

Foreword

Giving people better opportunities to participate in the labour market improves well-being and strengthens economic growth. Better labour market and social protection policies help countries to cope with rapid population ageing by mobilising potential labour resources more fully. Many OECD countries achieved record employment levels prior to the global financial crisis, but in all countries employment rates differ markedly across population groups. High unemployment, weak labour market attachment of some groups in society, and frequently unstable, poor-quality employment reflects a range of barriers to working or moving up the jobs ladder. In many countries, the crisis has accentuated long-standing structural problems that are causing these disadvantages. It is a major challenge for policy makers in the coming years to address these problems and make OECD labour markets and, thus, OECD economies more inclusive.

Therefore, the OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee is carrying out a set of reviews of labour market and social protection policies to encourage greater labour market participation and better employment among all groups in society with a special focus on the most disadvantaged, who face the greatest barriers and disincentives to finding good work. This includes a series of country studies, *Connecting People with Jobs*, which provide an assessment of how well activation policies help all groups to move into productive and rewarding jobs and a number of policy recommendations that could improve the situation.

This report on Latvia is the fifth country study published in this series. It discusses the evolution and performance of active labour market policies in Latvia since 2012, as the Latvian labour market emerged from the particularly severe effects of the global financial crisis. The report assesses the success of selected activation measures in Latvia, focussing in particular on evaluating training for the unemployed, measures to support mobility and entrepreneurship for Latvia's regions, and wage subsidies targeting Latvia's most vulnerable groups.



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