

# Foreword

Economic crimes are growing in number, complexity and reach, making them increasingly difficult to investigate and prosecute in Latvia. Transnational organised crime has been identified as a critical risk in the National Risk Assessments of many OECD countries, and how to counter illicit economic activities is part of the OECD work programme on risk management and resilience. These crimes are perceived to have a significant impact on Latvia's economy as well as on the security of citizens and of society as a whole. The Latvian State Police and criminal justice system (CJS) more broadly are actively involved in on-going policy reform and institutional changes to address these challenges.

The research takes the form of a gap analysis, which informs the recommendations and specific actions to improve cooperation and coordination mechanisms in Latvia among the State Police departments and other institutions. To do this, interviews were conducted with a range of experts involved in economic crime investigations to consider the level and quality of cooperation and coordination on investigations and handling of evidence for such crimes that have a direct negative impact on the business environment in Latvia.

This report highlights progress Latvia has made to strengthen its institutions and policies in the fight against economic and financial crimes, and notes areas that require further attention. Its recommendations provide Latvia with an opportunity to continue to build on its achievements, while raising awareness of the complex context around policy implementation.

Looking to the future, Latvia would benefit from promoting greater international awareness and engagement in its domestic-focused strategies and approaches to investigation and prosecution of economic crimes. This will require building capacities within the criminal justice system and intensifying co-operation with key actors in European and international law enforcement organisations to ensure a stronger national response.

A more holistic national strategy that encompasses actions both within and outside the criminal justice system is necessary to prepare for and respond to economic crime. Interagency law enforcement co-operation will be an important factor in ensuring that better investigations translate into more successful prosecution of cases.

Criminal entities and organised crime syndicates are motivated by profit and loss. The Latvian Government can send a clear message that Latvia is not a good place to do illegal business and show, through its actions and commitment, that those who do will be prosecuted in a timely and efficient manner. The OECD stands ready to support Latvia in tackling economic crime and in bringing about sustainable positive change.



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