

Collaboration for development with professionals from Latvian diaspora

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Collaboration for development with professionals from Latvian diaspora

The paper explores the involvement of diaspora professionals, who are working in international organizations, in promoting the development of Latvia, analysing:

- current cooperation practices of diaspora professionals
- their predisposition to engagement
- benefits of engagement
- factors contributing and hindering engagement and cooperation

Why it is important to explore diaspora engagement

- ❑ The understanding that the diaspora (emigrants and their descendants) can be a partner in promoting development has emerged relatively recently (Newland & Plaza, 2013; Kuznetsov, 2013)
- ❑ Countries are paying increasing attention to the maintenance of links with emigrants to engage them in the development of their country of origin (Cohen, 2017; Kuznetsov, 2006; Kingsley, 2018)
- ❑ In this light, emigrants are seen not as lost taxpayers but as a “national asset”, contributing in different ways (Kingsley, 2018)

Why it is important to explore diaspora engagement

- ❑ Focus on diaspora professionals is important in the context of race for global talent to promote innovation and growth. The global competition for talent leads to a rapidly increasing migration of high-skilled professionals (Bailey & Mulder 2017; Tom & Villares-Varela, 2019)
- ❑ States are looking for different opportunities to maintain various links with its diaspora and is seeking to convert “brain drain” into “brain gain” (return migration) or at least “brain circulation” (diaspora engagement). Those links are of great importance not just for fostering development, but for promoting states’ strategic objectives and interests abroad, too.

Research background I

- ❑ Project «**Involvement of Latvian professionals in diaspora diplomacy**», funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Latvia
- ❑ The purpose of the research was to explore how to develop targeted and systemic cooperation with diaspora professionals working in international organisations so that it would be possible acquire the necessary knowledge and contacts to advance the interests of Latvia, as well as to provide support for the career advancement of Latvian nationals, thereby extending the network of Latvians and their opportunities in the international organisations.



Research background II

- ❑ The national research programme project “**Cutting-edge knowledge and solutions to study demographic and migration processes for the development of Latvian and European society**” (DemoMigPro)
- ❑ The project aims to provide new knowledge and solutions for studies of demographic and migrations processes to foster sustainable development of society in Latvia
- ❑ WP5 aims to advance knowledge on talented/high skilled migrants and diaspora networking possibilities. This research will provide empirical evidence and contribute to developing a multilevel framework for talent migration research, mainly focusing on multispatiality, fluidity and social embedding



The target group

The target group of the study are diaspora professionals working in:

- ❑ intergovernmental organisations (UN, NATO, OECD, EU, CE) and their institutions and bodies, as well as associated agencies and other organisations, missions, courts and tribunal services
- ❑ various international non-governmental organisations (human rights, nature protection and other fields)
- ❑ permanent officials, temporary workers, consultants and experts, as well as workers at different professional levels – from administrative staff, officials and experts to top leaders
- ❑ people who have worked in these organizations over the past 10 years and have accumulated valuable experience that is relevant for this study

Research methodology and data

- ❑ The study is a combined mixed methodology research (case study + parallel mixed methods research with equal emphasis on qualitative and quantitative research methods)
- ❑ Pilot study (April-May) 5 interviews
- ❑ Case study on policy framework and initiatives of four European countries – Czech Republic, Poland, Denmark and Ireland
- ❑ Survey (from June 21 to July 7, 2022 , N=150)
- ❑ FGD and interviews (July 4 – 7, 2022, 6 FGD with 18 participants and 3 interviews, with 1 additional in July 26)
- ❑ Report in Latvian on Diaspora and migration research centre
DOI <https://doi.org/10.22364/dmpc.22>



Results: cooperation experience

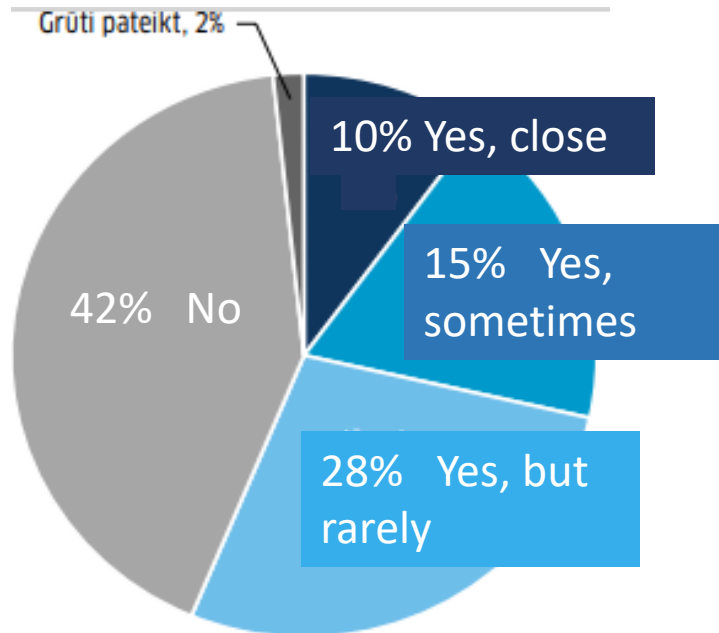
“I've been looking forward to this conversation for 19 years” (FDG 2)

- ❑ People working in international organisations are willing to share their knowledge and experience
- ❑ The study participants see the current cooperation as irregular, *ad hoc*, depending on people in office (e.g. Latvia's ambassadors, specific State administration employees etc).
- ❑ Several participants see a positive trend in cooperation patterns - increasing interest and diversifying forms of cooperation, regularity in some sectors, but still based mainly on individual initiative, rather than on a systemic and strategic approach.

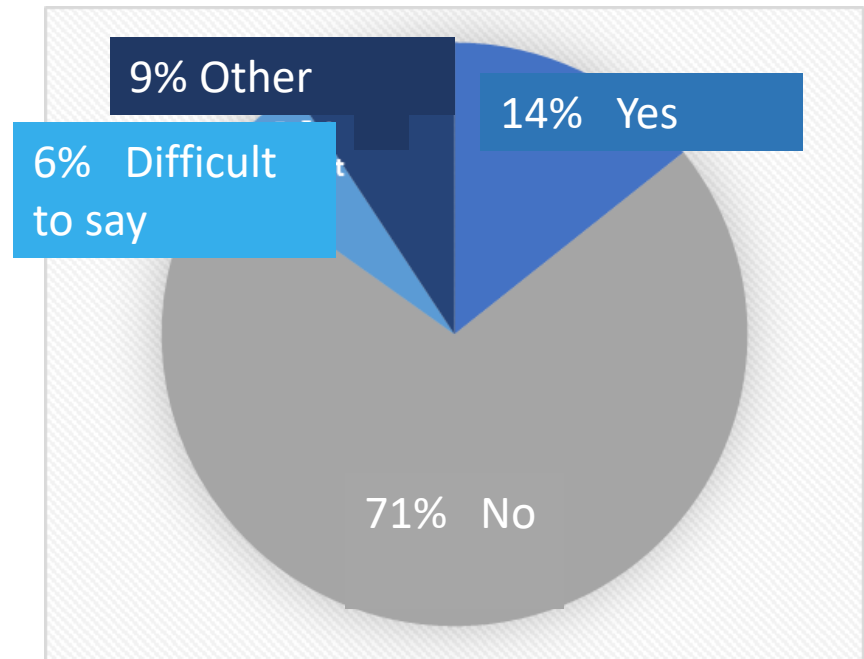


Results: cooperation experience

During the last 5 years, have you had any cooperation with representatives of Latvia? (%)



Has the Latvian civil service or diplomatic service shown interest in you and your professional knowledge? (%)



Which Latvian institutions have you cooperated with?(%)

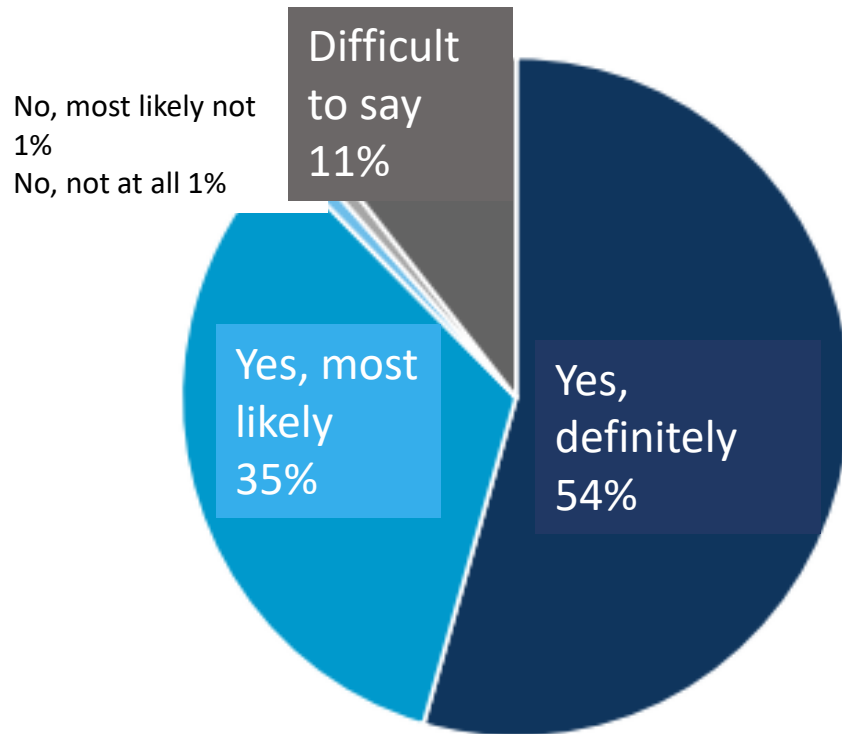
	Intergovernmental organization	Non-governmental organization
With the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Central Service in Riga)	31,4	13,3
With another Ministry or organization under Ministry supervision	58,8	26,7
With an embassy or honorary consul in the country of residence	31,4	26,7
With the Office of the Prime Minister	3,9	0,0
With the President's Chancery	3,9	0,0
With Corss-Sectoral Coordination Centre	2,0	0,0
With the State Chancery	9,8	6,7
With the Ombudsman	5,9	6,7
With municipality	9,8	20,0
With higher education institutions in Latvia	23,5	33,3
With Latvian private companies	5,9	26,7
With State state - owned companies or corporations	3,9	6,7
With Latvian Diaspora/Return migrant's Organisations	19,6	20,0
With other non-governmental organization in Latvia	17,6	60,0
With other organizations	7,8	20,0

What kind of formal or informal support have you provided to Latvia? (%)

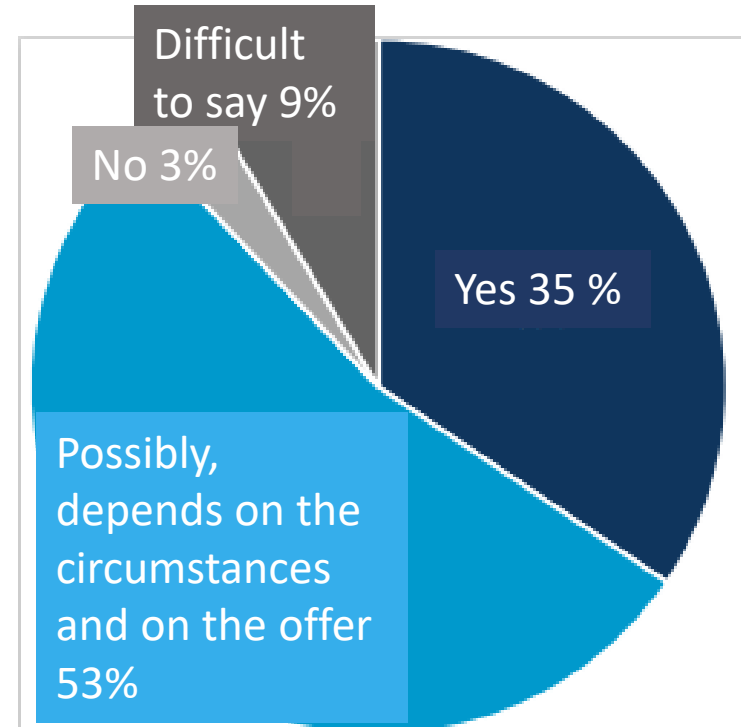
Consulted representatives of Latvia informally and shared expertise in their field of competence	63.9
Promoted Latvia, its recognition and attractiveness in the international environment	49.2
Helped to establish the necessary contacts in their current home country or in another country	42.6
Provided information about the situation, position, customs, plans, etc. of their host country or other country they know well	34.4
Invited or recommended Latvian professionals for positions in their organization	27.9
Led or presented at seminars, lectures, classes for civil servants, specially organized courses, summer schools or other forums	24.6
Explained and argued the position of the Latvian state to the representatives of other countries or organizations	23.0
Prepared explanatory opinion articles and gave interviews to the Latvian media	19.7
Participated in Latvian government-organized expert / working groups in their area of competence	9.8
Helped a state institution to evaluate a project application, a candidate for a position, or provided an expert opinion	8.2
Prepared explanatory opinion articles or gave interviews to foreign media about Latvia	6.6
Other	14.8

Results: Diaspora professionals' predisposition to engagement

Do you think such cooperation should be developed? (%)



Would you like to cooperate with representatives of Latvia in the future? (%)

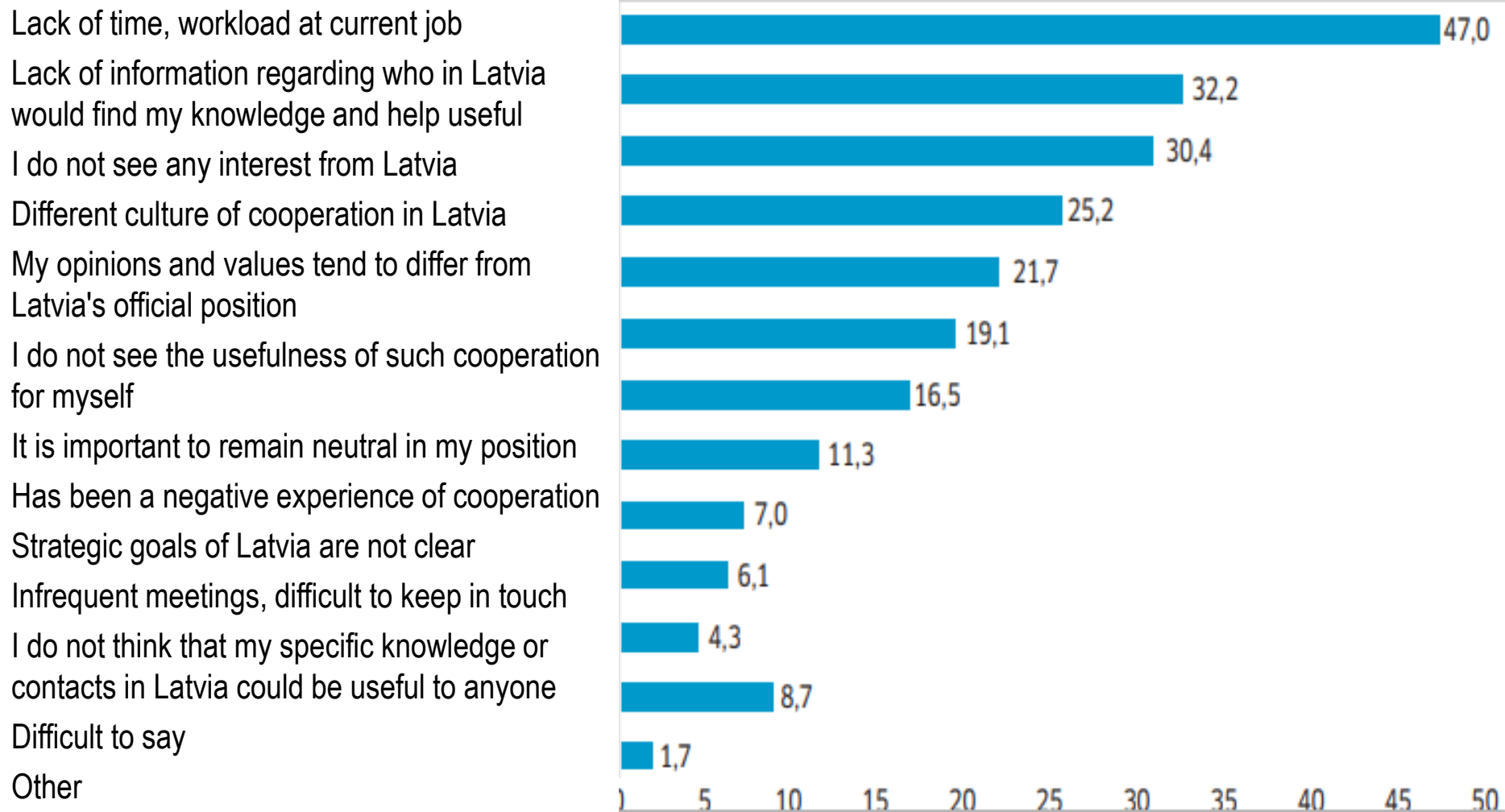


Results: value attached to cooperation

Professionals working in international organisations can:

- ❑ strengthen the influence and visibility of the State in the countries and organisations in which they are located;
- ❑ to provide instruments to the Latvian State Administration, which would help it to achieve better results in the representation of Latvia's interests and in increasing the influence of Latvia;
- ❑ to advise on international developments, to comment on issues related to specific organisations, sectoral perspectives or wider global trends;
- ❑ may also be consulted in relation to Latvia's development priorities, sectoral development issues, looking from the international organisation perspective or from a wider scale of global trends;
- ❑ to inform about processes, procedures, decision-making progress and “backstage” discussions, which in turn helps the Latvian State Administration to take more appropriate action or make better decisions.

Results: factors hindering cooperation



CONCLUSIONS

Benefits of cooperation with diaspora professionals are:

- ❑ related to transfer professional intellectual and social capital, investment in education and civil society
- ❑ related to the contribution of the diaspora to the transfer of experience, knowledge, contacts, ideas and practices which contributes to the development of the country



CONCLUSIONS

- ❑ Important factor contributing or hindering cooperation and networking at institutional level is institutional culture of cooperation and strategic vision of the state or institution for such cooperation. The institutional culture is a catalyst for engagement and cooperation, as well as its lingering factor
- ❑ Today, cooperation and networking depends primary on the cooperation practices at the individual level – specific interests, openness, motivation, strategic vision of the particular employee of the particular public administration body



Thank you!

“Cutting-edge knowledge and solutions to study demographic and migration processes for the development of Latvian and European society”
(DemoMigPro, Nr. VPP-LETONIKA-2021/4-0002)