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**Aim of the conference**

Exchange of opinions, knowledge and practical experiences about current issues in sociology, economy, management, philosophy and pedagogy sciences.

**Inviting papers and presentations in the following topics**

- ✦ Labour market and public administration;
- ✦ Challenges and solutions in education;
- ✦ Place, identity and globalization in society development;
- ✦ Innovations and sustainability as development factors;
- ✦ Ethical dimension in society development – diversity, inclusion, tolerance etc.

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## CONTENTS

### Labour market and public administration

<b>The Accessibility of Riga and Latvia as a Tourist Destination: the Challenges of a Foreign Language Usage</b> <i>Anda Komarovska</i> .....	9
--	---

<b>Strategic management of trade unions: necessity and potential</b> <i>Antra Līne</i> .....	10
---	----

<b>Municipality Websites as a Communication Channel in the Central Bohemia Region</b> <i>Jaroslav Cmejrek, Martina Urbanova</i> .....	11
--	----

<b>The integration of foreigners from third world countries at the local level</b> <i>Jirina Režanková, Jaroslav Černý</i> .....	12
---	----

<b>Role of government public affairs in optimization of public administration</b> <i>Līga Mirlīņa</i> .....	13
--	----

<b>Representation of interests of Lithuania's sub-national actors at EU level</b> <i>Liudas Mazylis, Vaida Lescauskaite</i> .....	14
--	----

<b>Conflict and Legitimacy – Research Variations in Small Municipalities of the Czech Republic</b> <i>Michal Kubalek, Vaclav Bubenicek</i> .....	15
---	----

<b>Experience of Discrimination Reported by Latvian Migrant Workers in Ireland: A Survey-Based Analysis</b> <i>Pierce Parker, Brendan Halpin</i> .....	16
---	----

<b>Interest representation at the EU level: case of Lithuania's environmental interest groups</b> <i>Romualdas Povilaitis, Liucija Mazylyte</i> .....	17
--	----

### Challenges and solutions in education

<b>The Facilitation of the Secondary School Pupils' Participation Skills in After-school Class Work</b> <i>Antra Mazura, Inese Jurgena</i> .....	18
---	----

<b>The modular study at the state police college</b> <i>Aldona Homiča</i> .....	19
--	----

<b>The question of reading in the humanities in Latvian universities</b> <i>Andris Gaters</i> .....	20
--	----

<b>Impact of foreign language skills on employability</b> <i>Daina Grasmāne, Sanita Grasmāne</i> .....	21
<b>Project KoGloss: Glossaries of Word Groups for the Acquisition of LSP</b> <i>Egita Proveja, Agnese Dubova</i> .....	22
<b>Modern Teaching of Home Economics and Technologies in Latvia: Theoretical and Practical Aspects</b> <i>Elita Volāne</i> .....	23
<b>Students' Needs in ESP at Latvia University of Agriculture</b> <i>Ieva Knope</i> .....	24
<b>Analysis of Professional Competences of Labour Protection Specialists</b> <i>Imants Bērtaitis</i> .....	25
<b>Mind maps and their usage to develop students' foreign language skills and competence</b> <i>Inese Ate, Kristīne Liepiņa</i> .....	26
<b>The perspectives of e-learning forms: Jelgava high school student's perceptions</b> <i>Kitija Kirila, Kitija Namniece</i> .....	27
<b>Achievable outcomes of "Social Sciences" in the parent's point of view</b> <i>Lana Janmere</i> .....	28
<b>Student conferences as means for developing academic skills in foreign languages</b> <i>Larisa Maļinovska, Anete Mežote, Inese Ozola</i> .....	29
<b>Teachers' professionalism and Continuous Professional Development</b> <i>Līvija Zeiberte</i> .....	30
<b>Study program "Home environment and informatics in education" developing opportunities</b> <i>Natalia Vronskaya</i> .....	31
<b>Foreign language as a means of communicative competence</b> <i>Olga Civzele, Larissa Turusheva</i> .....	32
<b>Development of vocational high school graduates competitiveness in the EU Higher Education Area</b> <i>Olga Dementjeva</i> .....	33
<b>Pedagogical aspects of e-learning in higher education</b> <i>Sarmīte Bremze</i> .....	34

<b>Development of project management and IT competences through integrated learning</b> <i>Taavi Tamberg, Sulev Alajoe, Reet Soosaar, Arvi Kuura</i> .....	35
<b>Factor of acculturation and its management with foreign students</b> <i>Vita Balama</i> .....	36
<b>Place, identity and globalization in society development</b>	
<b>Social capital and local identity in the society of globalization</b> <i>Alberto Bernini</i> .....	37
<b>Middle class in modern Russia</b> <i>Chaplygin A., Slepukhin A.</i> .....	38
<b>Optimum Currency Area Theory - A Critical View</b> <i>Eva Muchova</i> .....	39
<b>The place of educational institutions in learning region</b> <i>Iveta Kāpota</i> .....	40
<b>The Topicality of the Social Market Economy</b> <i>Jan Lisy</i> .....	41
<b>Cross-cultural challenges of management in the Baltic countries</b> <i>Lada Kalinina</i> .....	42
<b>Ethnic identity formation aspects in a multiethnic environment</b> <i>Larisa Brokāne</i> .....	43
<b>Flexibility in Labour Market Relations among Employers and Employees</b> <i>Līga Rasnāča</i> .....	44
<b>Cultural identity and media coverage</b> <i>Lulivera Krusteva</i> .....	45
<b>Local development - multiple views</b> <i>Marikova Pavlina, Herova Irena</i> .....	46
<b>Cultural space as a regional identity development factor</b> <i>Silva Poča</i> .....	47
<b>Impact of globalization processes on the choice of values of young people</b> <i>Spodra Austruma</i> .....	48

## **Innovations and sustainability as development factors**

<b>Project management competences needed: an analysis of the preliminary conclusions of the application of the Estonian Reconstruction Act</b> <i>Airi Noppel, Arvi Kuura</i> .....	49
<b>E-learning – a contemporary tertiary education solution in the context of globalization</b> <i>Anita Emse, Sundars Vaidesvarans</i> .....	50
<b>Financing of innovations: problems and opportunities in Latvia</b> <i>Artis Zablockis</i> .....	51
<b>E-management as the factor of social changes in Ukraine</b> <i>Galyna Fesenko, Tetyana Fesenko</i> .....	52
<b>Information sources in dealing with common cold: children rhinitis case</b> <i>Ieva Salmane-Kulikovska, Signe Dobelniece</i> .....	53
<b>Innovative city – promoter of territory development</b> <i>Inese Haite</i> .....	54
<b>The key sources of economic development in small new EU member states</b> <i>Irina Curkina</i> .....	55
<b>Enterprise Technology Absorption Readiness Assessment Model in Latvia</b> <i>Juris Tuvstulauks, Valdis Avotiņš, Natalja Jarohnoviča</i> .....	56
<b>Northern Vidzeme municipal development from the perspective of the regional governmental employees</b> <i>Jānis Ūsis</i> .....	57
<b>Sustainable development of Jelgava local municipality from the point of view of municipality representatives</b> <i>Laima Barisa</i> .....	58
<b>New Business Idea Development methodology: Case of Latvia and Estonia</b> <i>Liene Riekstiņa, Valdis Avotiņš</i> .....	59
<b>Evaluation of the town’s attractiveness – a case study of Balvi city</b> <i>Lienīte Litavniece</i> .....	60
<b>NGO as significant element of Helix model system promoting innovations in rural areas</b> <i>Maiga Krūzmētra</i> .....	61

<b>The Knowledge Commercialisation in Regional Universities: Case of Latvia</b> <i>Natalja Jarohnovich, Valdis Avotins</i> .....	62
<b>EU structural funds role in business development</b> <i>Sarmīte Bremze, Vladimirs Jefremovs</i> .....	63
<b>Barriers for use of traditional training evaluation approach in enterprise</b> <i>Signe Enkuzena</i> .....	64
<b>Green procurement - social aspects – introduction</b> <i>Redek Jurcik</i> .....	65
<b>Entrepreneurial university model: case of knowledge flow analysis in VUC</b> <i>Valdis Avotiņš, Natalja Jarohnovich</i> .....	66
<b>Social Intelligence Indicators for Addiction Disorder Patients</b> <i>Velga Sudraba, Kristīne Mārtinsone</i> .....	67
<b>Ethical dimension in society development – diversity, inclusion, tolerance</b>	
<b>Civil society crisis in Poland and attitudes towards politicians</b> <i>Adam Grabowski</i> .....	68
<b>P. Birkerts’ “Psychology” (1921) in the Context of New Dimensions</b> <i>Ināra Leikuma</i> .....	69
<b>The role of philosophy in the contemporary society</b> <i>Leonards Leikums, Gunārs Brāzma</i> .....	70
<b>The Barrier-Free Workplace for Disabled People</b> <i>Marga Živitere</i> .....	71
<b>Society "for" and "against" legalization of euthanasia</b> <i>Rihards Poļaks</i> .....	72
<b>Youth integration as value transformation in multicultural society</b> <i>Tamāra Pigozne</i> .....	73
<b>The problem of personality and professional identity in Plato’s works</b> <i>Valērijs Makarevičs</i> .....	74



**Labour market and public administration  
Darba tirgus un sabiedrības pārvalde**

**The Accessibility of Riga and Latvia as a Tourist Destination: the Challenges of  
Foreign Language Usage**

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Topicality: The accessibility of information in foreign languages (basically English, German and Russian) promotes Riga (and Latvia) as a foreign tourist destination.

The goal of the work is to determine the accessibility on the Riga (and Latvia) as a tourist destination from a foreign language perspective.

The tasks of the work are to conduct practical research of accessibility of Riga (and Latvia) as a tourist destination from a foreign language perspective. The following methods are used: The research of theoretical literature and sources, empirical methods (practical study – an experiment, expert interviews).

Conclusions and suggestion: The result of the practical study of Riga as a tourist destination proves that Riga and Latvia are foreign tourist unfriendly from a foreign language perspective: the amount of visual information meant for foreign visitors is insufficient, the foreign language command of employees of the sector of tourism service is rather poor. A foreign tourist must be well prepared for a visit to Latvia, previously collecting information in web pages as well as consulting the local tourist information centres and travel agencies.

**Key words:** tourist, accessibility, destination, information

## **Strategic management of trade unions: necessity and potential**

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This article presents a review and analysis of the theoretical framework for the strategic management of trade unions as specific non-governmental organizations. The aim of the study is to theoretically justify the need for the strategic management of trade unions and to empirically clarify Latvian trade union strengths and weaknesses, as well as the formulations of their mission and goals. The paper theoretically describes the stages of the strategic management process; it examines the role of the strategic direction and it offers an analysis of trade unions' objectives. To provide a successful strategy formulation process, methods to analyze trade unions' internal and external environmental factors have been proposed; the nature of the strategy implementation and evaluation are described. The author has empirically established Latvian trade union leaders' views on the strengths and weaknesses of unions' internal environment, opportunities and possible threats in the external environment, as well as the formulations of the unions' missions and goals. Methods of data acquisition and processing: a questionnaire method in the form of a structured interview and the SWOT analysis method are used. It is concluded that the strategic management of trade unions is necessary because it ensures they are able to adapt to changes in the external environment.

**Key words:** Trade unions, strategic management, vision, mission

## **Municipality Websites as a Communication Channel in the Central Bohemia Region**

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E-government represents a relatively new but booming concept in the Czech Republic. Investigation of communication channels in public administration is very important in the case of the Czech Republic considering its disintegrated nature of settlements (the number of municipalities has increased by half since the Velvet Revolution in 1989). There are 6,249 municipalities in the Czech Republic, which is a quite a high number for a country with ten million inhabitants. The research shows that the introduction of ICTs significantly enhances the access of citizens to information, not only in bigger cities but also in numerous rural communities. This is, however, namely the case of information relating directly to the activities of local administration bodies and to public services. As for information on competing political entities and their programmes, election campaigns, on civic associations and interest groups activities, we only find random and isolates pieces of information that cannot be used to make a picture of the local political process. This paper focuses on municipality websites in the Central Bohemia Region that is characterized not only by disintegrated nature of settlements but also by processes of suburbanization and metropolization.

**Key words:** Public administration, local government, websites, civic participation

**The integration of foreigners from third world countries at the local level.**

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The submitted study focuses on the approach to the issue of the integration of foreigners from third world countries outside the EU living in Central Bohemia. The project aims to clarify the conditions for the integration of foreigners from third world countries at the local level. The integration of foreigners is a long-term process taking place in resettlement areas and through work activities – namely in municipalities. Municipalities are also an important intermediary in providing feedback to the central authorities on the effectiveness of integration policies in the Czech Republic. The situation and position of foreigners and the problems that arise during the integration process can be best identified by the lowest level of public administration – however, the alignment of these processes is the responsibility of central state administration. In terms of the effectiveness of the integration process, the involvement of municipalities in the creation and implementation of integration policies is necessary. Municipal governments are increasingly faced with an ever faster growth in the number of foreigners in their territories, and the situation in some smaller towns and villages is close to critical. The emergence of closed communities of foreigners and the growing tensions between them and the indigenous people can be considered as being the result of ineffective integration policies. The guideline for the selection of medium-sized cities for integration was expected to be the wider participation of the community of new citizens from third world countries into the socio-economic events in the municipality. Some of the main indicators monitored in this study include the approach of the citizens of third-world countries to the job market (the possibility of entering into and asserting oneself in the job market) and a substantial degree of active civic participation in the local community. The paper is based on the results of two projects financed by the ESF and implemented by the Organization for Aid to Refugees, which took place from 2010 in the Central Bohemian region, and which is trying to put them into the context of the European research MIPEX 2011 – Migrant Integration Policy Index (2007-2010). The sources of data for the investigative research are: statistics, information from the employment offices and the testimony of selected foreigners living in the CB region.

**Key words:** integration, foreigners, municipalities, job market

## **Role of government public affairs in optimization of public administration**

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With the decrease of administrative influences the effective function of contemporary public administration needs the support and partnership of the society. The necessity to consider the reaction of society and mass media obliges public administrators to inform and to create public understanding on decisions made by public administration, especially unpopular ones, as well as to ensure the opportunity for individuals get involved in the decision making process. In other words, the regulation of the state needs increasingly more public acceptance and approval both responding to public needs and wishes and creating common values and standards that in one way or other can be achieved by the mass communication process. Thus the role of communication and public relations in public administration performance increases.

Analysing the formation principles of communication and its place in public administration, the aim of this research is to follow the development tendencies in public administration communication that are directed to the formation of public understanding of public administration activities.

In order to understand the role of public affairs in public administration processes, the author has studied the tendencies of public administration, non-governmental organizations and media relations transformation during several state reform development stages in Latvia.

**Key words:** public administration, communication, decision making, public affairs

**Representation of interests of Lithuania's sub-national actors at European Union level**

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Analytical models based on the multilevel governance approach are tested as applied for citizen interest representation processes of Lithuanian municipalities at European Union institutions. Lithuania is a specific object of research as a new European Union member state possessing limited resources, being rather centralized, and without any deep institutional expertise and traditions of local government. Research methods such as in-depth interviews with experts followed by an analysis of documents are used. Different patterns of representation are tested. It has been shown that institutional frameworks and accession channels are to be assumed as explanatory factors taken into consideration when analysing the aforementioned processes. The limited resources of the municipalities, the lack of initiative, and common positions hardly formulated are the main problematic features depicting the existing situation. Ways of resource optimization are further discussed.

**Key words:** municipalities, Lithuania, European Union, interest representation

**Conflict and Legitimacy – Research Variations in Small Municipalities of the Czech Republic**

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The article is a case study of the political process in small municipalities of the Czech Republic. The question of the existence and nature of conflicting policies is investigated on three levels. On the basis of one municipality, the premises of the politological theories involved in the function of political systems in Czech small municipalities, while being focused on conflict and its nature, are gradually verified on the basis of data and qualitative research. The nature of the actors of the conflict in municipalities and collective legitimacy of disputes are then further investigated. The results of the study, which presents a gradually improving specification of the interpretation of the conflicting line in municipalities, lead us to the question of the possibilities of applying individual theoretical approaches in a given, specific area of investigation.

**Key words:** cleavage, conflict, local political system, plurality, legitimacy

## **Experience of Discrimination Reported by Latvian Migrant Workers in Ireland: A Survey-Based Analysis**

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In Ireland, there is a concentration of migrant workers from EU10 states in five sectors. Previous research findings made it clear that employers in Ireland have access to an almost unlimited pool of relatively well-qualified migrants who can be employed in low-skilled jobs at wages and conditions that are rock bottom – or sometimes even below – minimum standards set out in employment laws and regulations.

Due to the fact that profit-maximizing employers exploit migrant workers by discriminating in terms of different wages among workers and of different EU10 nationalities based on differences among real wages prevailing in their countries of origin, the study was proposed to pry into the possible existence of such discrimination based on nationality in terms of wage and other factors.

In 2009 and 2010, through a nation-wide research study conducted at the University of Limerick, over 270 Latvians residing in Ireland were asked about their experience of discrimination in housing and employment.

On one hand, because Latvians were ranked lowest among four new EU10 member state migrant workers in Ireland studied in terms of labour market performance, a greater amount of focus was placed on their collective experience and to extract their personal accounts of discrimination.

On the other hand, however, because inward migration into Ireland has taken place over a period when the economy has been expanding at a high rate between 2004 and 2007 – the latter part of so-called “Celtic Tiger” Years – economic conditions have been relatively favourable for EU10 migrant workers in the Irish labour market.

Moreover, due to the fact that a vast majority of immigration into Ireland has been from other European countries, many of the immigrants into Ireland were not subject to common forms of potential discrimination such as those based on race, religion, or colour. These factors should work in such a way to set these recent immigrants into Ireland fairing comparatively well when measured against Irish natives. Statistical analyses do indeed indicate that Latvian respondents did not express any more or less compelling cases of discrimination vis-à-vis the other three nationality groups. Analyses of open-ended questions, however, did reveal more complex and personal stories of discrimination and incidents of negative experience.

**Key words:** Labour Market Discrimination, Migrant Workers, Wage Differentials



**Interest representation at the European Union level: case of Lithuania's  
environmental interest group**

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An increased number of competences transferred from the national to the European level and a high number of the European Union regulations and directives allow expected changes in traditional patterns of interest representation. Since the 1990s, one can observe increased attempts of business as well as public interest groups to influence decisions at the supranational level. However, not all the interest groups are willing to *Europeanize*, e.g. transfer their activities from the national to the European level. Factors such as organizational arrangements, resources, goals as well as national institutional context may determine their activities' changes. This article examines the case of Lithuanian environmental interest groups and their level of Europeanization. Considering the comparatively short time of EU membership and a rather weak tradition of interest representation, the analysis of environmental interest group activities shows to what extent the EU factor shapes and transforms the activities and strategies of non-profit interests. The research combines qualitative data from the interviews with the stakeholders as well as quantitative data of interest groups' organizational resources.

**Challenges and solutions in education  
Izaicinājumi un risinājumi izglītībā**

**The Facilitation of the Secondary School Pupils' Participation Skills in After-school Class Work**

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The view of a school as one of the most essential personality socialization agents in which the role of the formation of social skills, values and attitudes towards society and individuals is as essential as knowledge acquisition, has become topical in the context of 'Education for Sustainable Development'.

At the same time the complexity of social and political processes requires a definite degree of preparation for new citizens in order to be involved in the above mentioned processes. The school's active role in preparing the pupils' participation in decision making, the readiness to undertake responsibility, the rendering of a positive participation experience has a positive impact on the goal achievement of education for sustainable development.

The article is devoted to the current secondary school pupils' participation in the present social and cultural development situation in Latvia as an important priority of youth personality formation, particularly emphasizing its sustainable importance. The problematic issue of participation has been raised in Latvia and the EU's normative documents, their aims, objectives and principals.

The aim of the article is to analyze the research results on the understanding of secondary schools pupils' participation content and the participation implementation forms in after-school class work.

In the article the following discussion point has been raised: the school's pedagogic environment should ensure the formation of the essential participation experience of a kind which would promote the implementation of the sustainability principle.

**Key words:** participation, civic society, education, sustainable development

**The modular study at the state police college**  
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Every year volume of knowledge and skills needed to be learned increase. At the same time the study period is limited. This situation causes educational institutions to search for innovative approaches oriented to improving the educational process. Study program structured in a system is not so flexible and adaptive for solutions of various study tasks. That was a reason for the program's splitting into relative independent parts – modules. Modules provide an opportunity to combine these parts both in one and quite different study programs.

Learning is a search for meaning. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which students are actively trying to construct meaning. Meaning requires understanding of wholes as well as parts. And parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Therefore, the learning process focuses on primary concepts, not isolated facts.

In this context, modular study is an effective philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on student's experiences, they construct their own understanding of the world they live in.

The last decade the educational system had some challenges (Bologna, etc.) and the implemented of high standards for the educational process, especially for the development of the professional competence of prospective specialists.

The state Police College is oriented on education solving specific goals in society as well as on psychologically pedagogical aspects emphasizing policeman's job as collaboration with the community.

The article analyzes the essence of integrative study and presents the module "Quarrels/Requests for Help". The elaboration and implementation of this module provides the opportunity for the improvement of the professional competence of the prospective policeman.

**Key words:** modular study, integrative study, professional competence

**The question of reading in the humanities in Latvian universities**

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Where did all of the books go? Reading in Latvian University humanities degree programs is a seriously lost and de – emphasized process. This paper will examine the reasons why.

Great and good universities do emphasize the reading of great and brilliant books. It is the very heart and life – blood of the educational process. Without intense and intelligent reading all that would be left would be an intellectual and spiritual corpse.

The reasons why Latvian universities do not read are actually quite complex. They involve economics, history, culture, political culture, the nature of the Latvian language, threats on the Latvian language from the major languages, demographics and no doubt a whole host of other reasons this paper will attempt to touch upon.

The basic fact is that Latvian university libraries and Latvian bookstores are devoid of the brilliant books that exist in the, if you will, developed countries let alone the brilliant books that have been historically produced. Also these books are not translated into Latvian for it would not be financially feasible to do so. Thus there is a great book void which ostrich – like the universities, faculty and students simply avoid thinking about or accept as being natural.

**Key words:** Books, reading, libraries

### **Impact of foreign language skills on employability**

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To confront rising unemployment, the skills of the labor force must be improved. Skills mismatches in the labor market have been a growing concern in most EU Member States. With the aim to find out how foreign language skills impact employability, a study was carried out, in which 127 respondents from the Latvian University of Agriculture participated.

The findings of this study show that 38% of the undergraduates, 30% of the Master's students and 30% of the Doctoral students are willing to work in the EU labor market and are ready for mobility. A close correlation was found between the willingness of the undergraduates and Master's students to work in the EU labor market and their self-assessment of their foreign language skills. The respondents, whose foreign language skills are at a basic level, are not willing to work in other countries, because they are aware, that for successful employability in the EU labor market, their foreign language skills are critical. No close correlation between foreign language skills and readiness for mobility was found in the responses given by the Doctoral students. A further study is needed in this matter.

The data from this study reveal the perceptions of the respondents concerning the necessity of English, German, Russian and French skills for the Latvian labor market, as well as predictions how, in midterm, the necessity will change in Latvia and the EU. All the respondents are aware that English is the dominant foreign language in the Latvian labor market and other EU countries. Differences occur in their perceptions concerning the usefulness of the second foreign language. As expected, the prevailing majority of the respondents perceive Russian as currently being the second most useful foreign language for the labor market of Latvia, but not for the EU, where after English, German and French are required.

These findings can be useful for educators, when designing modules for the acquisition of professional foreign language skills with the aim to enhance the future graduates' employability prospects in the EU labor market.

**Key words:** the EU labor market, employability, foreign language skills

**Project KoGloss: Glossaries of Word Groups for the Acquisition of LSP**

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Contemporary society is characterized by its aim to become a information society. Interdisciplinary projects and global cooperation are increasing in popularity in a information based society. However, language diversity and differences in the use of LSP may be an obstacle. That is why dictionaries and LSP lexicons are not satisfactory. Sometimes glossaries are made up, but practice shows that an effective glossary is complicated to be worked out. In the two-year project „Glossaries of Word Groups for the Acquisition of LSP” [KoGloss] an applicable know-how is elaborated. Partners from the University of Tartu in Estonia, Ventspils University College in Latvia, and Vilnius University in Lithuania are participating in the project being coordinated by the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. The project KoGloss studies parallel LSP glossaries in the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and German languages by using relatively simple means and techniques. The paper aims to introduce the audience to the project objectives and work methods.

**Key words:** KoGloss

**Modern Teaching of Home Economics and Technologies in Latvia: Theoretical and Practical Aspects**

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In the pedagogical process based on the humanitarian education paradigm it is important to promote the development of every student's identity, ensuring its expression in the acquisition of life skills activities. The mission of modern education, including the subject of home economics and technologies, is to assist in acquiring the skills that are required in different areas of life: working, learning, personal and public life.

By acquiring and analyzing home economics and technologies teaching methodology, it can be stated that the founder of handicraft methodology in Latvia, as well as representatives of didactics offer a variety of approaches based on European folk traditions in the promotion of the students' skills development. Latvian educational classics are influenced to a large extent by European educational traditions and, accordingly, they serve well also.

The aim of the article is to explore and discover the theoretical basics of the didactics of home economics and technologies and to develop their importance in the process of teaching content acquisition of modern home economics and technologies in the elementary school.

Nowadays, the integral approach is typical of the organization of the learning process of home economics and technologies. The teacher's ability to associate the teaching content with real life situations, methodological techniques that focus on the activation of the students' learning activities, the aspect of personality development, where mental and physical unity is implemented, and real world mental, emotional and volition harmony.

**Key words:** Home Economics and Technologies, didactics, teaching methodology

**Students' Needs in ESP at Latvia University of Agriculture**

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While developing and improving the content of ESP courses according to the students' needs at the Latvia University of Agriculture, general English knowledge, academic and business English knowledge and terminology have to be constructed and fashioned into the ESP courses.

**Key words:** ESP, tertiary education, needs analysis



## **Analysis of Professional Competences of Labour Protection Specialists**

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The number of occupational diseases and accidents occurring at the work-place in the Republic of Latvia decrease from year to year, nevertheless it is one of the highest in the European Union. This is due to several reasons e.g. the insufficient competence of employees, employers and also labor protection specialists. The determination of competences is particularly important when taking into account the necessity to define learning outcomes in all educational programs in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework of Latvia developed on its basis in 2010.

In order to reduce the risk of injuries and occupational diseases at work, labour protection specialists in cooperation with employers and employees have to ensure a safe work environment. To be able to fully carry out these tasks, labour protection specialists have to be competent. Labour protection specialists have to possess various competences as they have to draw employees and employers' attention to the places that are dangerous in the work-place, to explain legal requirements to be followed at work and they also have to provide professional instructions to employees. The aim of the research is to determine the competences that labour protection specialists have to possess, carry out an analysis of the possibilities to acquire these competences and their conformity with the EQF.

**Key words:** labour protection, competences, education of labour protection specialists, the EQF

## **Mind maps and their usage to develop students' foreign language skills and competence**

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The topicality of this article is connected with the necessity to acquire foreign languages more effectively. Nowadays people face rapid changes and new challenges connected with globalization processes, extension of the labour market and a multicultural environment. These changes and challenges create new tasks for lecturers- to be aware of new approaches how to improve the teaching of foreign languages at the tertiary level, analyze one's own experience and compare that with the experience of other countries, and help students to acquire new "learning strategies".

Analysis of the theoretical literature shows that young people have well-developed cognitive abilities such as perception, thinking, memory and thinking operations – analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization and classifying. Creating mind maps reflects the process of perception. The creating of mind maps does not promote passive learning and learning environment, on the contrary it activates the learning environment and the study process. Concepts help to classify and arrange ideas/thoughts, and mind maps connect the right and left cerebral hemisphere. The ability to memorize information can be significantly improved because process of creating mind maps resembles the memory process. Concepts, images and key words are used, and connections are formed between concepts.

Creating mind maps develops thinking and students learn to arrange concepts and ideas into systems. When we are thinking we use words and concepts, which are arranged into schemes or models.

The authors offer several ways how the implementation of mind maps in foreign language teaching and learning creates links between the previous and new knowledge, stimulates students to take active part in the study process and develops students' foreign language skills and competence.

**Key words:** learning styles, thinking process, visualization, concepts, mind maps

## **The perspectives of e-learning forms: Jelgava high school student's perceptions**

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The number of high school students and young people who are willing to further their studies has rapidly decreased in our country, and a lot of young people are leaving to look for employment opportunities abroad. Therefore, the introduction of E-studies is one of the possibilities to continue schooling. However, there is an important question, whether high school students are aware of such a form of studies and whether they are ready for it, and how many of them are prepared for it. Education as a social institution is usually perceived as a body of organizations, approved by society, in which training of diverse kinds and levels is implemented. In our country, major changes in the educational institutions are taking place, resulting in the creation of new concepts, such as the information society and knowledge society. The development of society is based on the acquisition and circulation of information, the continuous acquisition of knowledge during the whole period of one's life; that is, life-long learning.

Learning and teaching is the basis of the educational institution. The E-University is a type of educational institution, and e-studies are a form of teaching and learning.

**Key words:** educational institution, life-long learning, e-studies

**Achievable outcomes of “Social Sciences” in the parents’ point of view**

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Parental involvement in a development and an assessment of the educational content is a rare research object not only in pedagogy, but in Latvia social science researches as well. They aren't considered as serious school partners. As far as social pedagogy literature shows parents in the formal education context mainly are mentioned in the cases of preventing pupil learning disabilities. There isn't serious analysis in scientific literature about different subjects content in the parent's point of view and it isn't used in the development of educational content. This is the main reasons which determine necessity of such researches. Furthermore „Social sciences” is young subject in Latvia educational system and there are different attitudes about it from teachers and pupils. Frequently „Social sciences” isn't considered as serious subject in the school. Therefore developers of educational content must take in to consideration parent's point of view about knowledge and skills which are included as achievable outcomes in this subject.

**Key words:** parents, social sciences, knowledge, skills

## **Student conferences as means for developing academic skills in foreign languages**

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The aim of the research is to find out how participation of students in international scientific conferences influences the development of their academic skills in foreign languages. The use of foreign languages in the academic study and research has increased in recent years. At the Latvia University of Agriculture in co-operation with three faculties – the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Engineering and the Forest Faculty such conferences have been organized already for six years. The students of all other faculties of the university are also participating with their reports and publications. Student conferences being extra-curriculum activities form the environment where foreign languages play an important role being not only the languages of the contributions but also they are used in the process of communication among the conference participants from different countries. An enquiry among the participants of the conference is presented and the results are analysed.

**Key words:** academic skills in foreign languages, EAP, extra-curriculum activities

## Teachers' Professionalism and Continuous Professional Development

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World's society in 21<sup>st</sup> century are experiencing not only deep changes in all fields of life, but as well realization that to understand and to manage these changes you need completely conceptually new approach.

In the situation, when general education is beginning to become an element of societies lifelong-learning, teachers have been asked to participate in process of reaching new goals of this new education. It is obvious that the major and the most important involvement in this process is teachers' professionalism.

Nowadays teachers' professionalism is measured by three within themselves connected concepts: knowledge, autonomy and responsibility.

The education in state level in many countries, including Latvia, is monitored by the professional standard of the teachers. It specifies all necessary competences as well as points to the next available way in professional development in the further education.

Continuous Professional Development in further education has been looked at as coefficient for systematic development and as a confirmation of achieving educational goals, which guides teachers to achieve and undisruptedly develop individual skills and knowledge as well as helps to prepare themselves for work in profession in the field.

Today by professional development we understand:

Lifelong learning, a fulcrum of self-development, a monitoring and security tool for teachers at their work place, the tool to ensure society of teachers' professionalism, a confirmation that all state's education institution requirements and suggestion has been fulfilled, a professional competence confirmation for an employer.

There is three basic teachers' further education elements mentioned within the scientific literature, they are as following:

1. To ensure undisrupted continuity of the professional teachers' competence development in helping to modernize and widen professional skills and knowledge.
2. To ensure available options to develop competences what lets you prepare for development in your professional career.
3. To develop individual and professional affectivity therefore rising self confidence in teachers and their satisfaction with their work.

Different education models let you systemize the working spheres where the professional development is happening. As the one of nowadays most common models is the constructivist paradigm matching transformative further education model.

**Key words:** teachers' professionalism, further education, continuous professional development (CPD)

**Study program “Home environment and informatics in education” developing opportunities**

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The aim of the research is to clear up the necessity of the information and communication technologies (ICT) integration methodology, offered by author, in the household and home economic education. Studies with the ICT integration methodology, worked out by author, include: 1) possibilities of unassisted and intensive household, home economic and informatics mutual integration providing and development; 2) diversifying and improving of study methods; 3) extended application of ICT. Worked out ICT integration methodology was evaluated with analytic hierarchy process (AHP), by comparing defined criteria and subcriteria coupled together in relation to set aims. According to global priority summary of experts, it is possible to conclude, that the highest total rating have alternative studies with the global priority vector of ICT integration methodology – 0.396. As well as compliance with study content based on criteria (0.310) and the effectiveness of studying (0.225) the first place takes alternative studies with ICT integration methodology. It means, that worked out and offered by author ICT integration methodology is necessary in household and home economic studies.

**Key words:** ICT, household and home economic studies, alternative, integration methodology

### **Foreign language as means of communicative competence**

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Learning a foreign language is not the aim for students of the bachelor's study programme *External Relations of Organizations*. English as a foreign language is integrated into the study process and has become a tool in acquiring professional competence. ESL standards, worked out at the Center of Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC, have been taken as a basis in achieving learning outcomes. Blended learning, which includes both traditional and non-traditional methods and means of learning a foreign language, has proved to be successful in reaching the main goals: business and life communication, work with different sources of information and its presentation, cross-cultural communication.

**Key words:** communicative competence, procedural language knowledge, foreign language as a tool, CAL ESL standards, blended learning



**Development of vocational high school graduates competitiveness in the EU  
Higher Education Area**

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We live in a constantly changing world: the fast development of technologies, the globalization of education and business, cultural changes etc. It is very important, for today's youth, to get a good/ stable education, which meets modern requirements for competitiveness in the labor market. Young people should more seriously consider their choice of higher education because they are naturally interested to be enrolled into a good school and to receive a competitive diploma/occupation.

Investigations in Latvia and other EU countries show that young people often have difficulty in choosing a future occupation and higher education institution. There are also a lot of problems during the study period and employment after graduation. This all may indicate a poor awareness about the requirements and features of education and the labour market and insufficient preparedness for study.

Today's high school teaching staff should begin preparing their students for study and prospective professional work in advance. Teachers should be involved in the process of finding prospective employers to help the young people in professional orientation, choosing a study direction and university pre-entry training.

The article examines the significant question of the innovative approaches and learning strategies of today's high school teacher's work for improving the preparation of young people for university entry, studying and for the prospective professional work. It describes the training program, which is being realized at present in a particular vocational school in Riga.

**Key words:** competitiveness, classification of higher education institutions, pedagogical process, higher education

## **Pedagogical aspects of e-learning in higher education**

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IT boom in the world has contributed to the wider application and development of e-learning/e-studies in higher education of Latvia as well. *E-studies are the studies, which take place with the application of electronic technologies: telecommunication and computer networks, radio and TV, video records, interactive TV and multimedia CD-ROM.* In some countries e-studies are understood as online studies in the network. Especially organized virtual environment is *essential feature of e-studies*, interactive study materials for instructors and students self-study, possibilities of self-assessment for both and support of instructors in the study process. *E-study principles* enter Latvian higher education institutions slowly, however, as it is stressed by specialists – during next years students and lecturers more and more will feel the opportunities offered by modern technology. Practically it is: the instructor is reading the lecture face-to-face, but the variety of study materials, tests, group work and project development is organized virtually: discussion forums, chats with instructors and classmates, etc. Twenty years ago telephone and fax, radio and TV, audio and later video were technologies characteristic to *distance learning*. It was possible to achieve a remarkable improvement of the quality of studies even with the technologies mentioned already comparing with the *correspondence studies*. E-studies/E-Learning is more than only business. *New teaching methodology* is characteristic to this form of learning, which differs from full-time study. Via e-learning the student acquires so necessary for information society added value of education – learns not only the subject matter, but also learns how to work with new technologies. In Latvian universities e - studies are realized in different versions. One of the most common is acquisition of study courses attending lectures in person at the university as well as working in a virtual environment. The problem with e-studies is that in Latvian universities, it is necessary not only to explore new technologies and to acquire new studying habits, but also to encourage not only students but also lecturers themselves to use new study technology. The latest trends show that study work is increasingly switched to virtual environment, but that does not mean that, thinking about the quality of studies, the “effect of presence” will disappear, which cannot be provided by e-studies without sufficient “effect of presence” of the lecturer. Students wish to mix- face-to-face lectures when the teacher can be asked about all the vague and work in a virtual environment. That is the way to make study process more effective and to improve the quality of specific courses.

E –study is becoming more and more popular in the world. However, the aiming for maximum quality, offer of such studies require large capital investments in different sectors as well.

**Key words:** education, technologies, e-Learning, instructors, motivation

## **Development of project management and IT competences through integrated learning**

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The present paper aims to explore the possibilities for the development of project management and IT competences through integrated learning. We examine the essence of IT skills, such as communication, time management, information handling, office and productivity tools, as well as project-specific tools etc., in correspondence with the project management competences stated in the IPMA International Competence Baseline.

We are going to show that there are several possibilities where obtaining IT-competences can support learning project management competences and vice versa. We assume that learning these competences separately is probably less effective than in combination. Our methodical approach is based on the constructivist learning paradigm. This paper also discusses language-related issues, mainly focusing on the necessity for cooperation on course design and language learning.

The actuality of the topic is particularly emanating from a shift in the contemporary paradigm in education – the efficiency of learning and teaching, the motivation of students (especially adult learners in part-time studies) and the decreasing share of contact hours are creating problems almost everywhere in educational institutions. Thus the integration of subjects and courses (including “modulization”) is becoming more and more important.

**Key words:** Project Management, IT Skills, Education

**Factor of acculturation and its management with foreign students**

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The tertiary education of Latvia faces new challenges and dimensions in its development and sustainability one of which is the welcoming of foreign students. Their level of acculturation is the main issue for the given article. The reasons of the phenomenon of acculturation are evaluated and the forms of it -integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization and their possible solutions are discussed. The existing experiences of the students are also explored. Culture shock is described from different viewpoints: from that of foreign students studying in Latvia and from that of Latvian students returning after a study semester or two abroad. Within the paper conclusions recommendations for overcoming culture shock will be proposed.

**Key words:** Acculturation, assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization

**Place, identity and globalization in society development  
Vieta, identitāte un globalizācija sabiedrības attīstībā**

**Social capital and local identity in the society of globalization**

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The analysis of the concept of social capital, theorized by R. Putnam and other important scholars (such as Durkheim, Bourdieu and Woolcock), emphasizes the crisis of the associative mutuality that has been characterizing our society for forty years. The study of associative mutuality shows that social capital developed very fast during the first part of the 20th century, thanks to the social solidarity. Unfortunately the role of social capital has reduced its importance in the last decades and at the same time society has got into a period of crisis, involving not only the economy, but also (and above all) behaviors. Through the study of the structure and the organization of the civil associations we can see that the origin of the local autonomy is basic for the creation of urban democracy (originated from medieval communes); in particular I would mention the association Monumenta (founded in Parma in 2004), and its care in protecting the artistic heritage of the city. In the last few years some scholars have focused on the relationship between the central state and the local institutions, because it concerns important fields such as economy, health, public administration, school and University. Social capital is basic for the development of this relationship, since it connects business, university and local administration. We can mention the University of Umeå, which has demonstrated that local governance can improve the development of a region, and at the same time the vocational education of students and teachers.

**Key words:** Social Capital, Urban Democracy, Free Association, Local Governance

### **Middle class in modern Russia**

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The theme of the research is the middle class in modern society. The main idea of this topic is to study middle class in Russian society. As a social group the middle class plays a big role in the progress of a nation-state. In our opinion modern society must consist of different classes with the majority being the middle class. The article presents the analysis of the reasons for the division of society on a class basis and also describes the main feature of studying middle class: its essence and nature.

Novelty of the research is in the following. There's a great need to study the middle class to get the answer: how to expand such a class in Russia, especially during the world financial crisis?

Another reason of the urgency of the theme is that there is a considerable difference in points of view on the nature of middle class. The debate around the allocation and definition of such institute don't stop the till nowadays.

All these reasons generate a theoretical and applied interest for the study of the middle class in modern Russia.

The paper demonstrates our own approach to the problem of researching this class in Russia; its main function, nature and signs. There is also a lot of statistical information as a result of the sociological research which took place in Saratov at the beginning of 2011.

**Key words:** class, society, modern, division

### **Optimum Currency Area Theory - A Critical View**

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The launching of monetary union in Europe, from a historic point of view, represents a completely new solution. It did not have a very strong background in economic theory. The paper deals with the theory of optimum currency area (OCA) as the theoretical basis for analyzing the advantages of membership in a monetary union. R. A. Mundell in his ground-breaking essay of 1961 opened up the issue of optimal currency areas and put the question of under what conditions it is advantageous for a group of countries to introduce a common currency. The project of EMU has raised questions and polemics among a professional public. Entering a monetary union requires the fulfillment of nominal convergence criteria. The criteria of the optimum currency area together with real convergence play a key role in assessing preparedness to join the monetary union, as well as in evaluating the costs and benefits of membership in it. The criteria for an optimal currency area are not a black and white problem. Some of them may be partially met and others not at all. This paper deals with the polemic issues related to the theory of OCA, explores the development of OCA theory and analyses the arguments pro-and-cons of a monetary union and finally discuss the relation between a political union and a monetary union.

**Key words:** optimum currency area, criteria, asymmetric shock, monetary union, EMU

### **The place of educational institutions in learning region**

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Learning region is a region that develops on the basis of determined educating of people, who live and work there. The needs based on their identity and maintenance are identified and defined to develop their competitive opportunities by investment in increasing of social capital. The principle of continuous teaching is realized in region, because development of human resources is the part of development strategy in region. The municipal involvement in actions of learning region is one of the cornerstones to ensure sustainability strategy in public development.

The social functions of school were analyzed and obviously they can be interpreted in the context of regional development. The school is the highest grade of ambivalent modern public education a institution form.

The municipality constructs comprehensive collaboration network of educational institutions that gives the opportunity to constitute various educational projects, educational institutions unite their resources, thereby the quality of offer increases significantly.

It is necessary to include the dimension of region in the structure of educational institutions activities. The educational institution has to maintain a high level of educational standards and quality of education, to consider the strategies of regional development. It is necessary to analyze and evaluate influence of educational institutions activities on regional development regularly, as well as to search for new types and forms of activities constantly to stimulate its influence on regional development.

Educational institution operates as an expert in introduction of creative innovations in learning regional activities. These purposeful activities create the situation that the educational institution is important in the solution of regional educational problems.

**Key words:** development strategy in region, educational institution, introduction of innovations, learning region, social capital



## **The Topicality of the Social Market Economy**

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The model of social market economy represents one alternative for market economy functioning. This model is based on traditional Christian ideas and values and these are typically linked with the free initiative and activity of individuals and social solidarity. The efficiency and prosperity of the market economy are based on fulfilling social goals. The state assumes the responsibility just in case that individual or market structure fails. State actions in the social area should be consistent with the market to develop the market economy instead threatening it. Neoliberals are enforcing the minimalization of state intervention. They concede that the state should be active in the optimalization of macroeconomic proportions, the macroeconomic cycle and inflation regulation. It should emphasize optimal economical growth and optimal income redistribution. State should protect, support and develop competition and restrict monopolies.

**Key words:** neoliberalism, ideal kind of economy, model of social market economy, ordoliberalism, competition and monopoly

## **Cross-cultural challenges of management in the Baltic countries**

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Business nowadays has become more and more international. However, many organizations perform less effectively as soon as the borders of their home country are crossed. The reason is that processes and solutions, which work well in the country of origin, might be useless or even harmful in foreign countries. One of major obstacles remains cross-cultural conflicts or misunderstandings.

We are facing cultural differences not only with countries, which are far away – like Canada and China, but also on the same continent – like Europe. Also small neighbor countries can be very different – like common mistake made with 3 Baltic countries taken as the Baltic's. Even in one tiny country we can observe significant cultural differences – as between Latvians and Russians in Latvia. The reasons for such diversity exist not only in the ethnic background, but also in the religious and historical origin.

An executive team can not always find the best common solution for local problems. One way of organizing might be perfect for one part of a transnational company and frustrating for another. Instead of living one mental model of behavior international managers need to clarify how the foreign culture would affect processes in the organization and then support creating an intercompany culture, which smoothes national cultural diversities and encourages every employee to do his/her best for the company in the country of their placement.

**Key words:** cross-cultural management, cultural diversity, national cultures, trans-national corporations, globalization

### **Ethnic identity formation aspects in a multiethnic environment**

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The formation of ethnic identity from the point of view of the specific conditions of groups in a multi-ethnic country such as Latvia is determined by the condition of historically established interactions among communities with their cultural, political or religious identity.

The meaning of ethnicity in the given context is considered by the authors as the uncertainty of priorities in the perception of the dominating frames of socio-political and socio-cultural systems by different ethnic groups and the preservation of culture, including political and religious culture. The formation of ethnic identity is determined by various criteria typical of an ethnic group:

- ethnic self-identification
- personal territory
- historical traditions
- specific cultural heritage and mental culture including language and religion
- certain stable stereotypes of behaviour
- awareness of the mentality of other members of an ethnic group.

The author will focus on ethnic self-identity and explore the aspects of those formations in a multi-ethnic environment. Ethnic identity formation problem will be viewed from two perspectives. The first will be characterized by personal identity within the ethnic group and second-the group's ethnic identity.

**Key words:** ethnicity, ethnical identity, multiethnic environment

## **Flexibility in Labour Market Relations among Employers and Employees**

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The labour market is an arena where the employee exchanges his or her labour for wages, status or any other goods achievable by work. The concept covers those institutes and practises which lead the processes of exchange and the receiving of services between employees, employers and other agents who take part in the labour market processes as representatives of employees and employers or as national or local government institutions and nongovernmental organizations (NGO). Flexibility in labour market relations may differ in different spatial regional units. The main attention is paid to the flexibility of the relations between the agents of the labour market in different rural and urban areas. The flexibility of labour market relations can be characterised with the help of different dimensions of flexibility. A consolidated flexibility index with four dimensions has been developed to assess the flexibility of the employers of different territorial units. The dimensions are: flexibility of employees' recruitment, flexibility of the attitude to employees from different social groups, flexibility of employees' attachment and flexibility of employees' evaluation. However, at least theoretically the avoidance of flexibility as an adaptation to the changes in the labour market is also possible.

**Key words:** labour market; labour market agents, flexibility

### **Cultural identity and media coverage**

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The various aspects of cultural heritage and their media coverage are analysed in a key study, based on material excerpted from 8 dailies and 3 weeklies covering the last five years. The cases are thematically grouped and conclusions are drawn about the institutional and communicational deficits in the dialogue between different civilization layers. The content analysis helps delineate two major types of deficits concerning national, regional and European identity. The first group of cases focuses on the barbarous destruction of valuable archeological findings, due to the lack of an adequate policy on the part of the corresponding institutions, particularly in the cases of obvious conflicts of interests ( the investors' interests in particular) on the one hand, and on the other, the passivity of the media with regards to the discussion of these problems (for example, the "slippery" cases of private collections and museums, the difficulties the respective institutions have concerning the preservation of the old Black Sea settlements of Sozopol and Nesseber, included in the UNESCO list of places of important cultural heritage, the ancient Roman amphitheatre and the Yablanski house in Sofia, and many others.). The second group of problems is related to the inadequate and sporadic writings in the media about the discoveries and inventions of Bulgarian scientists, scholars and artists ( for example the Bulgarian Antarctica expeditions, the success of Bulgarian film-makers in Hollywood, our world famous singers, musicians and architects, etc.) On this basis the thesis of media civilization anomie is developed. The conclusion is that this remarkable historical heritage is not as yet properly used as a tool for enhancing national and regional self-confidence, with a view to improving the image of the Balkans as an attractive tourist destination and its role in European civilization.

**Key words:** cultural heritage, institutional and media passivity, media civilization anomie, deficit of national self-consciousness

### **Local development - multiple views**

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Local development can be assessed by monitoring changes and their impact on the local community. Primarily positive changes bringing profit are considered as development. However, this profit does not have to be economical. It can also be increase in the life quality of the inhabitants. Several studies show that if the impulse for a change comes from within the community, this change tends to bring positive results and development of the locality. Exogenous development more often than not leads to negative impacts.

In this report, we review the theoretic description of local development and its manifestations and seek ways how to measure this development. We present a simple indicator of total municipality development and show the limits of its use. In the second part, we summarize findings from our research focused on subjective notions of development and its evaluation.

It becomes clear that in the mind of local actors (predominantly mayors of rural municipalities) as well as other rural inhabitants, development means above all material and palpable values such as the construction of the technical infrastructure. Only a small part of the respondents perceived development as a social process, connected with relations between people and their common aims.

**Key words:** rural area, indicator of development, local development

### **Cultural space as a regional identity development factor**

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Regional or geographical identity is a sense of adherence and solidarity with community which is located in certain territory for a long time. Wherewith regional identity is older than ethnic and national identity and functions as an effective factor of unity in multi-identity communities. Cultural space is connected with mental identification between space and its inhabitants and as a result result inhabitants declare themselves as relevant to this particular space and demonstrates their identity to others, based on which they legitimate their territorial demands. This concept can also be explained as a territorial economical area which contains all specific cultural models that defines established environment. Cultural space that develops in rural area is subordinated to landscape, structure, production resources and other technical and material elements; however it is also dependent to traditions, beliefs, viewpoints and the level of education that members of a particular society have, which structures their attitude to the surrounding environment. It is closely related to regional identity that bases on love to their native land, creates good image of their place and can be foundation to the territorial self-organization of society. Author in her work focuses on cultural space as the essential factor of regional identity development and analyzes those aspects of cultural space that is related to creation of positive image of specific geographical region.

**Keywords:** Cultural Space, Cultural Environment, Regional Identity

## **Impact of Globalization processes on the choice of values of young people**

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In the context of consumer culture, young people learn new lifestyle philosophies as a result of globalization processes and cultural changes. Also in education the study of any subject in such an aspect means to study its specific type of thinking. Values and morale, their study mechanisms and needs are historically predisposed. Every socialization and communication begins with self-analysis, the same as the competence of every culture is examined within its specific culture-historical circumstances.

In modern globalization circumstances social life is dominated economic activities, economic goals and economic criteria. The main concern of society is not the innovation of education or the solution of issues related to the existence of nation, but production of goods and consumption. The expansion of consumer values is the expansion of the principles of globalization in space. In a society of globalization culture the most important is individual, not tribe, group or nation. The individual in global space frees himself/herself from connection with groups, he/she chooses his/her own values, social association, independently acts and individually takes responsibility for his/her choices and actions.

These types of culture may be correlated with the character of education and teaching. It is known, that the content of mass communication and market studies determinate the wants of consumers; and not the notions about what information would be necessary for a more worthy human life (Bardeo, J. Haenens, L. 2004).

The politics of education should be given a special importance in the age of economic crisis when mass thinking and wants are formed by the system of globalization and media.

There exists social mythology- that math and the natural sciences will guarantee you all the competences. This clearly shows up in a document such as „Latvia’s membership in the European Union, aims, priorities and actions from year 2007 to 2013” in the chapter „Education and science development”, where it is highlined that natural sciences and math has a priority role in Latvia. This kind of setting works as a direct reflection of the process of globalization - money attraction to a certain system of administration, only one education role and to one administrative principle.

Value education role and value definitions defined by educational documents, affected by postmodern culture, are open, general and abstract, concentrated on the acknowledgement of cultural inheritance and leaving development of individual's personality in the background.

**Key words:** value education, education, mass thinking, consumer society, globalization



**Innovations and sustainability as development factors  
Inovācijas un ilgtspēja kā attīstības pamats**

**Project management competences needed: an analysis of the preliminary  
conclusions of the application of the Estonian Reconstruction Act**

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This paper is intended to explore the essential need for project management competences in the reconstruction of companies. On 26 December 2008 the Reconstruction Act (in Estonian *Saneerimisseadus*, translated also as Reorganization Act and Rehabilitation Act) was passed in Estonia. This was quite a ‘revolutionary’ development in the insolvency-related business regulations and thus in the whole business environment in Estonia.

In this paper we examine the Estonian Reconstruction Act and carry out a cross-case analysis of accumulated empirical experience and existing court practice in Estonia. Our methodical approach (particularly for the first task) is following the new institutional and behavioral economics, namely the economic analysis of law. Our main working hypothesis is that the process of reconstruction has the typical attributes of a project and thus, its implementation requires the application of specific tools and techniques which are used in project management. The only logical deduction is that the managers of the reconstruction process must have (at least basic) competences of project management. We examine the need of specific project management competences across all the three competence areas and the 46 competences of IPMA International Competence Baseline and conclude that not only technical, but also contextual and behavioral competences are necessary. Also we pay attention to possible policy implications, showing that successful reconstructions can make the Schumpeterian ‘creative destruction’ less ‘destructive’ and more ‘creative’ and thus influence sustainability.

**Key words:** Business reconstruction, Project Management, Competences

**E-learning – a contemporary tertiary education solution in the context of globalization**

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Social, economic and political changes under the influence of globalization and the economic crisis has led to the migration of Latvians to other EU member states or to other countries in search of better work opportunities thus often discontinuing tertiary education in Latvia. The lack of proficient knowledge of foreign languages hinders pursuing tertiary education. Therefore this paper looks at e-learning as a contemporary solution for the pursuits of tertiary education.

The aim of the paper is to ascertain e-learning opportunities in Latvia in comparison to other European countries. The reasons for the choice of e-learning as a form of acquiring education have been explored in the paper using the statistical information gathered by the E-projects department of the School of Business. The main focus of the paper is on academic e-learning programmes offered by higher education institutions that offer a professional diploma, bachelor or master's degree.

Theoretical and practical research point out of those opportunities offered by e-learning are yet to be exploited fully in Latvia in comparison to other European countries. E-learning development and management policy in Latvia lacks goal-oriented organization. The quality of methodological materials and organization in various institutions in Latvia differs widely.

Nevertheless as indicated by the practical research there is an increasing trend of demand for e-learning as a form of education.

**Key words:** e-learning, distance learning, academic e-learning programmes

## **Financing of innovations: problems and opportunities in Latvia**

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One of the leading contemporary strategic management thinkers professor Michael Porter, identifies three stages of development of nations regarding competitiveness: the factor-driven economy, the investment-driven economy and the innovation-driven economy. Developed countries of the world nowadays have moved to the latter model which is based on heavy attention to and investment in research and development. The current tendencies of development of countries are based not only on basic factors of production like natural resources, labor and capital but more and more on developed factors like technology, infrastructure, knowledge and access to different forms of financing. The development and competitiveness of modern economies are unthinkable without serious investment in innovations.

Currently innovative companies face financing problems. Money lenders are not ready to lend money to innovative companies at the early development stages qualifying such deals as high risk deals. Traditional financial sources are not suitable for innovative companies as the cash flow of companies in early stages is mostly negative.

There are several ways how to finance innovations. Typical types of financing innovations in Latvia are government and municipality capital, company capital, EU fund programs, capital investments, grants and guaranties as well as business angels. This paper will analyze and explain the theoretical background of innovation financing possibilities in Latvia. Author will compare traditional sources of financing innovation and will stress the strengths and weaknesses of each type as well as prepare suggestions for the improvement of the existing situation. The aim of this paper is to determine the most convenient and appropriate ways of financing innovation in Latvia.

**Key words:** Innovations, financing, competitiveness, capital

**E-management as the factor of social changes in Ukraine**

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The development of information processing and transfer means, that the increase of informational processes rates creates new opportunities for the organization of management processes in the overall life of society. 2011 was declared as the year of the creation of the informational society in the Ukraine. With the purpose of the internal and external informational systems interconnection and the optimization of team work they plan to create E-management, the distributed computer system on the basis of telecommunication networks that allows for the use of the single software, the single databases and knowledgebase, perform the single control and monitoring of works, handle videoconferences, telecommunication meetings in real-time mode. Virtual management gained special significance in Ukraine in connection with the realization of national preparation program for Euro 2012. For instance, on the construction projects (stadiums in Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov, and Lvov) there were set up video observation systems that allowed receiving the latest information online. The virtualization of the Euro 2012 preparation program management has stimulated the creation of open informational space, social, cultural changes in the Ukraine on the whole.

The authors do not cover the technical characteristics of e-technologies and present them as the factor of the political, social and economic maturity of the Ukraine. In fact e-management assumes not only the creation of a web-portal but the establishment of stable horizontal communications between all subjects of the management process, participative (democratic) management system. Thereby the accomplishment of the Euro project becomes the indicator of the democratization level and market modernization of the Ukrainian economy. We need to overcome the post-Soviet syndromes in project management: a complete information blockade corruption etc.

**Key words:** national project, virtual management, participative system

### **Information sources in dealing with common cold: children rhinitis case**

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**Introduction.** Rhinitis is mostly considered a non-heavy disease, frequently handled with over-the-counter medicines, including nasal decongestants. The safety, efficiency and appropriateness of many decongestants is doubted in respect to small children by a number of countries. In Latvia decongestants can be mostly obtained without prescription, and information leaflets permit using them for small children. Previous studies in 2010 demonstrated extensive use of nasal decongestants for children and marked the necessity for more profound research.

**Aim.** To clarify information sources and perceived information and suggesting the use of nasal decongestants for children under six.

**Results.** A qualitative study, enclosing 27 semi-structured interviews with caregivers having used nasal decongestants for children under six, was performed. The decision to use decongestants is mostly made upon the suggestion of a doctor. Instructions provided by the doctors were diverse, and did not contain detailed information about possible adverse effects. Other sources were pharmacists, the information in Media, medicine information leaflets, lay people and nurses. Evaluation of the information sources varied, ranking from trust to the opinion that most information sources about common cold medicines, including nasal decongestants, are commercially-oriented.

**Conclusions.** Doctors, being an extensively used information source, must educate patients, explaining the adverse effects of decongestants, offering alternatives, as well as other trustworthy information sources for dealing with rhinitis in cases of small children. It is essential to rouse a discussion about the appropriateness of decongestants for small children in Latvia. The involvement of nurses in consultation about common cold diseases could facilitate the work of the doctors.

**Key words:** rhinitis, children, information sources, nasal decongestants

### **Innovative city – promoter of territory development**

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There are several reasons why sustainable development of territory has been delayed. The lack of local strategies, insufficient cooperation in planning of economy development and territory use, weak cooperation of social and employment sectors can be regarded as obstacles for the comprehensive development of territories. Restricted thinking and attitude according to possible development, growth and quality, which establishes lack of activities in innovation culture, creativity and entrepreneurship, can be mentioned as one of the main reasons of the abovementioned problem. For the sustainable development of territories in the European Union there are several types of challenges – demographical and climate changes, mobility of cities, degraded territories and global competitiveness. New challenges are implemented within the framework of limited public sector finances, which are followed by several economic crashes. Nevertheless, society seeks for solutions in order to initiate and continue changes. Latvia is currently implementing new concept of territory development, which are directed towards establishment of pre-conditions for increase of competitiveness. The priority „Polycentric development” established by the initiative of European Commission and co-financed by European Regional Development Fund can be regarded also ne of the instruments for the promotion of city development. Activities provided within the framework of this program are directed towards promotion of territory development in cities, supporting different innovative investments. Initiated investments expand to innovative solution of development problems; they can positively affect not only cities, but also the development of city itself. It is predicted the suggested initiative will allow cities to underline and strengthen its specific potential of development, as well as supplement the acting profiles chosen by other cities. Initiating development of sustainable city net, the strongest development centres have been defined – they can significantly advance the increase of competitiveness, promote its economic capacity and improve the quality of life.

**Key words:** Urban, Rural, and Regional Economics. Planning Models. Planning Policy

**The key sources of economic development in small new EU member states**

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Sustainable development issues are topical in the entire world nowadays. Latvia as a EU member state since 2004 has own economic development trajectory and future growth consequences. In scientific literature the term "small state" is used regarding set of isle micro-states Estonia also is classified as a small state. At the same time there is no correlation between the size of the country and the level of development. The goal of this article is to analyze a set of entrepreneurship indicators between small EU new member states, to identify the similar business stimuli and thus - key development sources.

The analysis is based on data analysis and scientific literature review, research findings, reports of the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the IMF.

To achieve the goal, the author analyzes briefly the concept of the small state in scientific literature, analyzes the key entrepreneurship indicators in small new EU member states, including Latvia and identifies the strengths and negative aspects of the development indicators.

**Key words:** small states; knowledge economy; investments; economic growth

## **Enterprise Technology Absorption Readiness Assessment Model in Latvia**

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The paper aims to assess the feasibility of establishing the technological absorption readiness assessment model and test it with selected companies in Latvia. The approach was based on the World Bank's Korean economy enterprises innovation readiness assessment model, which was adapted to technological absorption readiness model for local enterprises.

The study deals with one of the key business priorities – technological development for business growth and increase of its productivity.

The first part of the study is devoted to the theory of technology transfer, with special emphasis on technology absorption readiness, its origins and factors contained therein. The second part covers technology absorption at company and national level. The third and fourth part of the study describes methodology development process and achieved results.

Developed tool for technology absorption readiness assessment creates a platform to analyse companies' potential to adopt new technology and related needs, monitor identified weaknesses and bottlenecks for further growth and design new policy measures to increase firms competitiveness.

**Key words:** technology transfer, technology absorption, technology absorption readiness, innovation



**Northern Vidzeme municipal development from the perspective of the regional governmental employees**

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The administrative status of small towns has been changed after the administrative territorial reform in Latvia. Greater part of them became the centers of administrative, economical and social development of the new administrative units - counties. The article reflects research carried out to examine the view of the municipalities' officials about social and economical development of the 8 county's towns in Northern Vidzeme. The theoretical framework of the study is based on the Complex approach to the local development investigation. The research study is based on the qualitative research method- semi structured interviews. The results from the study show that developed infrastructure, access of education and qualitative culture environment are the main factors encouraged development. But aging and come- out of inhabitants, bureaucratic obstacles created by state establishments unadvised administrative territorial reform and general distrust toward political institutions are development obstructive factors. However local self- governments support entrepreneurship in their territories according to budgets possibilities and development strategies.

**Key words:** development, county, town, self- government

**Sustainable development of Jelgava local municipality from the point of view of municipality representatives**

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The concept of sustainability has been widely discussed and variously defined.

It is explained usually by the three “pillars” of development: environmental, economical and social. The essential structure in the understanding of sustainable development is given by Australian researchers Yencken and Wilkinson, who distinguish four “pillars”:

- 1) biophysical systems, ensuring the process of life of all of life, including human being;
- 2) economical systems, providing recourses for life;
- 3) social systems, ensuring public life lived in peace and equal;
- 4) political systems, based on honest and democratic decision making to coordinate the activities of the 3 systems mentioned above.

There are different challenges appear for public administration subjects at different levels. The Jelgava Local Municipality is involved in the Baltic Sea Region program’s 2007 – 2013 project “Trans in Form”. The aim of the project is to introduce competitive development concepts for rural regions, small towns and cities. It will raise awareness among both policy makers and citizens about regional attractiveness and potential. The project includes a research component – the discussion of the focus group “New stories and messages about the Jelgava Local Municipality”, where representatives of local administration participated and told their visions of sustainable development in nearest and further future. The article reflects the main results and conclusions from this discussion.

**Key words:** sustainable development, Jelgava Local Municipality, focus group discussion

## **New Business Idea Development Methodology: Case of Latvia and Estonia**

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Innovation is recognized as one of the main sources of economic competitiveness, job creation and wealth creation. According to the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2010, Latvia has the lowest innovation index compared with other EU countries. One of the main reasons for such a low innovation performance is the lack of new innovative business ideas. As crucial component of people's ability to innovate is creativity, our main task is to rise up the level of entrepreneurial creativity. This was implemented in the SIB Net project during four creativity seminars.

Aim of SIB Net project is to promote new innovative high growth firms by encouraging entrepreneurial creativity, providing needed support and evaluating needs for early stage risk finance. Ventspils University College is one of six partners responsible for creativity methodology design.

Series of creativity seminars included four ones aimed for encouraging entrepreneurial creativity to help idea holders to improve and develop their ideas into the real business plans. Participants of creativity seminars were new and nascent entrepreneurs, participants of cross border business idea competition organized within SIB Net project and also tenants of Business Incubators. Creativity seminar consisted of theoretical and practical part but emphasis was more put on practical part – working individually and in teams on creativity exercises and case studies. Almost 50 persons were trained to develop new ideas up to new commercial activities in these creativity seminars. Participants pointed out positive values of seminars: confidence, skills of entrepreneurial behavior, understanding of market opportunities, design of implementation plan.

**Key-words:** development of new business ideas, innovation, creativity, new firm

**Evaluation of the town's attractiveness – a case study of Balvi city**

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When encouraging polycentric development and thinking about sustainable development of cities, there is an increased necessity to carry out much broader evaluations of territories within one research. Such opportunity is offered by evaluation of attractiveness of cities. It is a comparatively new category of economic researches. Within framework of the ESF-financed project “Linguo – Cultural and Socio – Economic Aspects of Territorial Identity in the Development of the Region of Latgale”, research is done with a view to determine the criteria that would enable to evaluate attractiveness of cities (on the basis of impartial and subjective data).

Arrangement and evaluation of territories in the aspect of quality of life or competitiveness is as essential for the inhabitants (evaluating level of quality of life) as for tourists (evaluating safety level) and entrepreneurs (evaluating investment environment). Therefore, users of results of these researches are interested in a certain aspect, but each of them individually does not give a comprehensive concept of the particular territory. In researching city attractiveness, focus is not only on inter-comparison of cities, but an opportunity is also given to find uniqueness or competitive advantage that can help to facilitate its economic growth or to eliminate substantial factors that hinder development. Relevant in research of city attractiveness are the subjective data that show the level of contentment, and such data can be obtained as a result of polling inhabitants.

Employment and contentment are mutually correlating features, but the latter correlates also with city attractiveness. In the research, attention will be devoted to significance of researches of city attractiveness and analysis based on the aspect of employment.

**Key words:** attractiveness of the town, Balvi, satisfaction with life in the town, the Latgale region, employment

**NGO as significant element of Helix model system promoting innovations in rural areas**

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Helix model methodology leads to a systemic and trans-disciplinary approach promoting innovation by means of institutions of the non-governmental sector. A traditional model of implementing innovations "academic circles – business institutions" established linear relationship (Double Helix model), but an analysis of international experience has led to formation of a four element model (Quadruple Helix) variant, due to the conclusion that the success of innovative changes is also determined by the influence of civil society and one of its organizing forces – non-governmental organizations. The author participated in the research on organizations of the non-governmental sector in Latvia that proved that societies formed by various groups of the population are able to involve themselves in the processes of innovative changes as a significant element of the Helix model system.

**Key words:** Helix model, innovative activities, NGO, rural development

## **The Knowledge Commercialisation in Regional Universities: Case of Latvia**

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The aim of this paper is to investigate how knowledge created in regional universities and research institutes is implemented into the commercialization process. Moreover, to find out whether all knowledge acquisition opportunities are used in order to utilise them successfully.

The main tasks of the paper are the following:

- to identify and analyze the main modes of knowledge transfer in the commercialization process;
- to examine and analyze the collaborative facilities between the academic and business environment;
- to view and compare Latvian and Finnish regional universities' development policy;
- to conduct a survey in several Business Incubator companies in Latvian regions to assess their performance in relation to the production of innovative and knowledge intensive products;
- to develop proposals for knowledge transfer promotion between academia and business.

**Key words:** Knowledge Commercialisation, Regional Universities, Knowledge Commercialisation models

### **Eu structural funds role in business development**

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The aim of the article is to illuminate data of ERDF grant scheme “Support for Investment in the Enterprise Development Especially in the Assisted Areas” on impact on the development of business environment of Latvia on the return of grants and their promotion of entrepreneurship; intention of the authors were the development of recommendations for elaboration of grant allocation criteria in Latvia in the future.

**Introduction.** Within the course of analysis attention is paid to such factors as: the official balance sheet data from 2003 to 2007; in 2008 and from 2009 , Regulations of Introduction of EU Structural Funds 2007-2013, strategic guidelines for funding of priority directions of the use, EU Regulations, Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, etc.

**Methods.** Descriptive analysis of business activities of enterprises is carried out, and the reflection of changes in export, added value, labor force wages, etc. and other indicators of regional development were examined and the most significant were described in the article.

**Results and Discussion.** It was invested in various businesses in Latvia and it was found that, allocated grants activity cannot be measured clearly according to the existing criteria. Little or no economic-mathematical methods are used for the assessment of enterprise, business or regional growth in Latvia.

**Conclusions.** The development of the procedure of grant allotment has to be discussed; the criteria of assessment within the scheme have to be discussed, elaborated and adopted . It is necessary to introduce and apply economic-mathematical methods to evaluate return in business.

**Key words:** Business, regional development, investments, support scheme, evaluation methods, return/gain

## **Barriers for use of traditional training evaluation approach in enterprise**

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The need for training evaluation has never been more important than today when economic pressures force the enterprise to carefully consider each investment. Why do companies continue to evaluate the training incompletely or there is no training evaluation at all?

The aim of article is to discover what are the barriers to the use of traditional training evaluation models in enterprise?

The objectives of the article are:

- 1) To find out the current situation of training evaluation practice in enterprises
- 2) To identify the differences between theory and practice in training evaluation;
- 3) To describe the reasons why the gap between theory and practice is so big

The methodological framework is based on the latest literature review. The complexity of the learning, inadequate evaluation methods and organizational barriers are only the few weak links in the current training evaluation processes. Findings: training evaluation may not have a universal approach; each case requires its own individual approach. Being aware of and understanding the reasons for the barriers in training evaluation, HRM practitioners will be able to act critically to further improve the credibility of training evaluation.

The Originality/value: The number of training evaluation barriers identified is valuable for HRM professionals. This is the first step to bridge the gap between academic research and practitioner needs

**Key words:** training evaluation, training, management



### **Green procurement - social aspects – introduction**

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The green economy is a new trend and has social aspects. Also in the public economy, there are the political discussions about passing rules concerning ecological standards. On the other hand implementing these rules cost money. The main aim of this article is the following. The way if and how is possible make green procurement advantageous. There are many ways how to do it in practice. Firstly it is necessary to define what green procurement is and make a public choice about it's support. It is possible to think about three ways how to do it: through tender conditions, evaluations (ecological choice of criterion and its weight which should be at 30 % within the framework the most advantageous offer) and through "green" variants. Public choice for green procurement should have economic reasons. Examples concerning green procurement are mainly found in the field of agriculture products.

**Key words:** Green economy, Suitable development, tender documentation, award of contract, ecological criterions, "green" variants

## **Entrepreneurial university model: case of knowledge flow analysis in VUC**

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In this paper we have presented first of a series of three cases investigating technology commercialisation motives. University – industry knowledge and technology transfer becomes increasingly important and assessed information and collected data provided additional more clear approach to systematise model of the entrepreneurial university on a bases of a case of the regional university college.

Thus we feel that the research merits continuation with aim to investigate how knowledge created in regional universities and research institutes is implemented into commercialization process. Moreover, to find out whether all knowledge acquisition opportunities are used in order to utilise them successfully further.

The main tasks of the paper are the following:

- To identify and analyze the main modes of knowledge transfer in the commercialization process;
- to examine and analyze collaborative facilities between academic and business environment;
- to view and compare the Latvian and Finnish regional universities' development policy;
- to conduct a survey in several Business Incubator companies in Latvian regions to assess their performance in relation to the production of innovative and knowledge intensive products;
- to develop proposals for knowledge transfer promotion between academia and business.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial university, technology transfer, technology commercialisation, open innovation, commercialisation process and university-industry collaboration

## **Social Intelligence Indicators for Addiction Disorder Patients**

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Alcohol and drug addiction is a bio-psycho-social illness that affects a person not only physically but also influences his psyche, thinking and behavior as well as his attitude towards himself and his closest friends and others. Therefore, it is necessary to ascertain the addiction disorder patient's aptitude of social intelligence. This involves three factors: the patient's processing of social information, his social skills and social awareness. Using the Social Intelligence Test, 241 respondents were questioned; all Riga Center of Psychiatry and Addiction Disorder department patients. The mean arithmetical indicators were statistically relevant and significantly higher for males than females (in SIP factor), drug addict indicators were higher than those of alcoholics in all three SI factors. Male drug addict indicators were statistically relevant and significantly higher in the SIP and SA factors when compared to those of male alcoholics. For female drug addicts and alcoholics the SI factors had no significant statistical difference. In this paper, the research results were analyzed. The results allude to socially acceptable ways to answer for the respondents and their difficulties in adequately and critically assessing their own aptitude of social intelligence.

**Key words:** social intelligence, social skills, social information processing, social awareness, alcoholics, drug addicts, substance use disorders, gender

**Ethical dimension in society development – diversity, inclusion, tolerance**  
**Ētikas dimensija sabiedrības attīstībā – dažādība, iekļaušanās, tolerance**

**Civil society crisis in Poland and attitudes towards politicians**

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The unsettlingly high percentage of Polish citizens (especially young and well-educated ones) choosing not to participate in democratic procedures, such as elections, referenda etc., can be named as the basic symptom of a serious civil society crisis observed in Poland nowadays. In search of the antecedents of the crisis, analysts point primarily to the faulty functioning of state institutions. Social psychology suggests a different approach to studying the antecedents: It may be much more important how politicians themselves are perceived and evaluated than what the citizens' opinion about the state institutions is. Thus, the present studies examined young people's attitudes (and the attitudes' predictors) towards politicians – members of three parties representing the main political forces in Poland: PiS (Law and Justice), SLD (Democratic Left Union), and PO (Citizens' Platform). The results consistently demonstrate that Polish politicians, even those representing PO who evoked the respondents' most positive reactions as compared to those from the other two parties, are not too highly-evaluated, particularly because their morality is assessed as low. The personal, usually far from being positive, attitudes towards politicians then might be the main reason why so many Poles choose not to participate in the social-political life of the country.

**Key words:** attitude, competence, dialogue, morality, politicians

## **P. Birkert's "Psychology" (1921) in the Context of New Dimensions**

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The article deals with the structure, subjects and topicalities of the first psychology textbook published in Latvia. The acquired information is reviewed in the context of contemporary science of psychology. "General psychology" (2000) by P. Vorobjovs is used for the text analysis and comparison.

Within the framework of this article an in-depth analysis of the chapter "Feelings and emotions" has been carried out. Also the moral feelings have been taken into account.

The research leads to the conclusion that, regardless of 90 years in between, both of the above mentioned textbooks have many similarities. Almost all psychic processes that are important for the contemporary psychology can be found also in P. Birkerts' "Psychology". However, in some places there are terminological differences – for example, nowadays – "sense", in P. Birkerts' work – "apprehension". Certain difference can be observed regarding the volume of inspected topics.

P. Birkerts practically omits the history of psychology, whereas in P. Vorobjovs' work this topic is very important. In his turn P. Birkerts pays far more attention to such psychic processes as memory, imagination, feelings, and emotions.

The research leads to the conclusions that the main similarities between these textbooks refer to the psychological topics, whereas the main differences – to structure and traditions of a scientific work (methods, history). When discussing the main psychological topics, both authors pay attention to the same ideas but the accents are different.

**Key words:** P. Birkerts, psychology, contemporary psychology, new dimensions

## **The role of philosophy in the contemporary society**

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The paper considers philosophy as a comprehensive system developing together with society. The role of philosophy in the contemporary society consists mainly in its function of developing individual's world-view, the methodological function and the axiological function. Philosophy promotes creative and critical thinking, develops holistic world-view and value orientation in education.

Nowadays together with theoretical aspects of philosophy its practical orientation consisting mainly in ethical dimension is of growing importance. The attitude of Latvian society towards morality and ethics still has the impact of the decades of Soviet occupation. At the same time, the influence of the Western consumer culture is increasing since Latvia regained independence. Further research is necessary on Latvian society's attitude towards moral and ethical issues, as well as on the role of the ethics courses in Latvian schools and universities.

Although the contemporary philosophy of education emphasizes approaches of virtue ethics and character education, it would be wrong to deny the significance of ethical knowledge and understanding, which is the major component of ethics courses. One of the problems making more difficult the teaching of ethics is the widespread attitude of simplified moral relativism in the contemporary society. This attitude results in avoiding rational discussions on ethical issues. Nevertheless the rational analysis of ethical problems is necessary because it develops skills of argumentative discussions and understanding of ethical concepts, as well as gives the opportunity to avoid conformism, simplified clichés and ideological manipulation.

**Key words:** philosophy, the contemporary Latvian society, education, morality, ethics

## **The Barrier-Free Workplace for Disabled People**

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According to the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, to achieve the EU's growth targets, more people with disabilities need to be in paid employment on the open labour market. The purpose of this article is to examine and discuss the main barriers and the reduced opportunities of employment for disabled people from employers' side. With in this context, on the basis of a literature review and experts' interviews has been to determine the particular criteria for an identification of the main barriers and reducing such, as well as suggestions and recommendations for further improvements specifically in Latvia. The study based on research Information Systems Management Institute conducted within European Community Leonardo da Vinci projects 'Ability not Disability in Employment' (2003-2005), 'Increasing Employability of Disabled People' (2008-2010) and 'Ability not Disability in the Workplace' (2009-2011). Three surveys were carried out, both analyzing the situation in Latvia in the context of the European Union. The first survey compared the situation in Latvia and Luxemburg, the second – the situation in Latvia, Bulgaria and Turkey, the EU candidate country, and the third – the situation in Latvia, Germany, Italy and Lithuania. The abstract is prepare with the financial support of the EU Commission.

**Key words:** Latvia, barrier-free workplace, main barriers, reducing barriers

## **Society "for" and "against" legalization of euthanasia**

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On the appearance of the term of “*euthanasia*” in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most complicated and discussed questions was formulated within all of history, i.e. If a human has any rights to take another life because of compassion of even to personally request the death. The answer to this phenomenon is not found even nowadays, dividing the society into supporters and deniers of euthanasia.

The issue about the possible legalization of euthanasia entailed an especially active discussion among physicians, lawyers, philosophers and parsons, and as a result the analysis covers up, that until now the Christian religion expresses categorical rejections to any aspirations to legalize euthanasia, physicians and lawyers thoughts about this question remain rather contradictory.

One stream of physician consider that the Hippocratic Oath, which includes straightforward prohibition of practicing euthanasia, has become archaic and it does not correspond to the rapid development of medicine. On the other hand, another school of thought supposes that euthanasia contradicts the physician’s mission and for this reason should not be authorized.

Furthermore, even among lawyers the opinions of the dual nature of this issue could be found considering euthanasia. Some of lawyers defend the belief that any human has the right not only to life, but also to death; another fraction of lawyers opposes the current point of view by presenting the argument that the legalization of euthanasia would be a stimulus for the growth of crime and that is why its legalization should not be allowed.

Even if in such a complicated question a single point of view hardly ever will be achieved, the constructive discussions promote not only the appropriate legal development of euthanasia, but also characterize our attitudes towards the question of death with dignity.

**Key words:** euthanasia, society, ethics



## Youth integration as value transformation in multicultural society

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Under the influence of scientific thought's variety in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, several paradigms of youth integration exist simultaneously: recognition and belonging – in the industrial community, participation – in post-industrial civic community, communication of culture dialogue updating the aspect of values in post-industrial multicultural community.

Building upon the theoretical analysis of integration's paradigm a theoretical model that corresponds to the multicultural environment, where youth integration is concerned with participation in value identification in the communication of culture dialogue at the individual (personality), micro (family, class, group), mezo (school) and macro (region, country) context, and the model of pedagogical intervention for the facilitating of participation in the communication of culture dialogue for the identification of integration as opportunity value have been presented in the research.

Opportunity values have been emphasised and analysed beside the terminal values (the objective) and the instrumental ones (the means), as it relates to values' classification according to their objectives and tasks, (*Rokeach*, 1972, 1973, 1979) where the youth identify integration with new opportunities.

Integration was more associated with a political and social context until now and therefore was identified as a terminal or instrumental value. Integration as an opportunity value is associated with the individual context and is especially topical in a crisis situation as it is concerned with one's career, personal development, success, self-implementation and personal well-being in the period of transition.

The youth identify integration as an opportunity value: if social-pedagogical support has been provided to them, and if it is effective, according to the work principles of social pedagogy (*Bohnisch*, 1992), the basic principles of pedagogical behavior in communication with youth (*Fend*, 1993) and pedagogical strategies: (*Šulcs*, 2005), encouragement, respect, understanding, recognition, collaboration, trust and media are used as the means of social-pedagogical support.

**Key words:** multicultural environment, youth, integration, terminal, instrumental, opportunity values, social-pedagogical support

### **The problem of personality and professional identity in Plato's works**

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In order to understand the essence of a scientific problem better it is useful to follow the sources of its origin and the ways of its development. In our work we try to find the answer to the question how personality and professional identity was understood by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. The method of the research was the analysis of works both by Plato and by the modern authors writing about him. We may note that Plato did not use the notion „identity”. But his conception of the development of the personality includes the criteria of the modern understanding of identity (time and social aspects). According to Plato, the basis of the personality and professional development of a person is his/her understanding of justice. The principle of justice, in its turn, provides the sustainable development of society.

**Key words:** Plato, personality identity, professional identity, principle of justice, sustainable development