



Supporting institutionalisation of Latvian academic career reforms

Taking stock and looking forward

Final project event

20 Feb 2026



Funded by
the European Union





Reminder – key deliverables of the project

Near-term



Detailed **information** on reform implementation and perceptions of staff working in the higher education and research sector (through the readiness report and progress reports)

Advice from the Project Team and international experts on actions and processes that can support successful reform implementation (through the international workshops, meetings and progress reports)

Long-term



A **roadmap** that lays out steps and actions that can support and sustain the success of the Latvian academic career reforms.

A **sustainable community for academic staff** to work together on issues of common interest, share experiences and practices and provide practitioner input into policy development. An essential component of the reformed higher education and research landscape in Latvia, in line with (and driving?) best international practice



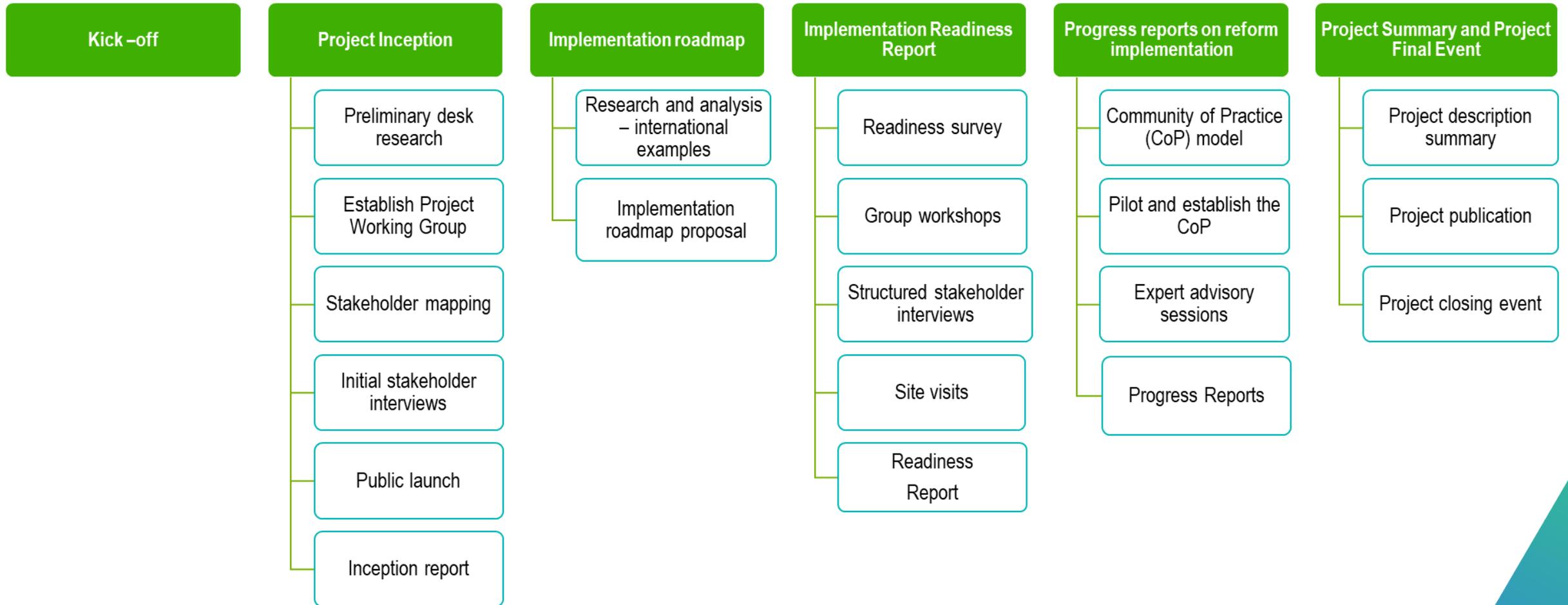
Our work together

September 2023

2024

2025

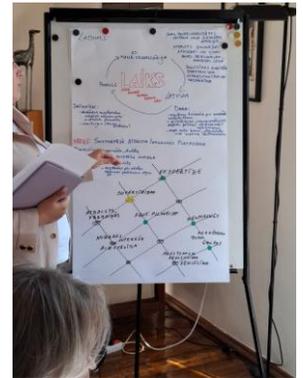
February 2026





Our work together

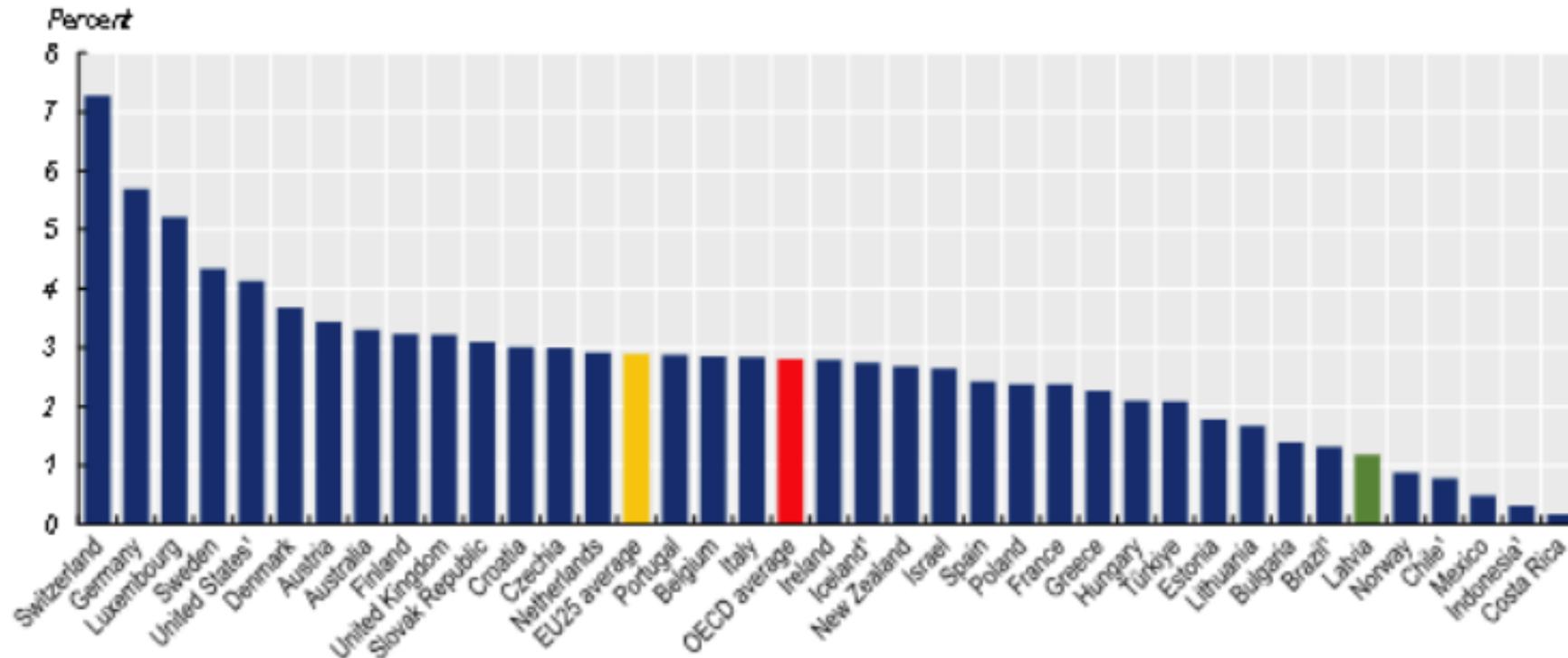
- 4 project team visits to Latvia
- 10 site visits to Latvian higher education institutions
- 20+ meetings and interviews with stakeholder organisations
- 10 international peers and experts contributed, mainly through 2 international workshops and events relating to the Community of Practice





Why this project is relevant

Figure 1.1. Share of doctorate holders among the tertiary-educated population aged 25-64 (2024)



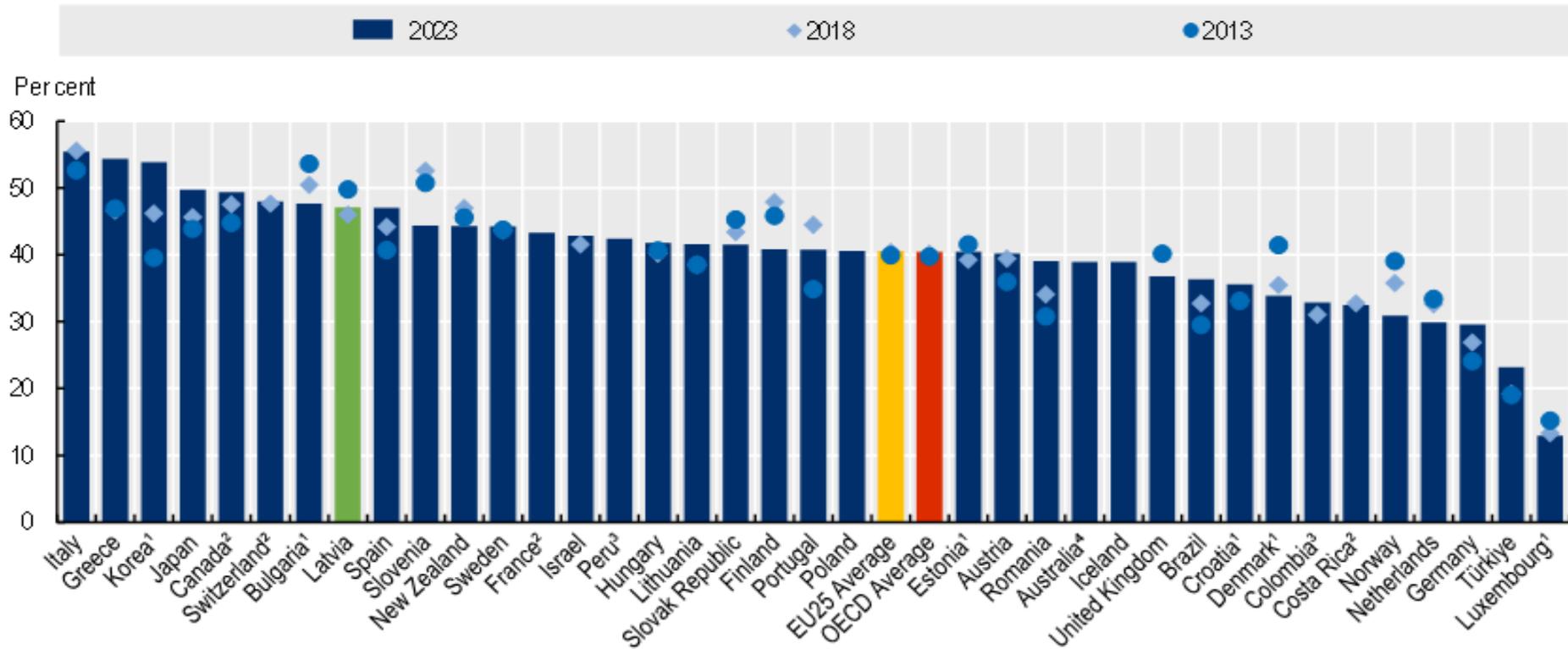
Note: 1. Year of reference differs from 2024.

Source: OECD (2025) Education at a Glance 2025: OECD Indicators, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c0d9c79-en>.



Why this project is relevant

Figure 1.2. Trends in the share of academic staff aged 50 and over



Note: 1. Year of reference differs from 2013.

2. Public institutions only.

3. Year of reference differs from 2023.

4. Excludes short-cycle tertiary.

Source: OECD (2025) Education at a Glance 2025: OECD Indicators, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c0d9c79-en>.



What we learned – key messages relating to doctoral education reform

Table 2.1. Doctoral education is a growth area in the Latvia higher education system

Statistic	Level of education	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change 2020-2024 (%)
Enrolment	Doctoral or equivalent (ISCED 8)	2 039	2 032	3 277	3 254	3 223	58.1
	Master's or equivalent (ISCED 7)	18 192	17 444	16 021	16 298	16 637	-8.5
	Bachelor's or equivalent (ISCED 6)	44 187	43 556	43 126	41 668	42 400	-4.0
	Short cycle degrees (college) (ISCED 5)	14 130	14 344	12 944	12 797	12 530	-11.3
Entrants	Doctoral or equivalent (ISCED 8)	548	595	727	822	800	46.0
	Master's or equivalent (ISCED 7)	7 107	6 958	6 215	6 703	6 625	-6.8
	Bachelor's or equivalent (ISCED 6)	14 817	15 157	14 174	15 791	16 182	9.2
	Short cycle degrees (college) (ISCED 5)	6 233	6 327	5 344	5 596	5 591	-10.3
Graduates	Doctoral or equivalent level (ISCED 8)	120	149	183	158	229	90.8
	Master's or equivalent level (ISCED 7)	4 372	4 345	3 730	3 744	3 798	-13.1
	Bachelor's or equivalent level (ISCED 6)	6 788	7 150	6 443	7 027	6 327	-6.8
	Short cycle degrees (college) (ISCED 5)	3 245	3 063	3 066	3 129	3 127	-3.6

Source: Official Statistics Latvia (2025_[10]) Official Statistics Portal of Latvia, <https://stat.gov.lv/en/statistics-themes/education/higher-education> (accessed on 29.01.2026).

- Doctoral education has become much more professionalised and (to some extent) more standardised within Latvia HEIs
- Enrolment in doctoral education is on the increase
- Cross-sectional comparison (graduates-to-entrants ratio across typical duration) indicates quite low completion rates



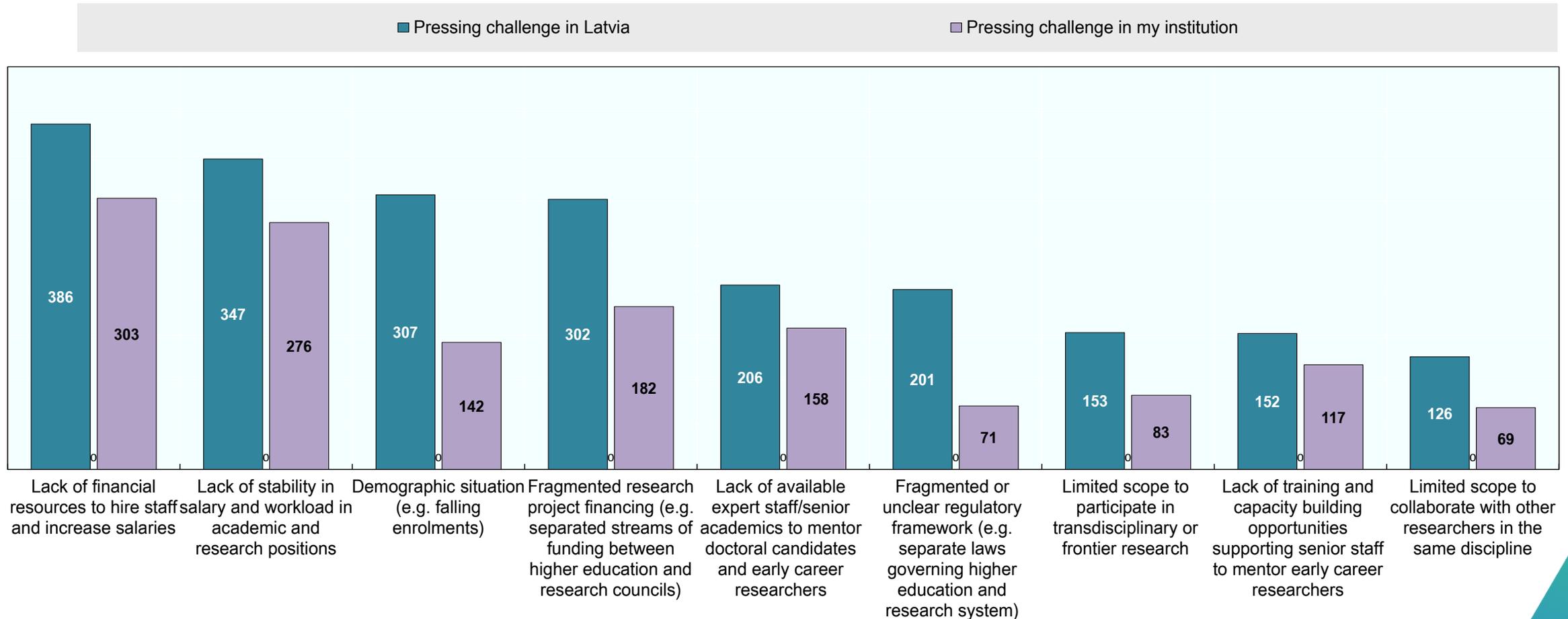
What we learned – key messages relating to doctoral education reform

- Stakeholders indicate that doctoral education is becoming more structured and professionalised, and reforms are generally expected to support further incremental improvement.
- Higher education institutions face some practical difficulties in managing the transition period and in planning ahead.
- The reforms may increase expectations for both supervisors and doctoral researchers, with potential implications for workload, training and support needs.
- Further strengthening internationalisation and deepening engagement with industry remain continuing priorities, but pose sustained implementation challenges.



What we learned – key messages relating to academic career reform

Lack of financial resources remains the key challenge to improving academic careers





What we learned – key messages relating to academic career reform

- Financial instability and fragmentation of employment contracts remain fundamental difficulties for Latvian academics, while in other cases, the “funding has come before the framework”
- Election does not guarantee employment or workload stability for academic staff
- Professional development opportunities for academic staff are starting to improve
- The comparative size of the Latvian higher education and research sector is advantageous in some respects
- There is substantial scope for improvement in information flow and practice-sharing across the higher education system → **Community of Practice could play a key supporting role**



Roadmap proposal – actions to support continuous improvement of academic staff conditions within institutions

Focus Area: Continuously improving academic staff conditions within institutions

Objective	Actions for the short term (2026–27)	Actions in the medium- to long-term (2028+)	Relevant international case studies
1. Ensuring a smooth and effective transition to the new doctoral education model in all institutions	<p>1.1 Provide pre-reform candidates with equal access to resources developed through the new doctoral schools</p> <p>1.2 Strengthen communication and connection among doctoral candidates</p>	<p>1.3 Achieve sustainable critical mass at institution level for all aspects of doctoral education</p> <p>1.4 Institutionalise mentoring of early-career researchers as a core competency of senior academic staff</p>	<p>Case Study 1: Estonian Doctoral School</p> <p>Case Study 2: Healthy practices in the Dutch PhD system 2.0</p>
2. Promote evidence-informed and aligned approaches to the management of academic careers within institutions	<p>2.1: Evaluate the postdoctoral and tenure track pilots to inform future expansion</p> <p>2.2: Review and, if necessary, strengthen internal dialogue on reform issues</p>	<p>2.3: Initiate recurring data collection and analysis of staff experiences at work and viewpoints on career-related issues</p> <p>2.4: Implement policies for responsible and holistic evaluation of academic staff throughout the institution</p>	<p>Case Study 3: University of Sussex staff survey</p>



Roadmap proposal – actions for policymakers

Focus Area: Updating and aligning the policy framework

<p>3: Ensure academic staff conditions remain at the forefront of higher education policy in Latvia</p>	<p>3.1 Roll out the four-stage harmonised academic career framework in the Latvian system as a priority</p> <p>3.2 Put criteria relating to staff conditions and working environment at the centre of the new accreditation framework</p>	<p>3.3: Establish a national data collection on staff profiles and conditions</p>	<p>Case Study 4: European University Association's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)</p>
<p>4: Balance stability with performance in the allocation of state funds</p>	<p>4.1: Thoroughly evaluate the pilot of the new state funding model to assess its impact on the conditions of academic staff</p>	<p>4.2: Pilot more adaptive durations and amounts for competitive state research funding</p>	<p>Case study 5: Institution level staff profile data collected by the Irish Higher Education Authority</p>



Roadmap proposal – actions that support practice-sharing and collaboration

Focus Area: Sharing practice and working together for the benefit of academic staff

5: Prioritise community building within the reformed higher education and research sectors	5.1: Put the Community of Practice for Latvian academic staff on a firm legal and financial footing	5.2: Establish a Latvian Young Academy to support early-career researchers	Case study 6: The Portuguese National Council for Pedagogical Innovation in Higher Education (CNIPES)
6: Mobilise collective action to tackle academic career issues	6.1: Create a sector-wide training and professional development framework for each grade of academic staff	6.2: Identify and prioritise academic career issues where collective development of shared norms and principles would be beneficial 6.3: Position the Community of Practice as a conduit for partnerships supporting excellence in the teaching and engagement missions of higher education	Case Study 7: The Danish Network for Educational Development in Higher Education (DUN)

Thank you!
Questions? Comments?



Funded by
the European Union

