



Latvia's academic career reform – a European perspective

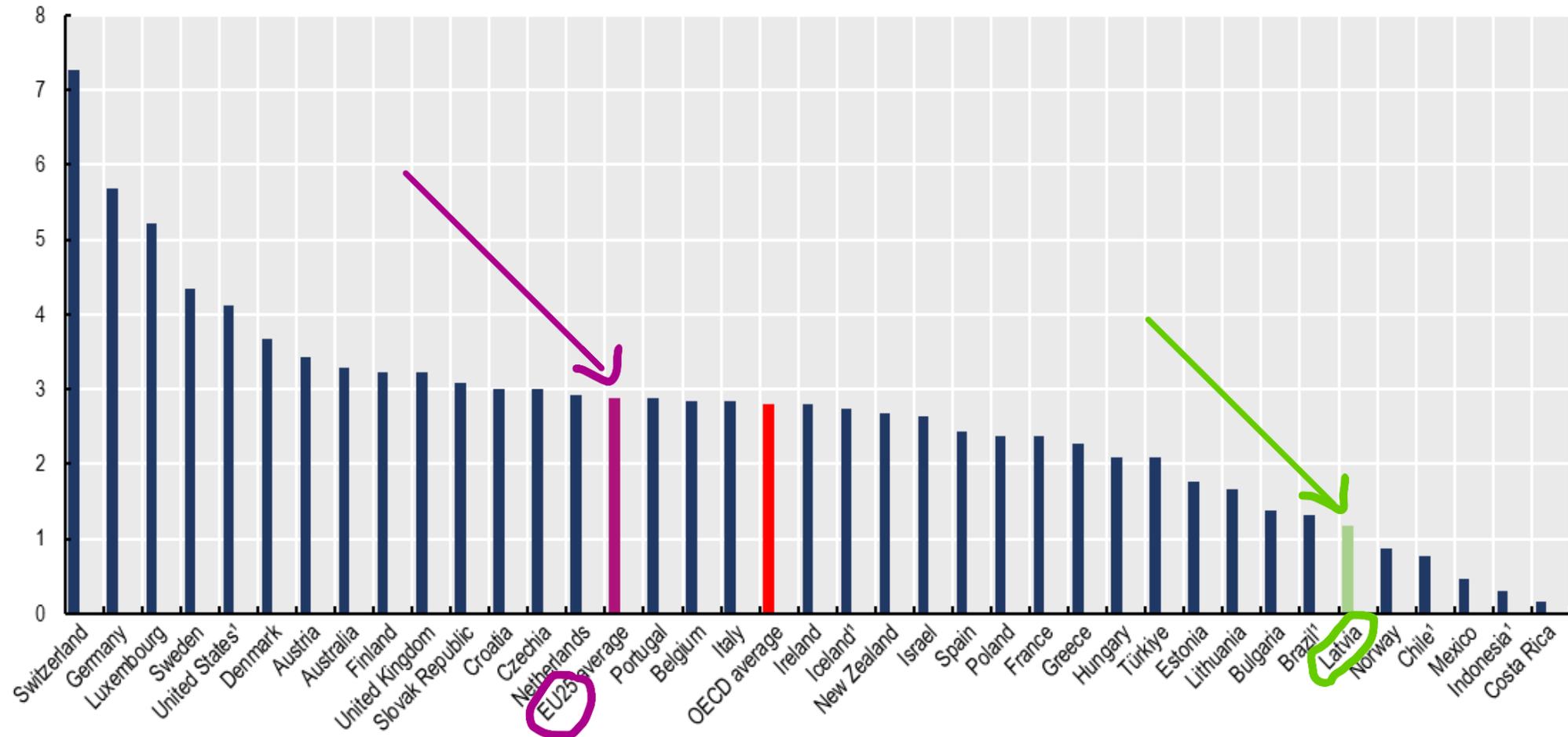
Sébastien Combeaud, Senior Expert, European Commission

Riga, 20 February 2026

Final event – TSI project 23LV24

Academic careers drive innovation

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>.



Professor Jānis STRADIŅŠ
Organic chemistry > health



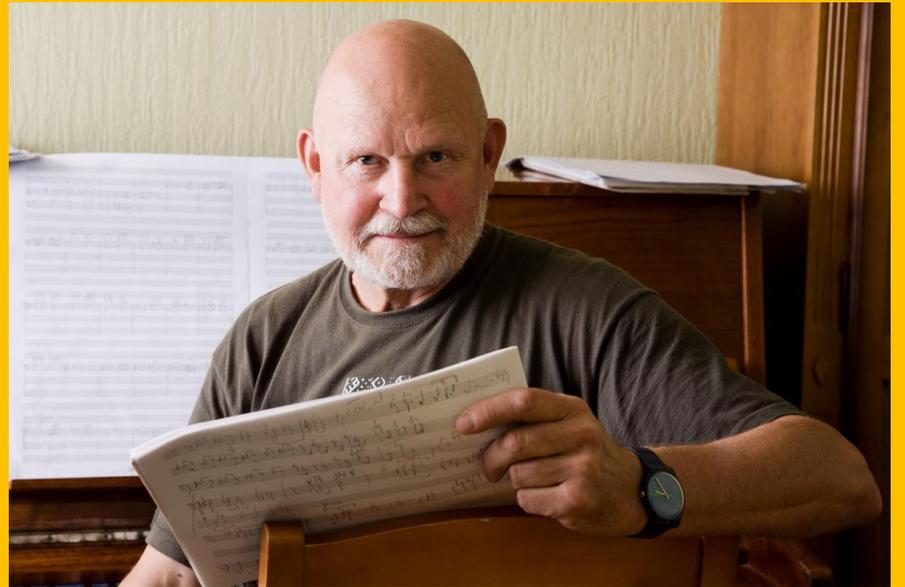
Dr. Aivars VĒVERIS
Physics > energy, industry, defence



Professor Jānis BĀRZDIŅŠ
Data transmission > ICT



Professor Vaira VĪĶE-FREIBERGA
President of Latvia (1999-2007)
Semiotics and linguistics > AI



Pēteris VASKS
Composer > Environment



Laila PAKALNIŅA
Filmmaker > cultural diversity- “Vienoti dažādībā”

Latvian reforms align with EU priorities and good practices

Council of the EU recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education (2024)

Calls on Member States and higher education institutions to promote:

- better working conditions
- continuous professional development
- gender equality, work-life balance, inclusiveness

Greater support and recognition of

- the full range of academic roles: teaching, innovation, mentoring, cross-border cooperation, institutional governance
- diverse academic career paths

Structures

Doctoral School

- By granting doctoral candidates employee status and embedding their training within structures, Latvia has aligned its new standard with EU standards.

Estonia

Estonia's Doctoral School funded by the European Social Fund shows:

- how **critical mass** can be achieved in the development of **transversal** skills in doctoral candidates
- the value of collaboration among higher education institutions, supporting **interdisciplinary** learning and **networking**



Structures

Community of practice

- Latvia's new Community of Practice for academic staff, as piloted during the TSI project, can foster knowledge-sharing and collaboration.

Portugal

Portugal's National Council for Pedagogical Innovation serves as a model for:

- fostering **knowledge-sharing** and innovation in teaching and training
- bringing **together local initiatives** on **pedagogical innovation** across the higher education sector

Competences

Supervision

- Latvia introduces new principles for academic staff employment, balancing teaching, research and supervision of junior researchers.

Netherlands

“Healthy Practices in the Dutch PhD System 2.0” provides:

- a framework for quality assurance, professional **supervision**, and psychological **support** for doctoral candidates
- an inspiring method - a **collective** way of setting common principles

Competences

Internationalisation

- Latvian academic staff benefit from opportunities to participate in joint projects and training initiatives with other institutions across Europe, enhancing the internationalisation of Latvian higher education and strengthening their careers.

European Universities Alliances

- Latvia's involvement in European University Alliances has expanded opportunities for **joint research** and **professional development**.
- Most institutions reported very **positive feedback** concerning the benefits of involvement in European University Alliances

Funding

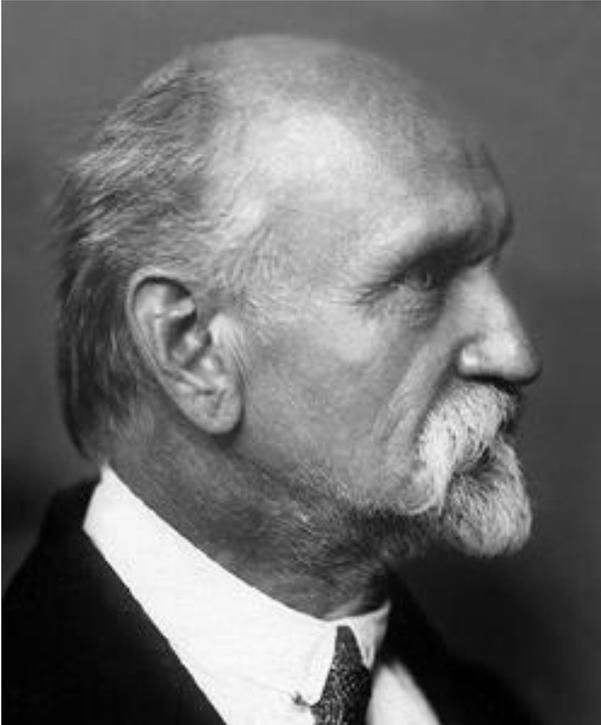
General funding

- **European Regional Development Fund**
Calls for postdoctoral researchers:
€192,360 for selected 36-month research project
- **Recovery and Resilience Plan**
consolidation grants for HEIs:
45% of investment 5.2.1.1.i for doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, professors, development grants

Funding for research

- **Horizon Europe**
European Research Council funds cutting-edge, high-risk research.
- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions**
support mobility and training for researchers at all stages, helping them build international networks and bring new ideas back to Europe.

Career and curiosity



*“What to the Youth shall say
the Aged?”*

*Lead so your life that you are
not left empty”*



Rainis’s last poem

Thank you



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