

## Teleradiology Project for Riga and Latvia

E. STUBRIS-STUMBERGS<sup>1,2</sup> - Z. BAIDEKALNA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>German Flight Academy

<sup>2</sup>Riga Municipal Agency "Telemedicine centre", Latvia

Dr Egils Stumbris-Stumbergs is Neurosurgeon, Aviation Medical Examiner of the German Flight Academy, and Head of the Riga Municipal Agency "Telemedicine centre", Latvia.

Ms Zanda Baidekalna is Project Coordinator in Riga Municipal Agency "Telemedicine centre", Latvia. Additional contributors to this article are Werner Ullrich, PhD, Berlin, Germany; Bud Slabbaert, Uttwil, Switzerland; Baiba Pure, Latvia and Ivars Eglajs, Development Institute, Riga, Latvia.

The development for teleradiology is crucial for Latvia for several reasons. Firstly, the number of qualified medical experts in Latvia is decreasing. Secondly, specialists are not always available when needed. Thirdly, hospitals in Riga cannot ensure patient treatment without involving qualified external medical experts. Last, but not least, information exchange between Riga's hospitals is practically non-existent. Riga, the capital City of

Latvia, has thus taken the initiative to establish a top-of-the-line telemedicine and telecare system.

The programme aims to reach four objectives:

- 1) establish a communication channel to exchange information between the municipal authorities and the various medical institutions (in- and out-patient care);
- 2) develop centralized information aggregation capacities in hospitals and healthcare institutions;
- 3) establish a communication channel to exchange information and specialist consultations for the development of a medical home-care network;
- 4) organize training for practicing family physicians in providing telemedicine services.

The Riga Municipal Agency "Telemedicine centre" is responsible for the implementation of the programme.