**Annex 7**

to the regulation of the 2023–2026 project application open tender of the National Research programme

“‘Latvian Culture: a Resource for National Development’

**Expert examination methodology**

**(for the project application and for the project mid-term/final scientific report)**

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# Introduction

 The expert examination methodology (‘Methodology’) has been developed in accordance with Cabinet Regulation 560 ‘Procedure for the Implementation of National Research Programme Projects’ of 4 September 2018 (‘Cabinet Regulation’) and in compliance with the regulations (‘Regulations’) of the project application open tender (‘tender’) for the National Research Programme ‘Latvian Culture: a Resource for National Development’ approved by the Implementation and Monitoring Commission of the National Research Programme ‘Latvian Culture: a Resource for National Development’ on 15 June 2023 .

 The Methodology has been developed for the international experts who perform the scientific assessment of the project application and the mid-term and final scientific report.

According to Section 35(1) of the Law on Scientific Activity, a national research programme is a state commission to perform scientific research in a specific economic, educational, cultural or other sector of national priority, with the aim of promoting the development of that sector.

The target audience of the Methodology is the experts assessing the project applications for the open tender (‘tender’) of the 2023–2026 National Research Programme ‘Latvian Culture: a Resource for National Development’ (‘programme’), who prepare individual and consolidated assessments of the project applications.

As a government commission, the programme is a policy implementation mechanism that identifies and researches issues of importance for Latvia’s sustainability and development, which must be the focus of the work of Latvian scientific institutions; the programme also identifies relevant scientific research tasks to address them. In view of the above, the programme creates favourable conditions for achieving Latvia’s sustainable development goals.

The Programme will involve the strongest scientific groups, bringing together researchers from humanities, arts, and social sciences to work together and achieve the project’s objectives.

The Programme has been created and is funded by the Ministry of Culture. The programme has been allocated a total of EUR 1,433,800 from the state budget. The project financing under the programme is EUR 1,333,800.

The general goal of the programme is the effective use of Latvia’s artistic and cultural capital for the sustainable development of the country.

The goal of the Programme is to develop a knowledge base for the current and historical processes of Latvian culture, the cultural and creative industries as agents of these processes, and the contribution of culture to the sustainable development of the country.

In line with the Programme’s implementation goal, the Programme has three tasks:

1. to develop a new knowledge base for the current trends in Latvian culture and creative industries (literature, music, theatre and dance, visual arts, design, architecture, audiovisual and film arts, interdisciplinary creative forms and cultural heritage, including traditional culture and crafts), including:

1. the accessibility of cultural products and services to the Latvian public, including access to contemporary cultural forms, as well as the role and interaction of the public and private sectors in shaping cultural products and services;

1.2. employment and income generation patterns and trends in the cultural and creative industries and the relevance of the provision of education at all levels for job market demand and trends;

1.3. the impact of digital technologies on cultural consumption patterns, the processes of creation and distribution of cultural content, and the generation of income from creative activities;

2. to develop a new knowledge base for historical processes of significance for Latvia’s cultural and creative industries with lasting impact on contemporary culture, including cultural developments during the years of Soviet occupation;

3. to develop approaches for assessing the social and economic impact of cultural and creative industries, in particular on the quality of life and on well-being, health, education, and social inclusion, environment and climate, and innovation, increasing the knowledge and understanding of the current and potential contribution of the cultural and creative industries to these fields and contributing to the sustainable development of the country.

# 1. Definitions of terms

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| **No** | **Term** | **Definition** |
| **1.** | **Scientific team** | scientific staff and scientific technical staff (persons who have the necessary technical knowledge and experience in one or more fields and who, under the supervision of scientists, participate in scientific activities by performing technical tasks. Scientific technical staff (engineers, technicians, laboratory technicians, process specialists, operators) involved in the implementation of the project. The scientific team consists of the project leader, the lead project participants (if required), and the project participants |
| **2.** | **Scientific staff** | lead researchers, researchers, research assistants, university academic staff [[1]](#footnote-1)and students |
| **3.** | **Project applicant** | the applicant is a scientific institution registered in the Register of Scientific Institutions of the Republic of Latvia (public or private), or a higher education institution, and meets the definition of a research organisation[[2]](#footnote-2). The applicant is responsible for the implementation of the project and the achievement of the overall project outcomes |
| **4.** | **Project partner that is a scientific institution** | the project partner is a scientific institution registered in the Register of Scientific Institutions of the Republic of Latvia and meets the definition of a research organisation, participating in the project with its own staff or research infrastructure |
| **5.** | **Project partner that is a public authority** | a public body required to perform scientific activities by an external regulation, its statute or its articles of association, and is engaged in the implementation of the project with property, intellectual property, funds, or human resources in its possession or ownership |
| **6.** | **Project leader** | the scientist who manages the project and ensures its implementation. The project leader plans and supervises the completion of the project tasks, is responsible for their own activities and the activities of other persons involved in the project in accordance with the tasks and science ethics standards set in the project, and for the timely preparation and submission of documentation describing the progress of the project in accordance with the procedures laid down in these regulations |
| **7.** | **Lead project participants** | the scientists implementing the project or sub-project and responsible for implementing parts of it |
| **8.** | **Project participants** | members of the scientific group who perform individual scientific tasks in the implementation of the project and are responsible for conducting the relevant parts of the project |
| **9.** | **University students** | The students involved in the project’s scientific team are bachelor students, professional programme students, master students, medical resident students, and doctoral students.[[3]](#footnote-3) The university students must be involved in the project in accordance with the provisions of Sections 21–24 of the Regulations |
| **10.** | **Project contact person** | A natural individual registered in the National Research Information System (‘information system’) completes the information about the project application, uploads its annexes, and, if necessary, maintains contact with the staff of the Latvian Science Council (the project contact person may also be the project leader) during the project submission, with the staff of the Administration for Studies and Science and the Ministry of Education and Science if the project is implemented. The project applicant indicates the project contact person in Chapter 1 ’General information’ of Part A of the project application. If the project has partners, their contact persons are also indicated. |

# 2. Scientific expert examination of the project application

1. The scientific assessment process of all project applications submitted as part of the tender is organised by the Latvian Council of Science (‘Council’).

2. If the project application fulfils the criteria for administrative assessment, then on the basis of Section 35 of the Regulations, the Council assigns two or more suitably qualified experts to perform the scientific examination of the project application.

3. Prior to obtaining access to the project application in the information system, the expert must:

3.1. confirms that they are in no conflict of interest and that they undertake to conform to the confidentiality requirements by signing Annex 5 ‘Declaration of absence of conflict of interest and respect for confidentiality’ to the Regulations (‘Expert Declaration’), and sending the declaration via e-mail to the Council;

3.2. enters into an agreement with the Council, as per Annex 6 ‘Expert examination agreement’ to the Regulations.

4. After receiving the expert statement, and concluding the expert examination agreement, the Council provides the expert with access to the project application and all the information in the information system necessary to perform the evaluation of the project application.

5. The expert must perform the scientific evaluation of the project by using their professional qualifications and experience in the relevant science field, and by providing a scientific justification for their opinion.

6. During the examination, the expert cooperates with the Council and complies with the instructions given by the Council pertaining to the performance of the examination in accordance with the Regulations and the Expert Examination Agreement.

7. According to Section 43 of the Regulations, the expert is only allowed to assess a project application of 15 pages, with up to three additional pages if there are supporting documents from the social partners, letters of recommendation about cooperation, etc.

**2.1. Individual evaluation of the project application**

8. The individual assessment of the project application (‘individual assessment’), prepared in accordance with Annex 8 ‘Individual/consolidated assessment form for the expert examination of the project application’ to the Regulations, must be completed and approved by the expert in the information system within two calendar weeks after the date of conclusion of the expert examination agreement and the receipt of access to the project application and all the necessary information, unless a different deadline is specified in the expert examination agreement.

9. In the individual assessment, the expert assesses each criterion and provide a score taking into account the considerations set in Section 13 of the Methodology.

10. The expert assesses the criteria and assigns a score from 1 to 5 for each criterion, where:

10.1. Excellent: 5 points (an excellent project proposal which conforms to the highest requirements of the science sector or even exceeds the requirements for the criterion; any deficiency in the project proposal is insignificant);

10.2. Good: 4 points (a good project application which conforms to the requirements of the science sector for the criterion. However, there are certain deficiencies);

10.3. Satisfactory: 3 points (a satisfactory project application which in general conforms to the requirements of the science sector for the criterion, there are certain deficiencies which will impede the project and prevent high performance);

10.4. Poor: 2 points (a poor project application, with partial or only general conformity with the requirements of the science sector for the criterion, with the presence of deficiencies that obstruct the successful implementation of the project and the achievement of its objectives);

10.5. Unsatisfactory: 1 point (an unsatisfactory project application which does not conform to the requirements of the science sector for the criterion. The provided information is insufficient for providing an evaluation for the criterion, and there are significant deficiencies which cast doubt over the implementation of the project and the achievement of its objectives);

10.6. If the grade of the project application for the criterion exceeds the requirements of the nearest lower grade, but does not fully meet the requirements of the next higher grade, the grade may be awarded with half a point, i.e. 0.5.

11. The expert provides a reasoned justification for the scoring of each scientific criterion. The expert explains in the justification the score awarded, using their professional qualifications and experience in the relevant scientific field.

12. Within three calendar days after the date of receipt of the individual assessment, the Council assesses the compliance of the individual assessment with the considerations referred to in Sections 27, 28 and 29 of the Cabinet Regulation, and with the Methodology, returning the individual assessment to the expert for clarification/revision/improvement, if necessary, justifying the reasons for the return. In the event of such a return, the expert updates, revises, and approves the individual assessment in the information system within three calendar days after the date of receipt of the notification on the return of the individual assessment of the expert by the Council, sent via e-mail.

13. The expert fills in the individual assessment in the information system (see Annex 8 ‘Individual/consolidated assessment form for the expert examination of the project application’ of the Regulations) according to the following criteria and considerations:

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| **Individual/consolidated assessment of the project application** |
| Project name:Expert(s): |
| **1.** | **Criterion: Scientific quality of the project** | Maximum score: 5 points |
| **1.1.** | Considerations: scientific quality, credibility, and novelty of the research | *The expert must explain their grade, taking into account the criterion in general and the fulfilment of the considerations for each criterion.* *1. Specific information for the criterion is given in Section 1 ‘Scientific excellence’ of the project application, as well as in Sections 2.4 ‘Scientific outcomes of the project, and ensuring the accessibility of the outcomes’ and 3.1 ‘Project applicant and scientific team’, but the assessment of the criterion must take into account the project application as a whole.* *2. The scientific excellence of the project, including the chosen research strategy and methodological solutions, the ability to generate new knowledge or technological insights, as well as the ability to build and develop an interdisciplinary and inclusive team of internationally competitive scientists using research methods and technologies that are recognised among scientists worldwide, must be assessed according to the specific features of the relevant scientific field or fields and the project, as well as the specific features of the institutions of the applicant and the project’s partners (if any).**3. The assessment takes into account the thematic goal of the tender (in accordance with Section 6 of the Cabinet Order) and the horizontal goals of the programme, the outcomes (in accordance with Sections 7 and 8 of the Cabinet Order), and their feasibility, and assesses whether the project application is sufficient to achieve the general goal and other goals of the programme in accordance with the thematic field of the project and the envisaged timeframe for its implementation.**4. Assesses the overall potential of the project in developing the knowledge base in social sciences and humanities, developing national research and innovation systems that address social challenges.* |
| **1.2.** | Considerations: scientific quality of the chosen research strategy and methodological approaches, and their relevance to the objectives |
| **1.3.** | Considerations: ability to create new knowledge or technological findings |
| **1.4.** | Considerations: contribution of partners (if any), their scientific capacity, planned cooperation quality. |
| **2.** | **Criterion: Impact of project outcomes** | Maximum score: 5 points |
| **2.1.** | expected transfer of the knowledge and skills acquired in further activities, and the development of scientific capacity | *The expert explains the score given taking into account the fulfilment of the criterion as a whole and the fulfilment of its sub-criteria. Specific information about the criterion is given in Section 2 ‘Impact’ of the project application, but the assessment of the criterion must take into account the project application as a whole.* *Outcomes and their expected impact, including the planned transfer of results in further activities and development of scientific capacity, possibilities for further development in research is evaluated in accordance with the specific nature of the science sector or sectors and the specific features of the project and the project applicant, and partners of the project (if any).* *The expert assesses the success of the project in involving students and doctoral candidates relative to the overall workload of the scientific team, including a plan for involving students and building the capacity of the scientific team within the project. Information about the workload of the project scientific team, including students, can be found in Section 3 ‘Project budget’ of  A ‘General information’ of the project application.**Sustainability of the project results is evaluated in combination with the intended scientific publications, and the distribution of project results at scientific conferences. Information about the publicity of the project outcomes can be found in the Section 2.5 ‘Scientific outcomes of the project, and ensuring the accessibility of the outcomes’ of the project application. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring the sustainability of the results in compliance with Open Access, Open Data, FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) and the project applicant’s choice for data depositing.**The potential of the project to raise public awareness of the project outcomes and to increase the socio-economic impact of the project outcomes must be taken into account (Sections 2.2–2.5 of the project application description). Assess whether the plans described in the project application for the application and transfer of the research outcomes to end-users are adequate and feasible. Assess the cooperation of the applicant with other scientific institutions, as well as with public authorities, NGOs, and businesses.**The expert also assesses the feasibility of the specific result of the project in accordance with Section 10 of the Regulations, the outcome being:*  *1. proposals for policy planning and implementation, taking into account the current processes in the field of artistic creativity and cultural heritage in Latvia;* *2. methodological solutions for measuring cultural impact, including social and economic impact, including in the international context;* *3. datasets for the tasks mentioned in Section 6 of the Cabinet Order in related possible thematic areas, e.g. on current processes of artistic creation and cultural heritage in Latvia, their social and economic impact and sustainability;* *4. a report on the planned integration of research outcomes in education, in particular in the academic and artistic creation processes of higher education institutions, including at master and doctoral levels;* *5. recommendations for cultural policy-making in view of UNESCO Conventions.* |
| **2.2.** | possibilities for developing research, including contributions to drafting new projects for submission to the calls for projects of the European Union Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ‘Horizon 2020’ and other research and innovation support mechanisms |
| **2.3.** | knowledge important for the sector; improvements in the national economy and the society created as a result of the research; |
| **2.4.** | sustainability of the acquired knowledge and a qualitative plan for its distribution, including the planned scientific publications, and informing of the public |
| **2.5.** | the research promotes the strengthening of the scientific capacity of the scientific staff involved in the research, including students |
| **3.** | **Criterion: Project possibilities and assurance** | Maximum score: 5 points |
| **3.1.** | quality of the research plan and its conformity to the objective set. The planned resources are adequate and sufficient for the achievement of the objective. It is planned to ensure efficient use of resources as part of the research. The planned work stages and tasks are clearly defined, appropriate, and credible | *The expert explains the score given taking into account the fulfilment of the criterion as a whole and the fulfilment of its sub-criteria. Specific information for the criterion is given in Chapter 3 ’Implementation’ of the project application and in Part C ’Curriculum vitae’ of the project application, but the assessment of the criterion must take into account the project application as a whole.* *The project feasibility, including the prepared plan for the research, planned project management and quality management, information about the data management plant, planned resources, available infrastructure are evaluated in accordance with the specific nature of the science sector or sectors, and the specific nature of the project, the project applicant and partners of the project (if any).* *The expert evaluates the compliance of the scientific qualifications and experience of the project leader and lead project participants with the project objectives and planned tasks, on the basis of the curriculum vitae submitted in Part C ‘Curriculum Vitae’ of the project application.**The planned project is evaluated in combination with the filled-in Chapter 3 ‘Project budget’ of Part A of the project proposal, which states the costs of remunerating the scientific team of the project, material supplies and technical provisions, official trips and publicity.* |
| **3.2.** | scientific qualifications of the project leader and lead project participants on the basis of the submitted curricula vitae (CV) |
| **3.3.** | suitable research management, including quality management, is envisaged. Organising of management enables tracking the progress of the research. Potential risks have been evaluated and a plan for their prevention or the minimisation of their negative impact has been developed |
| **3.4.** | research infrastructure is required for the research, including access to the equipment of partners (if applicable) |
| **3.5.** | the institution carrying out the research and the partners (if applicable) have the necessary knowledge and expertise |

## 2.2. Consolidated evaluation of the project application

14. Once the experts have completed and approved their individual assessment in the information system, the Council give each expert access to the individual assessment completed by the other expert and disclose to each expert the identity of the other experts.

15. One of the experts completes the consolidated assessment in accordance with Annex 8 to the Regulations, ‘Individual/consolidated assessment form for the expert examination of the project application’ in the information system, under the conditions set in Sections 6 to 13 of the Methodology. All experts approve the consolidated assessment in the information system within two weeks after the approval of the last individual assessment in the information system.

16. The consolidated assessment is an agreement between all the experts on the final assessment of the project application, so the expert who prepares the consolidated assessment consults the other experts on:

16.1. the score for each criterion;

16.2. the justification for each score of the criterion, compiled from the justifications provided by all the experts in their individual assessments.

17. The Council examines the consolidated assessment referred to in Section 15 of the Methodology once it is approved in the information system. If the Council finds that there are inconsistencies with the Methodology or the tender regulations, it has the right to return the consolidated assessment to the experts for reworking and approval.

18. In the event of a return of the consolidated assessment, the experts must revise and agree on the consolidated assessment within three calendar days, approving it in the information system in accordance with Sections 15 to 16 of this Methodology.

# 3. Mid-term and final scientific report scientific expert examination

19. Before accessing the project mid-term or final scientific report in the information system, the expert declares that they have no conflict of interest and undertakes to respect the confidentiality requirements by signing and forwarding the expert declaration to the Council and by concluding an agreement with the administration.

20. having received the expert’s declaration, the Council grants the expert access to the project mid-term or final scientific report, and all the information necessary for its assessment.

21. The Council gives each expert access to the mid-term scientific report or final scientific report of the project concerned and to the application for the same project. In addition, whenever the final scientific report of a project is assessed, the Council gives the expert access to the mid-term report for the same project .

22. The expert assesses the mid-term or final scientific report using their knowledge in the relevant scientific field and arguing their opinion on scientific grounds.

## 3.1. Mid-term and final scientific report individual assessment

23. Within two weeks after the date of conclusion of the agreement with the administration, the expert performs an individual assessment of the mid-term or final scientific report by completing and confirming Annex 10 ‘Individual/consolidated assessment form for mid-term/final scientific report’ in the information system.

24. The expert gives one of two possible assessments on the project’s mid-term scientific report:

24.1. to continue the project;

24.2. not to continue the project.

25. The expert gives one of two possible assessments on the project’s final scientific report:

25.1. the project objective has been achieved;

25.2. the project objective has not been achieved.

26. The expert assesses the project mid-term/final scientific report against the following criteria:

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| **Individual/consolidated assessment for mid-term/final scientific report** |
| Project name:Expert(s): |
| **1.** | **Criterion: Scientific quality of the project** |
| *The expert assesses how well the project scientific team has achieved what was planned in the project application by the time the mid-term/final report is to be submitted. The basis here is Chapter 1 ‘Scientific Excellence’ of the mid-term report/final report, also taking into account the mid-term report/final report as a whole, as well as the project applications. Here, the expert provides comments and suggestions to fully achieve the project’s goal and perform the tasks to achieve maximum scientific quality, or regarding research opportunities after the end of the project in order to achieve scientific excellence. In providing their comments, the expert takes into account the specific tasks and outcomes of the programme, and assesses whether the project is progressing towards the achievement of the programme’s general goal and other goals.**The expert assesses whether the results achieved by the scientific team of the project within the given period demonstrate its high research capacity, and whether the results described are sufficient for improving the knowledge base of the science sector/sectors.* |
| **2.** | **Criterion: Impact of project outcomes** |
| *The expert assesses how well the project scientific team has achieved what was planned in the project application by the time the mid-term/final report is to be submitted. The basis here is Chapter 2 ‘Impact’ of the mid-term report/final report, also taking into account the mid-term report/final report as a whole, as well as the project applications. In this field, the expert provides comments and suggestions to better achieve the intended impact and ensure the publicity of the knowledge gained within the scientific community and the general public, or for activities after the end of the project.**The expert assesses whether the project has made the humanities, arts, and social sciences, as well as the scientific community more internationally competitive, and has built their capacity.**The expert assesses how the project participant has selected the project’s target groups, whether their opinions have been determined achieving the necessary quality, and whether the activities have been effective in informing the public. Also, the expert assesses cooperation with public institutions, NGOs, and businesses (e.g. making recommendations, participating in policy planning, etc.).**The expert assesses and comments on the implementation of the plan to make the project outcomes and scientific knowledge available both in Latvia and internationally (including by publishing the outcomes in open access journals and posting the new research data in research data repositories according to the principles of ‘as open as possible’ and FAIR )findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable)).**The expert also assesses the project participant’s efforts to build the capacity of students and the scientific team, as well as the progress of the student involvement plan project.**The expert assesses the progress towards the programme’s specific outcomes:*1. *A report on the role and interaction of the public sector (including municipalities) and the private sector (including businesses) in shaping the cultural offer, including an assessment of the structure of the offer by region and by cultural offer fields, and proposals for possible policy changes to improve the competitiveness of private actors in the cultural sector.*
2. *A report on the availability of culture, including contemporary art forms, to the people of Latvia, by region and cultural field, with proposals, incl. for a methodology to create a ‘cultural services shopping basket’.*
3. *A report on the employment and income generation patterns and trends in the cultural and creative industries, with proposals for possible policy and legislative changes to improve income opportunities for creative work and social protection for workers in the sector.*
4. *A report on the sufficiency of vocational, vocational secondary, and higher cultural education for long-term job market demand, and proposals for a custom methodology for identifying job market demand in the cultural and creative sectors.*
5. *A report on the impact of the development of digital technologies on cultural consumption patterns, as well as on the processes of creating and distributing cultural content and the possibilities of generating income from creative work, and proposals for possible changes in policy and legislation to improve the accessibility and competitiveness of Latvian cultural products in the digital environment, the digital skills of those working in the sector, and the possibilities of generating income from the distribution of creative works in the digital environment*
6. *A report on the current and potential contribution of the cultural and creative industries to improving the quality of life and well-being of people in Latvia, their health, education, social inclusion, environmental and climate issues, and innovation, including in the context of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with proposals for methodologies and indicators for assessing the social impact of cultural and creative industries.*
 |
| **3.** | **Criterion: Project possibilities and assurance** |
| *The expert assesses how well the project scientific team has achieved what was planned in the project application by the time the mid-term/final report is to be submitted. The basis here is Chapter 3 ‘Implementation’ of the mid-term report/final report, also taking into account the mid-term report/final report as a whole, as well as the project applications. In this field, the expert provides comments and suggestions for adjustments to the work plan or research opportunities after the end of the project.**The expert evaluates whether the project management was successful, also taking into account the overall progress of the project. The expert assesses the information provided by the project participant on the preparation and maintenance of the data management plans. It is also evaluated whether the risk plan specified in Section 3.3 ‘Project management and risk plan’ of the project application was followed in cases where the risks materialised and whether the solutions of the plan were credible.**In addition, the expert evaluates and indicates whether students and doctoral candidates have been sufficiently involved in the project. Students must be involved with a total workload of at least 3.0 FTE on average during the project.* |

## 3.2. Mid-term and final scientific report consolidated assessment

 26. Once the experts have completed and approved their individual assessment of the project mid-term or final scientific report in the information system, the Council give each expert access to the individual assessment completed by the other expert and disclose to each expert the identity of the other experts.

 27. One of the experts completes the consolidated assessment in accordance with Annex 10 ‘Individual/consolidated assessment form for mid-term/final scientific report’ to the Regulations, under the conditions set in Sections 24 to 26 of the Methodology, in the information system, and all the experts approve it in the information system within one week.

 28. In the consolidated assessment, the experts agree on a single score for the mid-term or final scientific report and summarise the comments made in the individual assessments.

1. Higher Education Law, Section 27(1) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Section 2(83) of European Commission Regulation (EU) No [651/2014](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj/?locale=LV) of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Sections 107 and 108 of the Treaty (Official Journal of the European Union, 26 June 2014, No L 187/1)[(https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj/?locale=LV)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj/?locale=LV) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Higher Education Law, Section 44(1) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)