

## President of Latvia expects precise criteria for municipal co-funding of private education providers from the Cabinet of Ministers

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President of Latvia Egils Levits has signed the bill ‘Amendments to the Education Law’ adopted by the parliament, Saeima, on 14 July 2022 into law, requesting Cabinet of Ministers to provide precise criteria and balanced requirements regarding municipal co-funding of private education providers to eliminate lack of efficiency and transparency in the implementation of municipal funding.

Amendments to the Education Law stipulate precise procedure for municipal co-funding of accredited education providers, i.e., allocation of operational costs for providing basic general education to children residing and registered in the municipality.

The new law expands the scope of private providers eligible for municipal funding, and President of Latvia also reminds that, according to the law, Cabinet of Ministers is still entitled to (1) define the precise contracting procedures for cases when municipality needs to cover the operational costs of private education providers, and (2) determine the groups of children/students whose education costs shall be covered by the private providers themselves.

Provisions of the law, its objectives and spirit also explicitly indicate that not all private education providers will be eligible for such financial support from local government. These provisions apply only to special cases when children need special learning environment or learning methods to obtain education.

Given the above, President of Latvia has sent a formal letter to the Prime Minister Krišjānis Kariņš, urging Cabinet of Ministers to ‘immediately start working on well-balanced and precise implementation of the mandate given by the parliament and deliver well-informed and detailed regulation for the application of the Article 27<sup>1</sup> of the Section 17.3 of the Education Law to achieve the goals defined therein, while also preventing misuse of municipal funds and potential attempts to receive local funding despite the

objectives and the purpose of the Law’.

Letter of Egils Levits mentions the school network reforms initiated by the Cabinet of Ministers. The on-going reform will affect many Latvian municipalities. According to President, it is important to ensure that the desired quality of education and efficiency of the schooling system are achieved. ‘This reform is vital for sustainability of Latvia. Further successful implementation of the reform requires close attention of the Cabinet of Ministers. This will also include precise procedure for funding private education providers. It is important to remember that not all private education providers are eligible for financial support of the local government. Cabinet of Ministers must create a framework that ensures efficient and transparent application of municipal co-funding allocation criteria defined in the Education Law with respect to private education providers,’ stresses the letter of the President.

President also urges the Cabinet of Ministers to monitor the application of new rules. First 12 month following the adoption of the law will be critical. Cabinet of Ministers should immediately follow up with additional regulations or legislative initiatives to eliminate any legal gaps or attempts to access municipal funding against the objectives and purpose of the Law as soon as such problems arise.

President of Latvia also expects the Cabinet of Ministers to report back on drafting of the regulation and application of the new Law.

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