

SUCCESS: Latvia has joined the influential ESA network of incubators



On November 13, 2024, the European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre in Latvia (ESA BIC Latvia) was officially launched at the Science and Innovation Centre of Riga Technical University.

This milestone marks Latvia's entry into the network of 32 ESA Business Incubation Centres across 22 European countries. Over the past two decades, this network has supported more than 1,700 start-ups. During the event, **Luca del Monte**, Head of ESA's Commercialisation Department, highlighted Latvia's significant potential in the space sector, stating: **'The sky is not the limit in this case.'** The incubator is managed by 'Commercialization Reactor', which won a public tender to lead its implementation in Latvia. This launch also exemplifies successful collaboration among Latvian ministries, the space industry, research institutions, and ESA.

ESA BIC Latvia was established following Latvia's status as an ESA Associate Member State and aligns with the goals of the Latvian Space Strategy, developed by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Economics. At the opening ceremony, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Science, **Silvija Amatniece**, expressed confidence in the initiative, stating that ESA BIC Latvia **'will be the driving force in advancing Latvia's space industry, and its**

contributions will be substantial, including promoting space-based services, facilitating technology transfers to and from the space sector, and generating jobs while stimulating economic growth'.

Over the next five years, ESA BIC Latvia plans to support at least 12 start-ups, offering financial support up to 60 000 EUR, two years of business coaching, training, technical assistance, access to space data, and legal consultations. These services, provided at no cost, will enable entrepreneurs to focus on innovation and growth. The centre aims to drive the development of technologies that support the space economy or enhance space industry operations. Its objectives include fostering space-related start-ups, creating jobs, and nurturing science-driven businesses in Latvia. Applications will be open year-round, with the registration open for the first incubation batch until 15th January. Further details are available on **ESA BIC Latvia's homepage**.

Not yet sure if this opportunity is for your company? To help businesses define their potential role in the space industry, Commercialization Reactor is launching a 30-day **'Space Challenge'**, with registration open **until 25 November**.

About Latvia's Collaboration with ESA

Developing and implementing space policy is a key priority for the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. The Latvian Space Strategy 2021-2027 outlines the industry's future goals, with collaboration with ESA identified as a cornerstone for growth. Since 2015, Latvia has made regular investments in ESA programmes, resulting in over 100 successful projects benefiting more than 30 Latvian companies and research institutions. Latvia's status as an ESA Associate Member State since 2020 has enabled its companies and institutions to participate in world-class space projects, collaborate with major industry players, and gain valuable expertise for integrating into the European space sector.

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