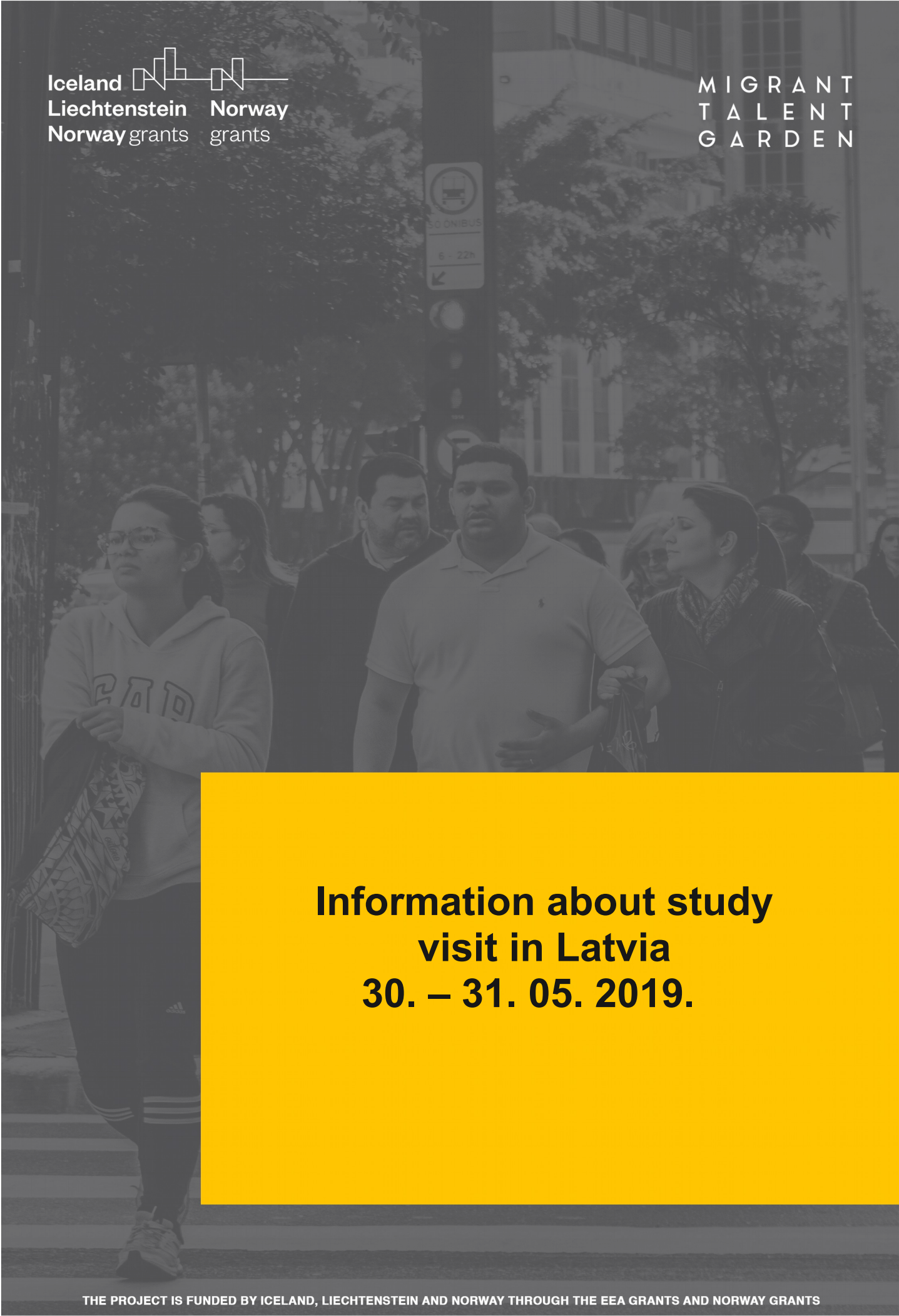


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**Information about study
visit in Latvia
30. – 31. 05. 2019.**

Participants of the Project Familiarise Themselves With Business Opportunities For Immigrants During a Visit to Latvia

A study visit of the “Migrant Talent Garden” project took place in Riga from 30 to 31 May 2019. The aim of the visit was to learn about business environment in Latvia and social entrepreneurship. Participants of the project from six countries - Greece, Bulgaria, Norway, Island, Croatia and Lithuania - visited the society “Shelter “Safe House”” as a part of the programme of the study visit. “Migrant Talent Garden” project is aimed at creating an electronic platform for supporting business that would allow on-line participation in a training programme and provide information about business initiation legislation of each participating country of the project. Creation of business incubators for immigrants is also planned under the project in each of the aforementioned participating countries.

“Shelter “Safe House”” Board Member Gunta Vīksne (Gunta Vīksne) told the participants of the project about the society's many years of experience and offered practical examples in the field of integration. SIA (LLC) “Baltijas Datoru Akadēmija” Project Coordinator Marija Vilne (Marija Vilne) presented to the visitors the training material and programme for the development of social entrepreneurship and business competence developed by the company. The material was created based on the experience and knowledge of non-governmental organisations and training centres as a contemporary learning tool easily adaptable to circumstances of each country to enable immigrant business development. She told that the learning tool is intended to assist in training migrants with different level of education and social status, providing them with the basic knowledge of entrepreneurship principles, local business environment and steps they have to take for the development of their own business.

The guests also met with Regita Zeiļa (Regita Zeiļa) from the Social Entrepreneurship Association of Latvia, who told about social entrepreneurship, including - what is a social enterprise under the Latvian law and forms of support available in Latvia. To inspire the visitors she shared several experiences, mentioning as examples the social enterprises “Humusa komanda” (Hummus Team), “BlindArt” and the chain of charity shops “Otrā elpa” (Second Breath).

The young entrepreneur from India Shashikanth Reddy Kotha shared his personal experience, difficulties, successes and thoughts on starting his own business in Latvia. Participants of the project could also ask questions to the entrepreneur to understand better opportunities for immigrants to start a business in Latvia.

The guests had also an opportunity to meet and ask their questions to the Head of ISMA Business Incubator Viktorija Rjaschenko (Viktorija Rjaščenko). Students are given an opportunity to develop and implement their business ideas with the help of ISMA Business Incubator. Viktorija Rjaschenko told that a business incubator serves as a means to support the development of business ideas, projects, foundation of one's own business and its successful further promotion. “A business incubator serves as the first micro-environment for the new enterprise, in which based on consultations with professionals in the field entrepreneurial skills are developed, knowledge and experience are acquired. There young

entrepreneurs may receive assistance with accounting, taxes and preparation of a business plan,” emphasized V.Rjascenko.

The Head of the ESF project “Support to Social Entrepreneurship” (implemented by the Ministry of Welfare) Juris Cebulis (Juris Cebulis) told the participants of the project about the legal framework of a social enterprise and possibilities to receive financial support for the operation of social enterprises. He also explained the criteria an entrepreneur must meet, if he or she wishes to obtain the status of a social enterprise and apply for support from the state. J.Cebulis mentioned also practical benefits provided by the Social Enterprise Law, told about the procedure of obtaining the status of a social enterprise in Latvia and also listed the most common errors made, when applying for the status of a social enterprise.

Specialized Consultant Ronalds Kraze (Ronalds Kraže) on the State Employment Agency (SEA) project “Integration of Fugitives and Persons Under Subsidiary Protection in the Employment Market in Latvia” told, how the agency places fugitives and persons under subsidiary protection with employers. He mentioned poor language skills, insufficient previous work experience, low motivation and a weak understanding of the country's tax system as the main challenges. In his opinion, right now Latvian entrepreneurs are open and ready to work with persons, who have acquired the status of a fugitive or a person under subsidiary protection.

The hosting organisation “Shelter “Safe House”” for the visit under the project indicates that the participants of the “Migrant Talent Garden” project displayed great interest in the business opportunities for immigrants in our country throughout the meeting and asked many of questions on the subject to the representatives of the organisation and special invited guests too. The participants of the project recognised also that excellent professionals with high qualification work in Latvia, cooperation with whom would allow to create a more successful environment for the integration of immigrants and development of business.





