who have returned to live in Latvia after a longer absence or have arrived from other countries and started attending schools in Riga since 2014. Two additional tutorials per week for the acquisition of the Latvian language are ensured from the municipal budget. Teachers' experience sharing and continuous education on integrating the children of newcomers in institutions of general education is supported.

In the previous period, several measures have been aimed at **reinforcing bilingual education** in the framework of general education. In pre-school institutions of education of ethnic minorities, children starting from the age of two must learn Latvian, from the age of three it is taught by a teacher of the Latvian language but below the age of three it is taught by a pre-school teacher.

Riga's municipal institutions of pre-school education of ethnic minorities, abiding by the provisions set in the guidelines on pre-school education, ensure a study process throughout the day, moreover, paying special attention to staff selection, i.e., institutions employ staff members who are carriers of the language, thus facilitating acquisition of the official language by children in everyday situations.

In 2018, two projects were launched. In the project "An effective class in Latvian", the teachers of minority schools update their skills in conducting classes in Latvian, whereas in the project "Better results in the Latvian language exam" the teachers of Latvian learn new skills to improve students' results in the Latvian language exams. These projects should be continued.

Action lines to be supported:

³¹ Available: http://www.amitiecode.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/training_booklet_lv.pdf (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

- ensuring the opportunities for learning and using the Latvian language appropriate for different needs to use the language and various target groups, expanding the linguistic environment;
- establishing a methodological centre for teachers who work with newcomers, advisory and educational work with children – newcomers;
- experience sharing and seminars of continuous education for teachers on using bilingual methodology, including updating the proficiency of the Latvian language for teachers for working with methods of bilingual education.

3.4. Social inclusion

The action line of social inclusion in the context of societal integration policy pertains to measures aimed **at supporting groups of residents under the risk of social exclusion, ensuring to them all necessary tangible and intangible resources for active participation in public life and for interacting** with other residents. In this action line for development, particular attention should be paid to children and adults with special needs and families with children, insofar this pertains to ensuring equal opportunities to be active and to participate in the municipal and social life, implementing the aim of societal integration.

The population survey data of the study “Societal Integration in Riga”, conducted in 2017³², show that since 2010 the number of those Rigans, who have a positive assessment of the services provided by the social services, has increased significantly (in the survey of 2010 positive assessment was given by 66% of respondents, in 2017 – 81%).

LD has significantly contributed to promoting accessibility of services and ensuring the services. In the new planning period, **seven priority target groups** have been defined in the area of social inclusion. Below, the current situation of each target group as well as problems that prohibit these groups from being active and becoming involved in the municipal and public life are characterised.

Families with children who have functional disorders. Taking into account the current budgetary possibilities, the following services are ensured to this target group: short-term social care and social rehabilitation in an institution, social care services at the person’s place of residence, social rehabilitation services at a person’s place of residence. Pursuant to the data of the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability, on 1 January 2019, there were 2263 disabled children in Riga, which proves that the municipality must continue developing social services directed to children with functional disorders and their families.

The need for services, part of which is medical rehabilitation, grows. This is part of the state’s functions and is not included in the autonomous functions of a local government, however, taking into account the residents’ needs and the fact that the rehabilitation services provided by the state are insufficient, the municipality currently

³² Pētījums „Sabiedrības integrācija Rīgā. Rīgas iedzīvotāju aptauja”. Pētījuma rezultātu atskaite 2017.gada jūnijs – septembris. Kantar TNS, 2017.

ensures 12 different social services, which comprise not only the social but also health and education part. At the same time, new target groups of children and adolescents with functional disorders are identified, whose needs are not met by the existing social services, and new integrated services need to be developed, covering educational, health and social areas. Likewise, not always parents receive the necessary material and emotional support when a child with functional disorders comes into the family, which leads to a significant risk of social exclusion for the parents due to the need to care for the family member and being outside the labour market for a long period of time.

Lone pensioners with low income. The analysis of statistical data on recipients of social assistance in Riga shows that the share of pensioners, persons with disability increases among the recipients of social allowances, this, in particular, applies to lone pensioners. In 2016, among all tested recipients of social allowances, 42 % of persons were pensioners living alone, persons with a disability, in 2017, however, this number was 45 % but in 2018 – 48% of all recipients of allowances. These persons have insufficient income to provide for their basic needs (housing, health care). To integrate these persons in society better, social assistance that meets their needs should be developed and ensured.

Persons with mental disorders. The process of de-institutionalisation has been ensured within the municipality for many years already; i.e., community-based social services for adult persons with mental development disorders are being developed and ensured – group homes, specialised workshops, daycare centres, family assistants, individual social rehabilitation programmes, etc. that aim at ensuring support in dealing with housing issues, promoting employment, providing meaningful leisure time activities, acquisition of social skills, and in other areas of life. The daily life of persons with mental development disorders in the community is inconceivable without the support of family or the state or municipal services, including knowledgeable, skilful and responsive professionals in various areas. Currently, the need of such persons for social services is satisfied only partially, proven by the situation that the waiting list for the group home service regularly includes 30 persons, the demand for specialised workshops and daycare centre is not met in full.

The municipality should continue developing support and services to improve the quality of life of persons with mental development disorders, allowing the persons to live independently, members of their family – to take salaried employment, raise their children and contribute to society. In developing the service, a person's specific needs and features, for example, age, should be taken into account.

Persons who have served a prison sentence. Currently, persons who have served a prison sentence may receive services of the social rehabilitation centre with or without accommodation. On average, 100 persons use social services annually, although, in accordance with the data of the Prison Administration, in 2016, in total 1224 persons in Latvia were released after having served their sentence. The social service with accommodation offers a place of residence, a set of measures for developing social and work skills, facilitates regaining of a person's social status, integration into the labour market and society and also eliminate negative consequences caused by other factors. Although the social rehabilitation services provide support for dealing with the person's

most acute problems (lack of housing, lack of salaried employment, lost social skills, violent behaviour, low motivation, health problems, etc.), the scope of these services is insufficient. Providing support to these persons is hindered by the poor exchange of information and cooperation between the involved institutions (RSD, the Prison Administration, the State Probation Service). Here both lack of trust among the released persons in the employees of the social service and poor motivation to cooperate, as well as lack of knowledge and skills among social workers needed to work with this target group was observed. To attain better results, social workers should be educated, likewise, social rehabilitation programmes without accommodation should be continued, among others, providing support to the relatives and working with the whole family.

Young people of age after out-of-family care (two years after the out-of-family care ended). Although social workers specialising in working with young persons after out-of-family care work in 11 territorial centres of RSD, some shortcomings are observed in practice, which proves that social work with young people is not sufficiently targeted and coordinated, is not always directed towards the interests of young people and cooperation between the young person and the social worker.

In view of the fact that the social service must begin cooperation with the young person before institutional care ends or the person leaves guardianship or the foster family, the analysis of the situation indicates that inter-institutional cooperation in the transitional stage is poor and that young persons do not trust employees of social services. In a large number of cases, the young persons who start cooperation with RSD after the out-of-family care ends disappear from the service's radar after a certain period of time (less than a year, a year) – change their place of residence or do not see motivation to cooperation, for example, in 2018, from 539 orphans registered in RSD data system, RSD had no information whatsoever about 72 young persons.

The collected data show that the most relevant problems for young people are linked to housing, employment and lack of education, social skills. The municipality should consider a more effective strategy for reaching young people to offer both existing social services (for example, family assistant, individual social rehabilitation programmes, psychologist's support, etc.) and for developing new social services. At the same time, the municipality should develop social work with young people that requires specially trained staff, including for working with young persons after leaving out-of-family care.

The process of social inclusion occurs also in institutions of education, this, in particular, applies to the **inclusion of pupils with special needs in institutions of general education**. In the stage of pre-school education, children with disabilities are ensured an assistant's services by the municipality until the age of five. In cooperation with the specialists from Education Support Unit and Advisory Pre-school Education Centres of the Municipality of Riga, individual plans are developed for children with disabilities and for children, who, according to the opinion provided, need to use a specially adjusted learning plan in the learning process. However, parents still believe that an individually adjusted learning plan "marks" the child, parents refuse to attend pedagogical-medical commissions, do not ensure to their children appropriate learning conditions and environment. Integration of children with special needs in general pre-

school education institutions is not always successful because sometimes other children and their parents have a negative attitude towards the different. Likewise, young teachers lack knowledge and experience in working with and teaching children with behavioural disorders and special needs. The experienced teachers, in turn, lack daily support in working with families under social risk, children with special needs, signs of burn-out and overworking are observed among them. Therefore the work should be continued to ensure individual plans for children of pre-school age, creating and understanding of teachers and parents of cooperation.

Notwithstanding the achievements in educating teachers working in general education, not all teachers have sufficient knowledge and skills for working with children with special needs, therefore institutions of education – development centres should be involved also in the future in planning and delivering study programmes, educational events for teachers should be organised on how to prepare psychologically for working with children with special needs, how to work with children who have hearing disorders, with hyperactive children, children with autistic spectrum disorders, with dyslexia, dysgraphia, behavioural disorders and low motivation to learn. Likewise, to increase teachers' professional capacity educational events for teachers on the differentiation of the study process and developing an individual approach, on assessing achievements are required.

With respect to **social inclusion of young people belonging to the risk group**, until now initial work has been conducted with these young people in the framework of the project financed by the European Social Fund “KNOW and DO!”; however, a systemic approach to this has not been developed in the municipality. The target group of the project are young people in the age group from 15 to 29 years who do not study, do not work, are not in vocational training and are not registered with the State Employment Agency as unemployed. The aim of the project is reintegrating young people in education and/ or labour market. In this context, an important task is to develop a model system for working with young people belonging to the group under social risk and testing it in the Municipality of Riga City.

Action lines to be supported:

- ensuring diverse and needs-based social assistance and services to the aforementioned risks groups in different areas of public life;
- developing the professional competences of specialists for working with the priority target groups in the action line of social inclusion;
- support measures for families with children with functional disorders;
- innovative services and programmes for children and young people, in particular, after the out-of-family care ends.

3.5. Accessibility of information

Information and understanding of social political processes within the municipality, its services and offered opportunities is one of the pre-conditions for active involvement and conditions of participation. In order to participate actively, residents should understand how the processes on-going in the municipality could be influenced.

The direction of accessibility of information comprises measures that aim to ensure **informative platform and informative infrastructure that promote interaction of residents** (informative materials, internet sites, functioning of the client service centre, etc.), to create pre-conditions for ensuring that all societal groups, irrespectively of their native language, financial, social or health status, would be informed about their possibilities to participate in public life.

In view of the extensive target audience as well as the specific target groups and their information acquisition habits, information about the services provided by the Municipality of Riga, as well as the events organised and supported by it is available on various information channels, including mass media, free-of-charge informative materials, ads, social networks, etc. Information is available on the websites of the Municipality of Riga www.riga.lv, pasvaldiba.riga.lv, as well as the websites of institutions responsible for specific sectors (RD institutions); an e-service platform operates, where the residents of the city can settle matters electronically.

The Municipality of Riga also has a Client Service Centre, which provides services to residents in 10 service points throughout the city, a toll-free informative hotline is also ensured. Moreover, a number of RD sectorial institutions have set up separate client service centres.

Once a year, the open-door days are organised in RD when Rigans are provided information both on the work of RD as well as municipal institutions and matters within their competence. Four times per year Rigans are polled, the surveys include various questions that are relevant for residents, also on the accessibility of information. The results of survey conducted in spring of 2018³³ reveal that 56 % of Rigans are satisfied with the possibilities to receive information on the work of the local government (including plans, decisions, etc.). This indicator has increased compared to 2012, when it reached 47%; however, it has not changed since 2015 (54–56%).

In the context of information accessibility, results of the survey of Riga's residents of 2017 are significant, they prove that **various groups of residents obtain information from different channels**. The data on the share of Rigans that use the internet to obtain information are important because this information channel is extensively used by the municipality. In the survey of 2017, 82 % of Rigans indicated that they visit internet portals to obtain information on current matters in the state. 52 % of the surveyed Rigans use internet portals as a source of information on events organised by the municipality or on services offered by it; 42 % of residents use the internet social networks for this purpose. Moreover, both these indicators have significantly increased since 2010.

In planning further work for ensuring accessibility of information, both the practice of using means and channels of information of various target and age groups as well as the general habits of media consumption and the language in which information is disseminated need to be taken into account. Public awareness-raising work should be oriented also towards educating about processes of migration and intercultural interaction in daily life, as well as educating the providers of various services and specialists who

³³ Pētījums „Rīgas iedzīvotāju apmierinātība ar pašvaldības darbību un pilsētā notiekošajiem procesiem”, SKDS, 2018.gada aprīlis –maijs, 85.lpp.

work with this target group about the rights and obligations of this target group and the significance of cultural competences.

Action lines to be supported:

- language diversity in providing information – to continue disseminating important information in several languages;
- diversity of information channels – using as diverse channels of information as possible, taking into account the different skills and access to channels and means of information among residents;
- improving information design, fostering its accessibility, also for persons with special needs, groups of residents under the risk of social exclusion.

3.6. Accessibility of urban environment and integration measures

Accessibility of urban environment and integration measures mean that space and premises are ensured for holding various cultural, sports, leisure activities, where residents can interact. It is very important that these events can be held throughout the city, also in its neighbourhoods. The action line for developing the accessibility of urban environment and integration measures includes measures that are linked to **the decentralisation and development of cultural, education, interest-based education services, opportunities to engage in sports and leisure activities**. These measures influence the development of comfortable and contemporary urban environments for the Rigans.

The city has expanded **organising of free-of-charge cultural events** and decreased participation fee for socially vulnerable target groups. The Municipality of Riga regularly organises events on the occasion of national holidays, memorial and notable days, events of national and municipal importance, traditional and seasonal events as well as international projects, festivals in accordance with the priorities that have been set and the available financing, for example, events in urban environment marking the Day of the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia, the event of the Day of Europe in Vērmanē's Garden on 9 May, the summer solstice – Līgo Day celebration in Riga on the Embankment of 11 November and Dzegužkalns, events dedicated to the anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia, the festival of light "Staro Rīga", etc. The target audience of these events always is the most diverse layers of residents – these are organised in the urban environment, are free of charge and, always, well attended. Implementation of projects and activities aimed at active participation and involvement of residents is seen as being very important.

The increase of free-of-charge cultural, sports and other public events in the urban environment has given the possibility to all groups of residents to be socially active and also provided a platform for contacts between various ethnic and social groups. The survey data of 2017 show that 9 % of Rigans have participated in organising festivals of their street or their neighbourhood. During the last two years, 31 % of Rigans have attended cultural, sports or other events in their neighbourhood, 17% have participated in

the festivals of their street or neighbourhood. Also the data of survey of 2018³⁴ show that 79% of residents are satisfied with the opportunities for going in for sports or active recreation in their neighbourhood. In general, a positive trend of growing attendance of various national and seasonal festivities is observed. The main reasons for not attending events (health problems, lack of time, work conditions, disliking large crowds of people) do not directly depend on the municipality's work.

One of the most essential segments of Riga's united **cultural space** is four centres of culture with their structural units³⁵, located in various neighbourhoods of Riga. The number of events that the Municipality of Riga regularly organises in the municipal cultural centres and their structural units annually is approximately 3000, of which more than 1500 events are free-of-charge, these are organised for target audiences of various age groups, including people with special needs. The total number of attendees annually is close to a million. A specific feature of Riga is that, in implementing the national and municipal cultural policy, the municipality collaborates with national, private and non-governmental institutions of culture and culture education. In Riga, the process of societal integration proceeds in all institutions of culture. An important segment of the cultural space in Riga is the public municipal library of Riga – the Central Library of Riga with its 26 branch libraries and three external service points (“The Library of Sunny Days” at the Children's Clinical University Hospital, the book issuing point at the Brasa Prison, the book issuing point at the Day Care Centre for homeless persons and needy Rigans).

Throughout the municipal administrative territories, in total, 12 institutions of general interest-based education are available, which provide a broad offer of **interest-based education** in the areas of culture education, sports, environment and technical creativity with children and young people in the age from two to 25 years as the main target group. The offer of the interest-based education programmes is defined by the demand by children, young people and their parents, offer by institutions of education, the national cultural-historical situation and traditions. An organic process of integration occurs in the groups of interest-based education because the students are united by their interest in the particular field irrespectively of their gender, ethnicity, religion or social affiliation. 10 accredited, professionally oriented institutions of sports education of the municipality of Riga (hereafter – sports schools) implement 43 licenced, professionally oriented educational programmes in 21 kinds of sports and ensure to the students the possibility to develop their mastery in sports. Alongside this, seven sports school offer interest-based programmes (programmes of diving, fencing, rhythmic gymnastics, etc.).

To ensure to children and young people of Riga additional, free-of-charge possibilities of **useful activities for their leisure time**, a network of leisure centres has been set up in the city's neighbourhoods. 22 centres are located in the premises of

³⁴ Pētījums „Rīgas iedzīvotāju apmierinātība ar pašvaldības darbību un pilsētā notiekošajiem procesiem”, SKDS, 2018.gada aprīlis – maijs, 85.lpp.

³⁵ VEF Palace of Culture, Riga Culture and Folk Art Centre “Mazā gilde”, Culture and Folk Art Centre “Ritums” with Masters' House, Association of Municipal Cultural Institutions of Riga – Culture and Leisure Centre “Imanta”, Culture Centre “Ilguciems” with Crafts House, Palace of Culture “Ziemeļblāzma”, concert organisation “Ave Sol”, management of the 13th century monument of architecture of national importance St. Peter's Church, Riga Porcelain Museum, Riga Centre of Art Nouveau, Aleksandrs Čaks' Memorial Apartment-Museum, and orchestra “Rīga”.

schools of general and interest-based education and are open both during the school year and holidays. In view of the resources and material technical provisions available to the centres, their target audience is mainly students of elementary and lower basic school, the number of annual visits exceeding 120 000. Regretfully, the centres are not evenly spread geographically, they are particularly lacking in Pārdaugava and Ziemeļu districts. New leisure time centres should be set up in neighbourhoods that have limited offer of leisure time activities, also, the material technical provisions of the existing centres should be improved, offering possibilities of meaningful leisure time activities to children and adolescents of various age groups.³⁶

Active lifestyle and physical exercise are an important pre-conditions for maintaining good health that allows residents to be active in all spheres of public life and ensure the quality of their own life. In organising **municipal work in the area of sports**, such social aspects as accessibility and inclusion are abided by. Annual sports activities in various kinds of sports are planned and implemented for all target audiences – children, adolescents, adults, seniors and persons with special needs. In the survey of Rigans conducted in the spring of 2018, among those respondents who stated that they were dissatisfied with the opportunities for sports and active leisure activities, 74 % mentioned as the reason the lack of appropriate infrastructure (sports grounds, bicycle lanes, etc.) At the same time, in accordance with the data indicated in the Guidelines on Sports Policy for 2014-2020, Latvia has one of the lowest indicators in Europe regarding the involvement of persons with disabilities in sports activities. The study of 2016 commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science “The Habits of Engaging in Sports and Taking Physical Exercises among the Latvian Population” shows that the lowest indicators of physical activities is seen among residents aged 55-66.

To create the possibility for Rigans of all ages and guests of the city to participate in sports festivals in the neighbourhoods, to promote physical activities of participants and their sense of belonging to the local community, in 2019, IKSD has started organising a competition for financing sports festivals and festivities of Riga’s neighbourhoods as well as free-of-charge sports activities for the residents of Riga’s neighbourhoods. To facilitate the residents’ involvement in physical activities throughout the city, the support for sports activities in neighbourhoods should be continued in the next planning period.

Action lines to be supported:

- ensuring cultural events and cultural processes in neighbourhoods;
- development of infrastructure for recreational activities and possibilities for spending leisure time in neighbourhoods and as close as possible to residents’ place of residence;
- expanding the possibilities for using the infrastructure of institutions of education for various societal groups;
- developing culture and sports infrastructure in neighbourhoods, focusing on ensuring environmental accessibility to persons with functional disorders;
- organising free-of-charge events in the urban environment, including organisation of multicultural festivities, festivals and other mass-scale events, creating the

³⁶ Rīgas pilsētas darba ar jaunatni plāns 2019. – 2023.gadam.

possibility for all societal groups to be socially active and creating a platform for mutual interaction between various ethnic, age and social groups.

4. Policy Performance Indicators

Performance indicator	Data source for assessing the performance indicator
Civic participation	
Voters' turn-out at the local government elections	Central Election Commission
Possibility to influence the municipality's decisions	Regular united sociological survey
Residents' assessment of the possibility to participate in the measures of urban development and processes of decision making as well as of expressing their opinion.	Regular united sociological survey
Involvement in the work of NGOs.	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents, who have done voluntary work	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents, who have participated in the municipality's public discussions	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Participation in neighbourhood events	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The number of projects implemented in the area of promoting societal integration (the action line of civic participation)	IKSD
The number of supported youth initiatives and projects of youth organisations	IKSD
The sense of belonging to Riga	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, borough	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Intercultural dialogue	
The number of projects implemented in the area of promoting societal integration (the action line for the development of intercultural dialogue and fostering tolerance, inclusion of newcomers)	IKSD
Social distance and tolerance towards various ethnic and cultural groups	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Residents' attitude towards newcomers	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents who believe that the Latvian culture should be respected	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents who believe that the culture of ethnic minorities living in Latvia/ Riga should be respected	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Participation in culture, sports, etc., events in the neighbourhood	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Official language	
Number of residents who have completed free-of-charge courses of the Latvian language	IKSD
The share of residents who know the Latvian language	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents whose knowledge of the Latvian language has improved	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents who have attended courses of the Latvian language organised by the municipality	Monitoring survey on societal integration

Social inclusion	
Residents' satisfaction with the accessibility and quality of social assistance, social services	Regular united sociological survey
Residents' satisfaction with the way social problems are dealt with	Regular united sociological survey
The number of projects implemented in the area of promoting societal integration (the action line of social inclusion)	IKSD, LD
Social distance and tolerance towards various social groups	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Accessibility of information	
Residents' assessment of the possibility to receive information about the municipality's work (including on plans, decisions, etc.)	Regular united sociological survey
Residents' awareness of the Latvian language courses.	Monitoring survey on societal integration
Residents' assessment on the accessibility of information in the municipality	Monitoring survey on societal integration or Regular united sociological survey, to which a question on the accessibility of information is added
Accessibility of the infrastructure of urban environment and integration measures	
The number of free-of-charge events in the culture centres and houses of culture of the Municipality of Riga	IKSD
The number of residents involved in various sports competitions and events (average number per event)	IKSD
Residents' assessment of culture events in Riga	Regular united sociological survey
Residents' assessment of the possibilities to engage in sports and active recreation	Regular united sociological survey
Residents' assessment of the possibilities for children to participate in hobby groups, amateur art groups (choirs, dance groups, hobby groups, etc.)	Regular united sociological survey
Residents' assessment of the possibilities for adults to participate in hobby groups, amateur art groups (choirs, dance groups, hobby groups, etc.)	Regular united sociological survey
The share of residents who have attended sports events organised by the Municipality of Riga.	Monitoring survey on societal integration
The share of residents who have attended public festivities and culture events organised by the Municipality of Riga	Monitoring survey on societal integration

5. SWOT analysis of the area of societal integration in the Municipality of Riga

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to NGOs and municipal institutions for organising events and activities in the area of societal integration • An extensive network of NGOs, diverse forms of cooperation between the municipality and NGOs • Multicultural society as a resource, creating an environment for mutually enriching interactions between diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups • Diversity of channels and means for disseminating information about on-going processes in the municipality • High sense of belonging to the city among residents as a resource for facilitating civic participation • Developed urban infrastructure and achievements in ensuring environmental accessibility 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low participation of residents in the municipal process of decision making • Insufficient exchange of information (both between municipal institutions and RD, NGOs and residents) • Insufficiently developed intercultural competences both in the municipality and society in general • Insufficient interaction between various ethnic, social and generational groups • Insufficiently developed culture of voluntary work • Insufficient support by the State for the municipalities in implementing integration policy
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of cooperation among municipal institutions of the city of Riga for the implementation of projects and measures in the area of societal integration • Promoting cooperation with NGOs– providing motivation for the organisations to be more active on the municipal level • Development of voluntary work in the city and municipal institutions • Decentralisation of social, culture, education and sports activities • Researching the experience of other cities and adoption of good practice • Implementation of international projects in the area of societal integration • Activating and facilitating the movement of neighbourhoods throughout the city 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prejudices continue to exist in society against newcomers, various social and ethnic groups • Decreasing of financial resources for the implementation of coordinated integration measures and activities • Manipulations with the public opinion regarding matters of integration

6. The Procedure for Supervising and Assessing Implementation of the Guidelines

The Guidelines will be supervised by IKSD, which will prepare information about the implementation of the Guidelines twice during the period of implementing the Guidelines: an informative report on the mid-term assessment of the Guidelines in 2022 and the final report in 2025.

In accordance with the recommendations on policy planning and assessment³⁷, the mid-term and final impact assessment is performed to identify the actual impact of the implemented solutions (measures) on attaining the policy aims and objectives. The mid-term and final impact assessment must comprise analysis of:

- attaining the policy aims and outcomes, explaining deviations from reaching the defined aims and objectives and analysing changes in the external environment that have impacted policy implementation;
- activities conducted by parties involved in policy implementation and their impact on reaching the policy aims and objectives;
- resources invested in policy implementation (financial resources, time resources, human resources, etc.).

It is advisable to involve in the mid-term and final impact assessment independent experts – specialists with in-depth knowledge of assessment methods and experience in conducting an assessment. The assessment can be conducted by both internal experts (municipal employees) and external experts.

Before preparing the mid-term and final assessment reports, IKSD will collect the data provided by the co-responsible institutions indicated in the Action Plan of the Guidelines on the implemented measures and performance indicators therefor. In cases, where the reached indicators differ significantly (for more than 20 %) from the planned, the co-responsible institutions will be asked to provide explanations to the institution that coordinates supervision of the Guidelines on the factors that have had a negative impact on reaching the indicator.

On the basis of the assessment of the performance indicators of the implemented measures and also using other data sources, IKSD will collect data on the policy's performance indicators that have been attained and provide an assessment of the achieved policy outcomes and the factors influencing them. The data sources on reaching the performance indicators of the measures and policies are indicated in the Action Plan for Implementing the Guidelines for 2019-2021 and the section of the Guidelines "Performance Indicators of the Policy".

In the mid-term and final assessment, it is advisable to identify the opinion of the policy's target groups on the impact of the implemented policy. To this end, societal

³⁷ Politikas veidošanas rokasgrāmata. Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs (2016). Available: http://www.pkc.gov.lv/sites/default/files/images-legacy/pkc_rokasgramata_090316_web.pdf (viewed on 14.01.2019.).

integration monitoring must be conducted – a survey of Riga’s residents, which is one of the data sources for assessing the policy outcomes. The possibilities to conduct surveys of specific target groups according to the measures implemented need to be examined, for example, an additional sample of persons with special needs and their families or newcomers. The annual sociological survey of Riga’s residents “Satisfaction of Riga’s inhabitants with the work of the municipality and the processes on-going in the city”, administered by PAD, should be used as a data source reflecting the opinion of policy target groups. Qualitative research also can be conducted to assess the achievements in the framework of directions of activities – individual or group interviews with representatives of various target groups, external experts.

In view of the fact that ISKD project programmes will contribute significantly to attaining the aim and objectives of integration policy, it is also advisable to conduct an assessment of project competition programmes every three years, in 2021 and 2025, respectively. The findings reached in the assessment of the implementation of project programmes can be used in developing competition rules to ensure implementation of projects that are based on the target groups’ needs and are linked to the aim and objectives of integration policy.

On the basis of mid-term assessment results, based on the assessment of the Action Plan for 2019 –2021, topical problems will be identified, the measures to be implemented updated and the Action Plan for 2022-2024 will be drafted.

Annex

The Target Groups of Integration Policy

On the EU level, societal integration policy is aimed at integration of *third-country nationals*³⁸. Every person having the citizenship of any Member State is an *EU citizen*³⁹. *Stateless persons* are equated with third-country nationals⁴⁰. The EU implements the common integration policy with the aim to ensure in all stages an effective management of migration flow, fair treatment of third-country nationals who reside in the Member States legally and to prevent illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings, as well as to envisage measures for combatting these⁴¹.

The term *immigrant* is non-existent in Latvian normative acts. This term is defined in the policy planning document “Policy Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy for 2012-2018”. It is explained in the document that the term *immigrant* is applicable to foreigners with permanent or temporary resident permits living in Latvia, as well as to the non-citizens of Latvia. The term *foreigner* is defined in the Immigration Law – a person who is neither a citizen nor a non-citizen of Latvia⁴². Latvian normative acts define also other groups of residents that are related to immigration – a citizen of the European Union⁴³, an asylum seeker⁴⁴, a stateless person⁴⁵, and a repatriant⁴⁶. In recent years, another group of residents has formed in Latvia – re-emigrants⁴⁷.

In view of both the historical situation and the new challenges in the area of migration, the Municipality of Riga uses the term “**newcomers**” with respect to persons, who have moved to live in Latvia after the independence of the state was restored. This group includes both refugees and persons who have acquired the alternative status, third-country nationals, re-emigrants and EU citizens who need support measures to integrate into the Latvian society.

³⁸ Pursuant to Para 14.¹ of Section 1 (1) of the Immigration Law, a third country is any other country, except for a Member State of the European Union, a country of the European Economic Area and the Confederation of Switzerland.

³⁹ Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2016/C 202/01) Article 20.pants. Available: https://www.ecb.europa.eu/ecb/legal/pdf/oj_c_2016_202_full_lv_txt.pdf (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁴⁰ Ibid., the second part of Article 67.

⁴¹ Ibid., the first part of Article 79.

⁴² Para 1 of Section 1 (1) of the Immigration Law. Available <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68522> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁴³ Para 12 of Section 1 (1) of the Immigration Law. Available: <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68522> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁴⁴ Para 9 of Section 1 of the Asylum Law. Available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/278986> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁴⁵ Section 2 and 3 of the law “On Stateless Persons”. Available: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=84393> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁴⁶ Section 2 of the Repatriation Law. Available: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37187> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

⁴⁷ Cabinet Regulation of 07.08.2018 No. 496 “Procedure for Implementing, Assessing and Financing Re-emigration Support measures”, Sub-para 4.1. Available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/300955-remigracijas-atbalsta-pasakuma-istenosanas-novertesanas-un-finansesanas-kartiba> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

It is important to identify these various groups of residents in creating a cohesive society because integration measures are needed by the whole of society – both by those members of society who have been living in Latvia for many years and those who have arrived recently. The newcomers from third countries and the EU states as well as those who return to Latvia face different problems related to their legal status, terms of residence and reasons of coming as well as shared problems linked to the lack of the knowledge of the official language, to organising their daily lives and insufficient measures of inclusive nature.

International documents

Communication from the European Commission COM(2005)389 to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “A Common Agenda for Integration - Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union”⁴⁸

The document underscores that migration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all migrants and residents of a Member State. The document advances the following components of integration: employment, basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history and institutions; education; non-discrimination; promoting intercultural dialogue; collaboration between immigrants and citizens of the Member State; participation in democratic processes and development of integration policy and measures.

○ Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. COM(2011) 455. 20.07.2011.⁴⁹

The document defines the three main features of measures for societal integration: participation in integration, more actions on the local level and involving the countries of origin.

○ The European Commission, The Action Plan for the integration of third-country nationals⁵⁰

Five groups of integration measures are defined in the document – arrival and reception procedures; including measures aimed at preparing immigrants and the community for the integration process; educational measures, including acquisition and use of the language, inclusion of the pre-school and school-age children in the local system of education, continuous and civic education of teachers; measures for employment and vocational education; access to various services; active participation and social inclusion, including measures that promote interaction between migrants and the local community, involvement of immigrants in cultural life, and anti-discrimination measures.

⁴⁸ Available: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0389:FIN:LV:PDF> (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

⁴⁹ Available: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0455&from=EN> (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

⁵⁰ Available: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/integration/action-plan-integration-third-country-nationals_en (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

- **The Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue**⁵¹

In this document, the term “integration” (social integration, inclusion) is understood as a two-way process and the ability of people to live together, fully respecting the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life. It comprises all aspects of social development and all policy areas. It demands to protect the vulnerable as well as the right to be different, to create and implement innovations. Effective immigration policy is needed to allow immigrants to participate in full in the life of the hosting country. As any member of society, an immigrant must comply with the law and respect the fundamental values of European society and its cultural heritage. Integration strategies should mandatorily comprise the whole society and include social, political and cultural aspects. In designing policy, immigrants should be respected and their different identity should be taken into account.

- **The Council of Europe European Charter of Local Self-Government**⁵²

The document underscores that “the local authorities is one of the main foundations of any democratic regime” and “the existence of local authorities with real responsibilities can provide administration which is both effective and close to citizens”.

- **European network of large cities EUROCITIES Charter on Integrating Cities**⁵³

The network of large cities in Europe **EUROCITIES** is operating since 1986, involving 140 member cities from 30 European states. Riga joined the network in 2002. **EUROCITIES** is a network for cooperation established with the aim of developing collaboration between cities in the social, environmental, transport, culture, education and information area, promoting advocacy of the cities’ interests in the EU and developing a vision of a sustainable future. The working group on migration and integration of **EUROCITIES** Social Affairs Forum examines issues that are related to processes of migration and integration in **EUROCITIES** member cities.

EUROCITIES distinguishes between three main aspects in connection with immigration and integration on the level of the city: integration of newcomers (immigrants and asylum seekers who have been granted residence permits), the situation in connection with immigrants and asylum seekers who are not granted a residence permit, and the situation of historical ethnic minorities. It is emphasised that when policy targets any of these categories of residents, also the other groups and society in general is impacted.

In 2010, representatives of 16 European large cities signed **the Charter on Integrating Cities**. This Charter renews and updates the cities’ commitment to focus on the integration of immigrants and to promote well-monitored migration in the increasingly socially diverse European cities as well as to promote the implementation of the EU common integration basic principles on the local level. Pursuant to this document

⁵¹ Available: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Publication_WhitePaper_ID_en.asp#TopOfPage (p. 11) (viewed on 26.10.2018.).

⁵² Available: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/39149-eiropas-vietejo-pasvaldibu-harta> (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

⁵³ Available: <http://www.integratingcities.eu/integrating-cities/charter> (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

“Integration is a two-way process, built on positive engagement by both newcomers and established residents. The process takes in all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, civic and political, and continues a long time after arrival. Learning and speaking the official language of the city is crucial to this process and is essential to interaction.”

Riga joined the Charter in March of 2012, and currently it has been signed by 37 cities.

National documents

○ **Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030**⁵⁴

The following aims have been set in this document:

- In 2030 Latvia will be a thriving country of active and responsible citizens. Everyone will have the opportunity to feel safe and belonging to Latvia, everyone here will have the opportunity to achieve his or her goals. The strength of the nation will lie in the inherited, discovered and newly created cultural and spiritual values, the richness of language and knowledge of other languages. It will unite the society for the creation of new, diverse and unique values in economy, science and culture, and these values will be appreciated, known and respected also outside Latvia;
- Riga will be an important cultural, tourism and business centre in Europe. Urban-rural partnership will ensure high quality of life in the whole territory of Latvia.

Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 covers several aspects of the area of societal integration. The document states that creative activity, tolerance, collaboration and participation promote societal cohesion, security and cultural diversity, and this can be achieved by eliminating income inequality, age- and gender-based discrimination in labour market, ethnic prejudice, and linguistic barriers.

The Strategy also provides that it is important for Latvia to maintain and develop its identity, language, national cultural values and the way of life typical of its cultural space. Cultural identity is formed by not only values of ethnic origin but by shared values, absorbing and transforming creatively the influences from European cultures. Common cultural heritage, language, traditions and awareness of values are the main components that ensure the sense of belonging to a particular community and promote societal cohesion.

The process of society’s participation should be made as constructive and effective as possible, the capabilities and skills of Latvia’s residents to participate in societal processes should be reinforced, among others, by implementing programmes of civic education. The Strategy highlights the following problem – if only a small part of society participates in making the decisions of national importance then, inevitably, decisions are adopted that do not reflect the interests of the majority in society and the opinions of

⁵⁴ Approved at the sitting of the *Saeima* on 10.06.2010. Available: <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/3323> (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

various social groups (ethnic, linguistic, economic, etc.) are not reflected sufficiently in them.

- **National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014–2020**⁵⁵

The document examines societal integration most concretely in the action line “Cooperation, culture and civic participation as the basis for the sense of belonging to Latvia.” It is stated in the Plan that Latvia is the only country in the world where the Latvian nation, language and culture can exist and fully develop. It is also underscored that there is a broad community of people outside of Latvia with a sense of belonging to Latvia. The aim of society and the state is to foster the language and to care for the values of national identity, civil society and societal integration in the long-term, i.e., by increasing collaboration of residents and their mutual trust, to facilitate that Latvia’s residents stay in Latvia and the nationals of Latvia return to it, to expand the use of the Latvian language in society and consolidate the position of the Latvian language in situations of daily communication, as well as to promote the residents’ sense of belonging, civic awareness and pride in their state and nation. To reach these aims, specific objectives, responsible institutions, indicative sources of funding and measurable performance indicators have been defined, which can be briefly characterises as support for the formation of national identity, promotion of civic participation, support for civic activism, teaching of the Latvian language, re-emigration measures, consolidation of the informative space, and promoting understanding among various ethnic groups, in particular, by using cultural activities as uniting platform.

- **National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Implementation Plan 2019-2020**⁵⁶

In July 2018, National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy Implementation Plan 2019-2020 was adopted, which was designed to ensure continuity in reaching the aims and performance indicators defined in the Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy 2012-2018. The plan defines three action lines – 1) civil society and integration, 2) national identity: language and cultural space, 3) new approaches to planning, supervision and implementation of integration policy. In each of these action lines, measures and performance indicators are set for local governments as the co-responsible institutions. In the action line of civil society and integration, local government measures are aimed at working with children and youth, defining the objective of supporting an institutional system for local governments in working with youth as well as to provide support for including in education the groups under the risk of social exclusion, in particular, Roma. In the action line of national identity, participation of local governments in the cycle of events “Marathon of civic participation and good deeds” for children and youth is envisaged. The role of local governments is mentioned also with respect to reinforcing the link of the diaspora youth with Latvia. The expected performance indicators in the third action line, in turn, are, among others, development of regular collaboration with local governments and increase in the number of local governments, where societal integration strategy and support mechanisms have been designed.

⁵⁵ Available: <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/4247> (viewed on 12.05.2019.)

⁵⁶ Approved on the sitting of the *Saeima* on 10.12.2012. Available: <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6239> (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

Local government level documents

- **The law “On Local Governments”⁵⁷**

The law defines the autonomous functions of a local government linked to the area of societal integration, for example: to provide for the education of residents, to maintain culture and promote the safeguarding of the values of traditional culture and development of folk creativity, to provide social assistance to residents, to provide assistance to residents in dealing with housing matters, to organise continued education for teachers and methodological work in education, etc. Section 12 of the law allows a local government

in the interests of residents of its administrative territory, to carry out its initiatives, with respect to any matter if it is not within the competence of the *Saeima*, the Cabinet, ministries, other State administrative institutions, the courts or other local governments, or also if such activity is not prohibited by law.

- **Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030⁵⁸**

The document defines the vision for the development of Riga as the capital city of a flourishing state of active and responsible citizens, which will be an important centre of culture, tourism and business in Europe, internationally recognisable North European metropolis. Skilful, provided for and active society is defined in the Strategy as one of the three long-term development objectives. The vision of Riga’s development provides that, in 2030, its society will be multicultural and tolerant, understanding by it “proper attitude in mutual relations, irrespectively of ethnicity, religion, gender, age or level of prosperity”. At the same time, “it respects the history of the state and the city, Latvian values and the Latvian language”, ensuring that “everyone has the opportunities to not forget one’s roots”. Notwithstanding the growing internal and external mobility, Rigans love their city and have a sense of belonging to it. The Strategy forecasts that the population of Riga will increase due to residents moving to it from other places in Latvia and also from other countries. The future vision underscores the accessibility of the network of culture and education institutions to all, as well as the possibilities for active recreation and sports, whereas “the system of social care and assistance is aimed at active measures, greater incentives for thinking about the future of one’s family, and inclusion of diverse groups in the daily life”.

- **Development Programme of Riga for 2014 – 2020⁵⁹**

The document defines the set of measures necessary for attaining the long-term vision and objectives. Aspects of societal integration permeate not only the action line “Societal integration and support for families” but also others, 19 action lines in total. The document defines the municipality’s strengths in the area of integration – multicultural society, possibilities to become involved in NGOs’ activities, diverse opportunities for residents to take part in various free-of-charge culture, sports, etc. events, functioning of advisory councils and working groups with the aim of involving residents in dealing with current issues, residents’ positive attitude towards learning the

⁵⁷ Approved by the Cabinet Order of 18.07.2018. No. 345. Available: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57255> (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

⁵⁸ Approved by the Decision of the Riga City Council of 27.05.2014. No. 1173. Available: http://www.rdpad.lv/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/STRATEGIJA_WEB.pdf (viewed on 12.05.2019.).

⁵⁹ Approved by the Decision of the Riga City Council of 27.05.2014. No. 1173. Available: http://www.rdpad.lv/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Attistibas_programma.pdf (viewed on 27.10.2018.).

official language. The following aspects have been identified as the most important shortcomings: lack of shared understanding in society of the nature of integration process, insufficiently developed intercultural competences, low readiness among residents to accept newcomers, insufficient knowledge of the official language as one of the most significant obstacles to participation in public life, insufficiently developed culture of voluntary work, and deficiencies in environmental accessibility. The measures of societal integration in Riga until now have been focused on reinforcing the advantages and reducing shortcomings. Societal integration is a dynamic process, therefore it is important to continue implementing both those measures that are aimed at resolving the identified problems and those that have left a positive impact.

It is noted in the document that the municipality's "task in the area of societal integration is to provide support for activities aimed at society's cohesion and participation, development of intercultural dialogue and promoting tolerance. The municipality of the City of Riga shall ensure to the residents joint educational, development and creative measures involving various societal groups as well as participation in voluntary work. The municipality will ensure that the equality principle is complied with ensuring to various ethnic, religious, social, age, etc. groups access to municipal services and facilitating involvement of these groups in municipal processes. Municipal institutions of Riga will collaborate to foster the development of the process of societal integration in the municipality, including also the development of voluntary work. The municipality will reinforce collaboration with NGOs that are active in the area of societal integration and will develop collaboration with other Latvian and foreign local governments to share the experience"⁶⁰.

Chairman of the Council

O. Burovs

⁶⁰ Ibid., 36.-37.lpp. (viewed on 27.10.2018.).