

President of Latvia: scarce science funding prevents research in numerous fields significant for Latvia

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On 26 October, President of Latvia Egils Levits met with Dr. Phys. Gita Rēvalde, Director of Latvian Research Council, in the Riga Castle to discuss funding, governance and development of science.

One of the main topics of conversation was selection and funding of research projects. Gita Rēvalde explained that impartiality is ensured by inviting international experts to participate in assessment of project ideas submitted by researchers. President Levits pointed out that there is a need to use specific criteria in different disciplines. Criteria based on unique features of the discipline. One-size-fits-all approach is not suitable for exact, human or social sciences. It does not support their development.

President Levits and Director Rēvalde also talked about funding of science. Funding constraints are a permanent problem every year. Due to lack of necessary funding, many excellent project ideas developed by local researchers are left without support. It is a waste of researchers' time, which they are forced to spend on project applications. It also leads to lack of appropriate research in many strategic areas for Latvia. Moreover, as far as national research programmes are concerned, especially on Latvian history, these programmes are not developing because of constant shortage of public funding for science that has existed for many years now. As a modern and developed 21st century state, Latvia should not allow that.

President Levits concluded the meeting by wishing the newly-appointed Director of Latvian Research Council success in managing such a broad sector and urging to focus on boosting the prestige of science.



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