

The EU funding programme for asylum and integration is approved

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On 27 October this year, the European Commission approved the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) National Programme or Action Plan 2021-2027, submitted by the Ministry of the Interior, for an amount of 41.8 million euros. Latvia has identified integration as a high priority, with 16.5 million euros or 39.5% of the allocated funding under the AMIF. The objective of the AMIF is to contribute to the effective management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of a common policy on asylum and immigration in response to the growing challenges of migration.

The field of asylum and migration in Latvia has been particularly topical since 2021, when an increased interest of third-country nationals in Latvia was observed. Irregular migration has become more acute due to the unstable situation in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, as a result of which Latvia is experiencing the provocations of hybrid warfare, such as the migration flows to Latvia facilitated by the Belarusian regime.

At the same time, the increase in the number of migrants, as well as the hybrid war on irregular migration and its future potential, point to the need to strengthen the capacity to process information on irregular border crossers and detained foreigners. There is also a need to find solutions for the accommodation of detained foreigners and the provision of humanitarian assistance to those asylum seekers in need, as well as for the return of migrants to their countries of origin, with the support of the European Union through the AMIF.

Within the framework of the AMIF, it is envisaged to ensure the development of digitalization of asylum and migration processes, to modernize the unified migration information system, to increase the professional qualification of staff in the field of migration flow management, to develop the capacity of Latvian state institutions in the field of asylum, migration and naturalization, to organize and improve the return process of foreigners to their home countries, as well as to improve accommodation conditions for detained foreigners. In the field of integration, a key activity will be the establishment of a "one-stop agency" to provide support to foreigners starting their lives in Latvia by bringing together the services of different institutions.

Thanks to the AMIF, public administration will be digitized and modernized, creating a user-driven public service. In addition, people will be empowered to exercise their legal rights; the efficiency of the judicial and law enforcement systems will be improved, and legal processes will be simplified. Significant support will be given to the civically active non-governmental sector, which will be able to implement projects in the field of integration. Persons crossing borders illegally will be assisted to return to their home countries. Civilians fleeing the Russian war in Ukraine will also be assisted with basic goods and services. European Union funding will help Latvia meet its international obligations.

The Ministry of the Interior is the Managing Authority for the 2021-2027 programming period of the AMIF, while the Ministry of Culture is the delegated authority for integration.

The 41 804 171.98 euros available to Latvia for the programming period 2021-2027 under the AMIF consist of European Union co-financing of 32 004 016.00 euros and national co-financing of 9 800 155.98 euros.

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