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Transforming academic careers in Latvia

Progress Report Two



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Introduction

This progress report (Progress Report Two) forms part of Output 5 of the project “*Support for Institutionalising the New Academic Careers Framework in Latvia*” (23LV24), funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), and implemented by the OECD, in cooperation with the Reform and Investment Task Force of the European Commission. It follows from Progress Report One, prepared and disseminated in August 2025, which summarised the project activities carried out from January – June 2025, and the findings from them. This progress report provides a more comprehensive elaboration of the Community of Practice pilot phase than provided in previous documents relating to the project. It reports on the pilot activities carried out in 2025 and offers some considerations that could be taken into account for its full establishment in the coming year, based on the discussions that took place during the pilot period.

The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

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1. Introduction

When higher education and research institutions exchange knowledge effectively, they develop a common understanding of issues and challenges, paving the way for creating best practices to address them. Nurturing a sense of community among academic staff and providing platforms for networking and professional learning promotes greater staff satisfaction and sense of belonging, along with better student outcomes (OECD, 2024^[1]). As highlighted in previous outputs of this project, successful and complete implementation of Latvia's reforms to academic careers is likely to not only require increased financial investment but strengthened collaboration across institutions and stakeholders.

In Latvia, several bodies and organisations provide focal points for interinstitutional discussion and formal collaboration on academic career issues. These include the Council of Higher Education, Council of Science, Council of Rectors of Latvia, the Research Latvia initiative, the Latvian Association of Young Researchers and the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees. Other cooperative efforts that support the academic career reforms are carried out as individual projects (e.g. the COMPAC project highlighted in Progress Report One). However, as the readiness report for this project highlighted, expansion of existing opportunities for informal collaboration and practice-based interaction would be welcomed by a large share of academic staff in Latvia.

A Community of Practice could help to fulfil the expressed interest among Latvian academic staff for greater interconnection. Research indicates that such communities can provide a more flexible and effective form of communication and collaboration than traditional bureaucratic organisations (Hanson, 2023^[2]) (Wang, 2024^[3]). Communities of Practice focused on knowledge- and practice- sharing among academic staff are already commonplace across the European Higher Education Area. For example, the recently established FOREU4ALL is a Community of Practice uniting European Universities alliances and higher education stakeholders to enhance collaboration, share best practices, and support evidence-based policy development through peer learning, guidelines, and targeted initiatives. (European Education Area, 2024^[4]). The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) has also established Communities of Practice that bring together staff, experts, and students to exchange practices, share experiences, and contribute to capacity building in professional higher education (EURASHE, n.d.^[5]).

A nationally endorsed and supported Community of Practice has the potential to become a key focal point for dialogue and grassroots collaboration on issues of mutual interest to academic staff in Latvia, providing greater flexibility and responsiveness than its more structured formal organisations. It could support practitioner-led cooperation on issues that affect job satisfaction, professional development and career prospects of academic staff and bring greater visibility to the breadth and depth of the work that academics do. For this reason, the current TSI project established as one its deliverables:

“design an appropriate community of practice (CoP) modelThe CoP should be representative of the sector as a whole and comprise members that are invested in progressing the reform agenda, sharing perspectives on the implementation process and willing to collaborate, advocate for, and positively influence the reform process. The proposed model will include mechanisms for collaboration, engagement and knowledge-sharing on reform implementation between the institutions and stakeholders concerned with the reform....[The CoP's] design and development will be carried out with a view to promoting its sustainability as a permanent community that will continue to operate beyond the lifetime of the project, and that may potentially in the long-term work together on progressing other areas of reform.”

Various project activities relating to the development of a Community of Practice for Latvian academic staff took place in 2025, including two key events:

- The Community of Practice concept prepared by the Project Team was piloted at an in-person workshop which took place on 29 April 2025 in Riga, bringing together more than 30 representatives of academic staff from across Latvian higher education institutions.
- An inaugural Community of Practice conference in Riga took place on November 7th, 2025 in the Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, which included an international expert keynote speaker engaged through the project for the event.

This report summarises considerations for the creation of a Community of Practice for Latvian academic staff, as developed by the project team, and reports the findings from the two events mentioned above. It culminates with a brief reflection on the future development of the Community. The implementation roadmap developed for this project (Output 3) proposes more concrete actions that could be taken to formally establish the Community and position it as a key conduit for capacity-building and professional development of academic staff in the coming years.

2. Considerations for Latvia on Community of Practice formation

The following subsections summarise the proposals related to different aspects of establishing a Community of Practice model for academic staff in Latvia, as developed by the project team. The proposals cover objectives, labelling, membership, legal form, governance, administration and potential topics of interest to the Community.

2.1. What should be the objective of the Community?

Communities of Practice serve a variety of different purposes for members and for hosting organisations or systems. They are often thought of as being focused on a particular topic but have also been defined more broadly as groups with common interests or objectives. A recent literature review on Communities of Practice in higher education defined them as “a group of people who share information, ideas, resources, experience, and learnings about a common or shared area of interest. The issues or interests a CoP might address vary across a spectrum of everyday challenges, new developments or opportunities, and emerging trends, while maintaining a focus on extracting and refining best practices within the higher education landscape” (Rettler-Page, 2023^[6]).

In Latvia’s case, the Community of Practice proposal has been framed within the context of the academic career reforms, which aim to establish academia in Latvia as an inclusive, attractive and sustainable career option for both existing staff and new entrants. The Community of Practice should ideally collaborate in ways that progress and positively influence the reform agenda, empowering academic staff to play an active role in shaping and implementing reforms and benefiting from them. With that in mind, a potential overarching objective could be:

To foster a lasting Community where academic staff in Latvia can engage in dialogue, practice exchange, mutual learning, and collaboration in a way that meaningfully enhances their career experience and affirms their expertise and agency as the key drivers of high-quality teaching and research.

2.2. Which title or label for the Community would best align with the objective?

Once an objective is agreed, consideration could next turn to the title or label for the Community that best communicates that objective. While during the specification of the TSI project, the term “**Community of Practice**” emerged as the initial preferred label to describe a practitioner-focused collaborative initiative

addressing academic career issues, “Community of Practice” is not the only possible label to attach to an initiative with the objective defined in the previous section. Other terms to describe a collaborative organisation addressing academic career issues could be defined that might be more familiar in the Latvian context.

An alternative label suggested during project team discussions is a “**National Board of Experts**” on Academic Career Issues, as the term “expert” is used quite frequently in Latvia. A second possibility that has achieved success in practice is the “National Forum” label used to focus collaborative efforts in Ireland’s higher education system¹. Labelling the Community initiative as a “National Forum”, a “National Board” or another form of distinctive “branding” may offer some strategic advantages over the term “Community of Practice”, elevating its perceived authority and systemic relevance and underlining its importance as part of the landscape of the reformed system. On the other hand, it would be important to ensure that referring to a “national” organisation would not remove the connotation of a community that is practitioner-led and a less formal means of sharing knowledge and practice. Membership of the Community would ideally remain open to all volunteer participants and membership procedures should avoid becoming overly bureaucratic and rigid.

2.3. Who should the Community members be and what should they do?

The project team, in developing proposals for the Community, concluded that questions of membership and activities of the Community should be addressed together, as the decisions on the activities in which the Community should engage would likely influence the decisions on membership.

Collaborative initiatives for academic staff should seek to achieve as wide a positive impact as possible within the system by engaging in different classes of activity. For example, the Community could address an existing need for clarity of information by establishing itself as **a key conduit for information synthesis and diffusion** on policy developments in Latvia with implications for academic staff. For example, a Community could synthesise and present information on reforms in a clear and accessible way and ensuring that this information is effectively disseminated. This would create a new horizontal channel of communication within the Latvian system and could help address some of the gaps in information flow and clarity identified in the previous project activities.

Another key role for the Community could be **facilitating practice-sharing opportunities** coordinated by Community members. These could be in the form of workshops, seminars or conferences that allow for practice presentations from across the system on key issues of relevance to academic staff. In addition to practice-sharing opportunities, the Community could also identify areas where **collective professional development** would be beneficial for the members. Professional development opportunities could take the form of advisory sessions or training workshops organised through the Community and offered to members. Ideally, professional development opportunities organised collectively would benefit at least one staff member in each institution, helping to diffuse their impact across the system.

In time, as the Community develops and establishes itself as a centre of collective expertise on academic career issues, it could begin to conduct **analysis and research** on topics within its remit, with a view to building and sharing new practitioner knowledge on relevant areas in the work of academic staff. The results of Community analysis and research could feed into the policy deliberations of the MoES, helping

¹ A National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was first established in Ireland in 2012 as an academically-led grassroots initiative with the goal of informing decision-makers, providing support for policy priorities, and developing a network and professional development framework for those who teach in higher education. The National Forum operated for many years as an independent initiative before being established on a sustainable basis under the aegis of Ireland’s Higher Education Authority in 2022 (National Forum, n.d.^[10])

Komentēja [SC1]: I have doubt about this. Is there no risk of overlap with authorities? Does it not sound too official or vertical? For a happy few only? Does it capture the grass-root and informal nature of the CoP?

Komentēja [GG2R1]: I am inclined to agree, but here the intention was just to report on alternatives that were considered. In the pilot, the term ‘Community of Practice’ was heavily favoured and it is the label that has stuck in the end.

to ensure that the practitioner view is reflected in policymaking and that the Community supports beneficial change in the Latvian higher education environment.

If the Community adopts all the activities mentioned above into its terms of reference, then a **tiered membership structure** is implied, reflecting different levels of engagement and responsibility. For example, the Community could mainly comprise low-commitment “general members” who receive updates and information from the Community and may occasionally participate in advisory sessions or practice-sharing offered through the Community. A second tier of more committed membership could act as a board of “leading practitioners”, selected according to their specific expertise or other criteria, for example, as representatives of their individual institution. Leading practitioners would play an active and visible role in the Community, helping to shape and distribute information to Community members, organising practice-sharing and advisory sessions, and in time, leading Community research and analysis. The leading practitioner role could provide staff with valuable opportunities to demonstrate expertise across a broad spectrum of academic activity, supporting recognition and career advancement, and, over time, helping to contribute to a more holistic assessment of academic careers.

2.4. What sort of legal form could the Community take and how could it be financed?

Consideration should be given to the most advantageous legal status for the Community and approaches to financing its operations. The legal form chosen could be determined in accordance with the agreement on its activities (as per the previous section), having regard for its intended governance and administration (as per the next section) and considering the plans for financing its operation.

Initially it may be most efficient to administer and fund the Community as an offshoot of an existing formal body or organisation (for example, under the Council of Higher Education, or an individual university). In the longer term, a decision would need to be made about whether Community should operate permanently under the umbrella of an existing Latvian organisation or whether it should be established as an independent entity (for example, as a public benefit organisation, association or foundation). Potentially, establishing an independent entity could broaden its scope of work and expand non-state funding opportunities, if that is a desired pathway for financing the Community.

In the project's preliminary stages, a budget proposal could be drawn up to estimate the Community's basic resource requirements (e.g. the full-time equivalent of secretarial support required, cost estimates and funding levels needed to provide the minimum level of activities). Resourcing options could include:

- a recurring contribution from state funding which could cover the basic administrative costs of the Community and provide a minimal level of resources for practice-sharing and advisory sessions.
- financial or in-kind contributions from individual higher education institutions. Financial contributions could be assessed and paid annually. Alternatively, a resourcing model could comprise a financial contribution from the state only and in-kind contributions from higher education institutions (such as providing administrative support or hosting events on an alternating basis).
- attracting external funding for analytical and research projects operated through the Community, which could finance the time of the leading practitioners working on them.

Each of these options would require deliberation and legal review to ensure that they could work effectively within the current framework governing the higher education and research system (for example, rules governing the transfer of funding between entities and the charging of staff costs). Potentially, there are some good organisational structures in place already in the Latvian system that can help inspire the future development of the legal and financial framework for the Community. The project team proposes that the Community members should prepare an estimate of the cost of its intended activities, once they are

Komentēja [SC3]: Can this project help them with a benchmark? A range of costs for some types of activities? Foreign examples (e.g. of fee level)? How can we provide them with unit cost indications (e.g. for a secretariat/year; a peer-exchange session/day? An advisory activity/hour...)?

Komentēja [GG4R3]: It would indeed be helpful, but quite difficult. Experience in other countries shows that the main resource to be covered in such initiatives is staff time, the cost of which will vary considerably across countries. As a result, fee or cost examples from other jurisdictions may have limited relevance for Latvia unless they are appropriately adjusted, for example through the use of relevant purchasing power parities. The amount of staff time will also vary in accordance with the scope of activities proposed by the CoP members. In these circumstances, the Community members might be best placed to prepare a realistic estimate of costs, based on their local knowledge.

agreed, and a plan for resourcing itself from state funds, contributions (financial or in-kind) from higher education institutions, and project-based funding (from public, private or international sources).

2.5. How could governance and administration work?

The specific labels, roles and responsibilities of the governing body of the Community would need to adhere to the requirements associated with its legal status. The activities of the Community could be overseen by an Executive Board, which provides strategic guidance and expert advice to members, advocates for the Community's activities and works to raise its visibility in the national landscape. The Executive Board would ideally include representatives from each of the key stakeholder bodies, identified in the inception report for this project as follows:

- Latvian Council of Higher Education
- Latvian Council of Science
- The Latvian Council of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions
- Leadership of the Latvian state-founded higher education institutions and state-founded research organisations
- Association of Young Scientists in Latvia
- Latvian Student Union
- Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees

An Executive Board would help to ensure coordination and information flow across the respective organisations. It could also include members drawn from the leading practitioners, a secretary with responsibility for carrying out the basic administration of the Community and a finance officer to prepare its annual budget and manage its financial operations.

Given the limited resources available within Latvian higher education institutions, administration of the Community should be simplified as much as possible to make it resource efficient. One way to support this is to develop at the outset **a simple and predictable schedule** for the activities of the Community. For example:

- the Executive Committee could meet twice yearly: once to review and evaluate recent activities, approve the budget and provide strategic advice for the development of an annual plan for the Community, and once to conduct a mid-year review of the Community activities.
- leading practitioners could meet every quarter to plan and coordinate their activities.
- practice-sharing and/or advisory sessions for the general membership could be planned to take place every two or three months, with an annual conference providing a fixed opportunity for the general membership to meet.

2.6. What specific topics could be addressed by a Community of Practice?

Ultimately, the decision on priority topics to be addressed in its work should lie with the Community itself. Ideally the Community would focus on topics where it can add the most value. For example, it could develop principles or standards on academic career issues that can serve as a reference point for the whole system. In this way, it could minimise duplicative effort across institutions and help to provide clarity across the system on best practices relating to topics of common importance.

The project team, based on analysis and interaction with stakeholders and academic staff, has identified several potential priorities for discussion. These topics are outlined below, as a starting point for further dialogue.

- **Use of emerging technologies in teaching and learning:** Collaborative initiatives on teaching and learning among academic staff are becoming more widespread within national higher education systems. They can be particularly useful for mapping current practices and sharing strategies to integrate emerging technologies (such as AI, Virtual /Augmented Reality and new equipment) into teaching practice.
- **Developing discipline-specific teaching approaches:** The Community could facilitate new connections between members interested in working together to develop teaching and learning approaches (for example, problem-based learning) within specific disciplinary contexts.
- **Inclusive teaching and student support practices:** The Community could provide a forum for exchanging practices, professional development or conducting research that can support more inclusive teaching and student support within institutions, promoting greater student success.
- **Wellbeing and stress management of academic staff:** Ensuring well-being of academic staff presents a pervasive challenge in Latvia, as in many other countries. The project team noted especially the stress levels in early-career academics (including doctoral students) in producing research publications that meet criteria set by institutions. The Community could tackle this issue in several ways – for example by providing workshops/advisory sessions on managing research-related stress or proposing new approaches to research assessment.
- **Supervision of research projects:** The availability of high-quality supervision for master's and doctoral research projects was identified as a challenge during previous activities of this project. Many doctoral schools are individually organising training for supervisors. The Community could play a role in the development of cross-institutional training on supervision, which could help to achieve economies of scale in the Latvian system and could also ensure that institutions can efficiently organise discipline-specific supervisor training.
- **Transversal skills training:** Certain transversal skills, such as innovative thinking, interpersonal skills and communication, are becoming increasingly vital for academic staff to progress in their careers and will be fundamental to ensuring the successful embedding of the many reforms in Latvia's higher education system. The Community could contribute to the establishment of a national professional development framework for academic staff, which would identify priority transversal skills and provide opportunities for staff to develop these skills.

3. Progress on the development of the Community of Practice

3.1. Piloting the project team proposals

Workshop approach

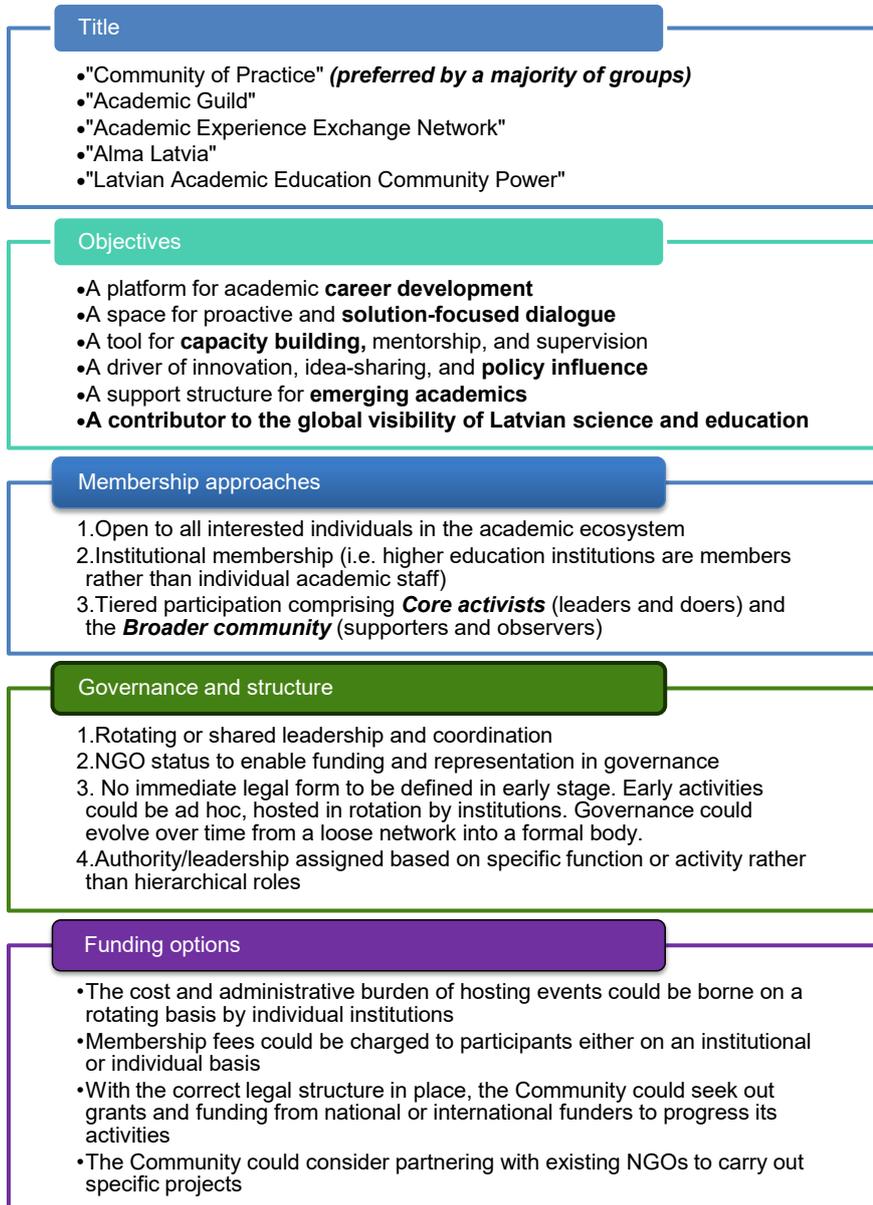
In April 2025, the project team proposals were piloted during a workshop in Riga, planned and organised by the project team in collaboration with an expert facilitator (Dr. Anita Gaile, business coach and change management lecturer). The workshop brought together 38 representatives from higher education institutions, academic staff, support personnel, and related organisations. The participants were chosen to reflect a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, career stages, institution types and job roles. They were tasked with exploring the value and potential structure of a Community of Practice for academic staff. Participants were assigned into groups of 4-5 people at random and each group was tasked with developing prototype models for the Community, taking guiding questions and considerations laid out by the project team (as per Section 2 above) as a basis.

Teams worked in 45-minute sprints to design their prototypes. Each team then presented its ideas to two other teams to gather feedback and made final updates to the proposals based on that input. Finally, teams presented their proposals to the full group. The following section outlines key messages from workshop participants, drawn from their deliberations during the session.

Conclusions from workshop participants

Participants collectively articulated several options and ideas for the development of the Community of Practice, following reflection on the project team proposals and their own co-creation exercises during the workshop. Figure 1 summarises the main ideas that groups identified relating to the title of the Community, its objectives, approaches to membership, governance, structure and funding.

Figure 1. Summary of ideas and options for the CoP from workshop participants



Workshop participants also expanded on several of the ideas summarised in Figure 1, highlighting key considerations for developing the terms of reference and working modalities for the CoP. These reflections were informed by the broader context of academic careers in Latvia, where individual academic staff often face high workloads and seek to have a stronger voice in decision-making processes. The main points raised can be summarised as follows:

- The CoP should not just become another organisational or representative body but should be designed as **a body that can achieve meaningful impact on the sector through its actions**. Primarily, it should serve to strengthen academic networks and build trust among participants, contribute to improved teaching and research quality, and help to support the next generation of academic staff.
- Open and regular dialogue, both within academia and with society at large, was noted by the group as essential for defending academic freedom, upholding scientific integrity, and reinforcing the social role of academia. A CoP was identified as **a potential platform to unify and amplify the academic voice, particularly during periods of political or policy change**.
- It is important that the Community offers **diverse engagement formats** to foster meaningful collaboration and knowledge exchange across its membership. Examples of proposed formats include seminars, forums, and workshops on specific topics, as well as summer schools and masterclasses that provide in-depth learning opportunities. Annual retreats were suggested to build community and create a recurring opportunity for Community members to engage in strategic reflection.
- **Thematic and interdisciplinary working groups** are considered essential for tackling some cross-cutting issues - for example, mentoring and supervision, career development, cross-sectoral collaboration, advocacy for academic freedom and managing innovation and paradigm shifts within the sector). It was proposed that these groups could engage collectively in policy or position development to influence broader systemic change.
- CoP-related activities need to be **funded in a way that does not place an additional burden on individuals or institutions**. There were also concerns raised about the extent to which higher education institutions would be willing and able to invest in the Community. Overall, participants favoured starting with a voluntary and low-cost structure but acknowledged that long-term sustainability would likely require more formal arrangements such as NGO status, membership fees, and project-based financing.

Finally, the project team notes that the workshop was oversubscribed, with additional places made available to meet demand. Participants expressed strong appreciation for the opportunity to convene and discuss the development of the CoP, as well as clear support for continuing these discussions (Figure 2). This indicates an apparently strong appetite among Latvian academic staff to have opportunities to get together and discuss topics relevant for their careers and future professional development, and a broadly positive perception among staff of the benefits of doing so.

Figure 2. Selection of comments from workshop participants after the pilot workshop.



Note: Comments were translated by the workshop organiser from Latvian to English. In total, 30 of the 38 participants provided feedback on the event. All comments received conveyed positive sentiment towards the workshop.

3.2. Inception of the Community of Practice

Discussions between the project team and stakeholders, including during the pilot workshop, highlighted the need for continued deliberation on issues related to the permanent establishment of the Community of Practice. Many participants expressed a preference for an initial informal phase, allowing for experimentation with different forms of collective activity and additional time to determine the Community's permanent legal form and operational arrangements.

Bearing these factors in mind, the project team proposed a two-phase establishment of the Community. It was agreed that the Community would first enter **a preliminary inception phase**, lasting the remainder of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026 (i.e. aligned to the end of the current TSI project), before being established more permanently in mid-2026. The Latvian Council of Higher Education agreed to take responsibility for the initial development of the Community during the inception phase, supported and advised as necessary by the project team.

The OECD secretariat met with and advised Council members on multiple occasions during 2025. The Council members proposed that **the inception period should focus on “artificial intelligence use in academia” as a first priority topic** to engage members. The choice of topic reflects the fact that the emergence of large language models and other forms of artificial intelligence is a live issue of concern and

urgent debate across the Latvian higher education system. Academics in Latvia are increasingly focused on understanding the capabilities of this technology and its impact on teaching, learning, and research. Council members also expressed strong interest in its potential to improve efficiency, especially as higher education institutions face ongoing budget constraints and the need to do more with fewer resources.

3.3. Inaugural conference

The inaugural conference of the Community of Practice took place on November 7th, 2025 at the Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, with the theme of “*Artificial Intelligence in Latvian Higher Education: From Implementation to Governance*”. The project team assisted the Council in planning the conference and arranged for an international expert in AI strategy for higher education (Prof. Mairéad Pratschke) to travel to Riga to deliver the keynote speech and to provide advice on an ad-hoc basis for the conference attendees on AI issues.

The conference served as a focal point for national-level information gathering on the use of AI, through a national survey of academics coordinated by the Council of Higher Education in October 2025, the results of which were presented at the event. It also provided an opportunity for Latvian academic staff and students to share practices related to their use of AI and to collectively discuss and reflect on key AI-related issues, supported by the contributions and framing provided by the international expert.

The conference helped to highlight some key messages for Latvian higher education institutions and academics going forward, as they begin to develop organisation-level AI strategies (Box 1). Annex A contains the programme for the conference.

Box 1. Key insights relating to AI strategy in Latvian higher education from the inaugural Community of Practice event.

The inaugural Community of Practice event for Latvian academics successfully launched critical discussions surrounding AI governance and the strategic alignment of AI within Latvian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Making progress on AI policy, pedagogy and practice within HEIs will be crucial for fully leverage the potential of international and national AI-related initiatives and infrastructures, such as the EU’s Apply AI Strategy (European Commission, 2025^[7]) and Latvia’s AI Factory Antenna (AIFA-LAT) (EuroHPC, 2025^[8]).

The event highlighted the need for Latvia’s HEIs to plan strategically for AI integration in all of its activities, taking into account the rapidly developing ecosystem, which includes the first regulatory requirements related to the EU AI Act² coming into force in August 2026 and the emergence of competing large, small and local language models (such as the LLM products developed by Latvian company Tilde³). Latvian HEIs should be at the centre of this ecosystem, fulfilling three key functions:

1. **AI Literacy (Ethical & Technological):** building baseline AI capabilities for students and staff in compliance with the EU AI Act.
2. **AI + Domain Intelligence:** updating teaching, assessment and research practice and pedagogical alignment of AI tools and systems.

² <https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/>

³ <https://tilde.ai/about-tilde/>

3. AI @ Work (Intelligence Augmentation): upskilling and preparing graduates for an AI-driven economy.

Most conference attendees seeking advice from the international expert were higher education administrators, indicating strong demand for guidance on institution-level strategy and AI governance. The conference also provided a forum for academic staff and students to share emergent practices and highlighted the fact that AI integration in teaching and learning is vastly different from AI in administration. A successful Community of Practice should continue to provide a non-competitive space where educators can share struggles with AI, learn from each other and co-design pilot initiatives.

Overall, the conference, guided by the tone of the keynote speech, offered an inspiring and engaging introduction to discussions on the development of AI strategies and policies in Latvian higher education. To sustain this momentum, it will be crucial to organise regular follow-up activities and create additional opportunities for sharing best practice for both academic staff and administrative teams responsible for institution-level policy implementation.

Source: Compiled by the project team based on feedback from conference organisers and the international expert (Professor Mairéad Pratschke).

4. Reflection and next steps

In 2025, the concept of the academic staff Community of Practice was developed, discussed, and piloted with input from academic staff and stakeholders, leading to the successful launch of the Community in its inception phase. At the time of writing (December 2025) the Community remains under the responsibility of the Latvian Council of Higher Education. Council members indicated to the project team their intention to establish Working Groups of Community members in 2026 to progress on some individual topics.

As per the agreed plan for the Community's establishment, the Community should move to a more permanent footing in 2026. One potential risk to its permanent establishment arises from planned changes to the governance structures of the Latvian higher education system in 2026. Current legislative proposals under consideration in Latvia envisage the discontinuation of the Council of Higher Education from September 2026, with its advisory functions to be reallocated to the Latvian Human Capital Development Council and its administrative responsibilities to be distributed between the Latvian Academic Information Centre and higher education institutions (Ministry of Education and Science, 2025^[9]).

If these proposals are realised, and given their imminence, care will be needed to ensure that the permanent establishment of the Community of Practice is not delayed or put at risk. The project team recommends that the establishment of the Community is integrated into plans for the transition of functions and responsibilities from the Council to other bodies and organisations during 2026. This would help ensure continuity of the Community and reduce the risk of disruption arising from the wider governance changes. One option that could be implemented swiftly would be to agree a rotating leadership model from 2026, under which responsibility for leading the Community would pass annually between higher education institutions, with the lead institution organising and hosting Community events during its term. In parallel, a Working Group could be established in early 2026, drawing on the same pool of participants as the pilot workshop, to initiate strategic planning for the Community's permanent features, in line with the

considerations set out in this report. These measures could help anchor the Community's transition to a permanent footing even in the midst of the planned governance changes.

Annexe A. Programme for the inaugural conference of the Community of Practice

“Artificial Intelligence in Latvian Higher Education: From Implementation to Governance”

Organised by:

Latvian Council of Higher Education (AIP)

Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia (IZM)

OECD and European Commission TSI Project

Art Academy of Latvia (LMA)

Date: 7 November 2025

Venue: Art Academy of Latvia, Kronvalda bulvāris 4, Rīga

PROGRAMME

09:30 – 10:00: Registration and morning coffee

10:00 – 10:15: Opening of the conference and welcome addresses

Representatives from the Latvian Council of Higher Education (AIP), the Ministry of Education and Science (IZM), and the OECD

10:15 – 11:00: Keynote - “Strategic Alignment of AI and Higher Education: A Roadmap for Readiness”

Dr. Mairéad Pratschke (Mairēda Pračke) is the author of *Generative AI and Education* (Springer, 2024) and *New Horizons for Higher Education* (NDLN, 2025). She is a Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Data Science Institute (UK), as well as a Research Fellow and Advisory Board Member at the National AI Institute for Adult Learning & Online Education (AI-ALOE, USA). Dr. Pratschke is also an External Expert to the National Council for Pedagogical Innovation in Higher Education (CNIPES, Portugal).

Her keynote will address how higher education institutions and colleges can strategically align the implementation of artificial intelligence with their missions, governance structures, and innovation ecosystems to ensure sustainable readiness for digital and ethical challenges.

11:00 – 11:25: Complementary presentation

Perspectives from Latvian higher education institutions and colleges on the use of AI in studies and research. Preliminary results from the AIP survey on AI implementation in higher education.

11:25 – 11:45: Līga Vēliņa (Art Academy of Latvia / CERS)

“Artificial Intelligence Tools in Art Education / Artistic Intelligence Tools”. Presentation on the use of AI and artistic intelligence tools in art education.

11:45 – 12:15: Curator’s tour of the exhibition “TIME TOOLS (Laika rīki)”

An exhibition by students of the Art Academy of Latvia’s “Movement.Image.Sound” sub-field, in collaboration with other LMA departments, showcasing creative processes and outcomes achieved using artificial intelligence tools.

12:15 – 12:30: Coffee break

12:30 – 13:45: Panel 1 - Students and Artificial Intelligence

The use of AI in studies, creative projects, and research at higher education institutions and colleges.

14:00 – 15:15: Panel 2 - Higher Education Institutions, Colleges, and Artificial Intelligence

Institutional challenges, ethics, and responsible AI implementation.

15:15 – 15:30: Closing session: Next steps for the Community of Practice.

15:30 – 16:30: Working discussion (special session):

Meeting with representatives of higher education and college administrations on the development of institutional AI strategies.

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