

President of Latvia: school children should be able to borrow computers from school library just like books

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Domestic policy

Egils Levits



On 15 December, President of Latvia Egils Levits hosted the Council meeting of Cooperation Memorandum *Computer for every child* at the Riga Castle. It was the fourth and the last Council meeting this year. 'Our ultimate goal is to create a sustainable scheme that allows school children to borrow computer for learning just like any other textbook they need from school library,' stressed President Levits.

Egils Levits praised Council for being a good example of successful collaboration between several public and local administration bodies on common goal. President of Latvia thanked Council members for their work and expressed hope that Council will manage to find best practical, technical and systemic solutions. 'Although this is a long-term endeavour, this is a societally extremely important project,' underlined President Levits. Ieva Ilves, Presidential Adviser for Information and Digital Policy, underlined: 'although project targets Year 7-9 students, we should continuously strive to expand it to primary school level to let children acquire vital computer skills from early age to keep up with times and the needs that arise'.

Minister for Education and Science Anita Muižniece presented the results of computer procurement. The following discussion focused on proposals and comments from Chair of the Saeima Education, Culture and Science Committee Arvils Ašeradens, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development Toms Artūrs Plešs, President of the Latvian Association of Local Governments Gints Kaminskis. President Kaminskis underlined the need to focus also on the parallel on-going project, which seeks to equip all schools with internet access, i.e., provide the broadband internet connection or the so-called 'last mile'.

Council members also discussed the report on the first phase of computer procurement project or the tender submission stage, which concluded on 6 December. Council called for evaluation of regional cost and procurement experiences, which are important for further decisions and actions. Council also agreed that a single computer procurement monitoring is vital for achieving greater precision in procuring computers, analysing specific needs and usage data.

Egils Levits, President of Latvia, Ilga Šuplinska, Minister for Education and Science, Artūrs Toms Plešs, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Jānis Reirs, Minister for Finance, Arvils Ašeradens, Chair of the Saeima Education, Culture and Science Committee, and Gints Kaminskis, President of Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments signed the Memorandum of Cooperation 'Computer for every child' on 14 May 2021 in the Riga Castle. According to the Memorandum of Cooperation, the initiative will be coordinated by Ieva Ilves, Adviser to the President of Latvia for Information and Digital Policy, in its first year. Council is comprised of representatives from Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Finance, Saeima Education, Culture and Science Committee and the Latvian Association of Local Governments.

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