

NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of ABSL Latvia

Dear ABSL Latvia members and strategic partners,

by Monta Geidane, Executive Director of ABSL Latvia

Three months have passed since you received the last newsletter from ABSL Latvia. Although a lot of has changed due to Covid19, we have also learnt to survive by becoming more prepared and educated. So called "new normal" is being fine with working from home, preferring online calls and webinars rather than in person meetings and conferences.

Most of GBS Centers have successfully activated and tested their business continuity plans in real life situations and started to build, improve, update the 'new normal' work conditions and ethics. While few companies are allowing it's employees to return to office life, there is still a list of limitations in place - no guest visits, divided teams and certain limits on how many people are allowed attend the office at the same time.

Although GBS centers have proved their readiness to cope with challenges, difficulties and unfavorable circumstances, there is no space for complacency, it's highly recommended to use the time wisely by searching for new ways on how to become even more protected in case of worst scenarios.

As before, within this newsletter, we will go through on what has been done and achieved withing last three months by touching upon five main responsibilities of ABSL Latvia: advocacy of the sector, cooperation with universities, building the recognition, business report, knowledge-sharing opportunities. I hope that this will be an interesting and insightful material to read and get inspired to be an active part of GBS community in Latvia.





ADVOCACY OF THE INDUSTRY AND LOBBYING THE INTERESTS ON BEHALF OF WHOLE GBS SECTOR

Communication with government institutions, EU funds

In the beginning of April, ABSL Latvia reached out to all of its members to clarify how well the industry is coping with pandemic situation and what kind of support companies expect to receive from the government of Latvia. All suggestions stressed by ABSL Latvia members were summarized and given to LIAA, which accordingly forwarded those recommendations to Cabinet of Ministers.

The majority of GBSCs were requiring the responsible government institutions to update Labor Law and Work Safety Law by including relevant clauses that speak on how to solve disputes with employees arising due to COVID19.

In addition to that, GBS centers asked the government to allocate 100% paid sick leave days during pandemic situation in order to mitigate cases, when people are suspicious about their health, but still keep going to office, thus putting at risk others and business itself.

Some of business centers were asking to keep kindergartens open as this factor directly impacts parent's ability to work.

Last but not the least thing mentioned by the majority of ABSL Latvia members was addressed to State Revenue Service - the need to prolong the submission deadlines for tax reports, annual financial reports.

ABSL Latvia prepared a list of recommendations to government of Latvia outlining several activities that should be initiated in order to improve the economic situation and encourage it's growth after the economic crisis caused by Covid19. Please take your time to get introduced with all suggestions prepared by ABSL Latvia in following pages.



ABSL LATVIA RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

0.5 MIL. € GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY TO FORM A DEDICATED TEAM FOR INVESTMENT ATTRACTION IN GBS SECTOR

ABSL Latvia suggests the government to allocate 0.5 million € to Investment and Development Agency of Latvia aimed to build a target-oriented and dedicated team of high level professionals serving and consulting investors willing to set up business support operations in Latvia. Although investment attraction is not the responsibility of ABSL, we are still interested to grow the industry as such. The more GBSCs will be present in Latvia, the more important will be the role of industry, thus giving us louder voice in discussions with government.



GOVERNMENT FINANCED TRAINING PROGRAMS

ABSL Latvia recommends the government to subsidize professional development training for people living in Latvia. We have heard about different kind of support programs co-financed by government, where people can develop their skills in floristics and other not highly demanded competences in labor market. The association suggests to provide government financed courses in order to teach only skills highly required by business services centers and other exporting companies like digital skills, foreign languages (including English), IT.

Government financed courses to develop digital skills, foreign languages, IT competences is crucial to grow business services exports.

ABSL LATVIA RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

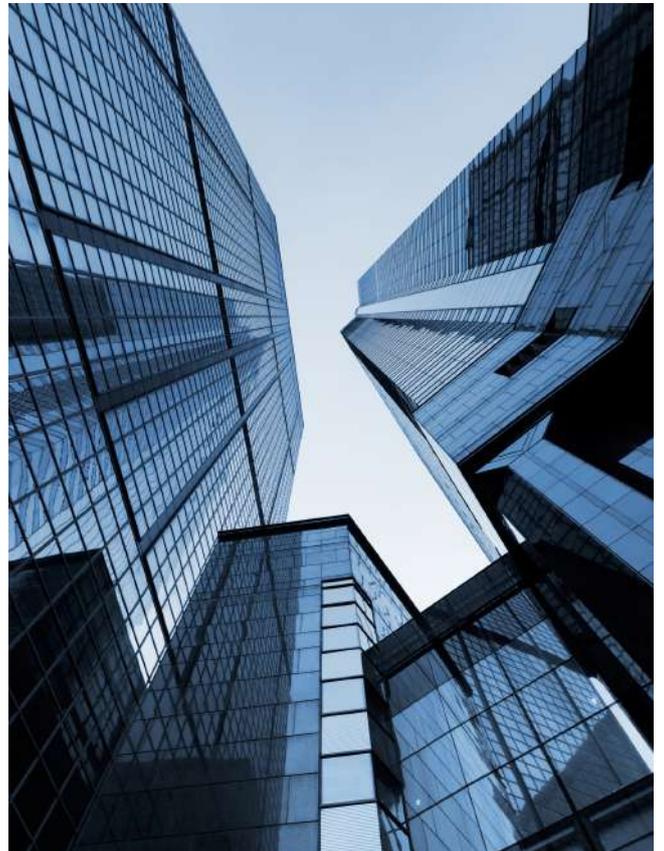
ISSUES WITH ACQUISITION OF WORK PERMITS SHOULD BE SOLVED

There are many complains about cooperation with OCMA, acquisition of work permits and the process itself, which is still time-consuming and containing lots of unnecessary bureaucratic requirements. The association proposes to ensure the possibility to submit documentation for acquiring the work permits electronically. Moreover, ABSL Latvia also suggests to provide a “green corridor” principle when it comes to international companies welcoming high level specialist from abroad. Besides, ABSL Latvia sees the necessity to create a website gathering all information about quality of life, costs, apartment rent, kindergartens in Latvia, Riga. Such activity should be initiated by forming a separate and dedicated team under Riga City Council or LIAA. This team should maintain and create the content for website and also work towards attracting high level specialists to Riga, which means building the recognition of Riga as city for career opportunities.

It is important to significantly ease the process of acquiring work permits in Latvia thus letting international companies to recruit high level specialists from abroad without spending so many time and resources on bureaucratic matters.

PROVIDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR OFFICE BUILDING

Taking into account that the recommendations were prepared together with National Alliance of Real Estate Developers, the remaining two recommendations are basically about office space development issues in Riga. We suggested to grant Altum credit and other financial instrument guarantees for large office development projects. In addition to that, we also advised the government institutions (LIAA, Ministry of Economics) to become the tenants of commercial office buildings, thus solving the need to have modern office space also in government institutions working with high level investors.



ABSL LATVIA RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

The previously outlined recommendations were officially sent to Prime Minister - K.Karins, Minister of Economics - J.Vitenbergs, Minister of Science and Education - I. Suplinska, Minister of Welfare – R.Petravica, director of OCMA - V.Jekabsons, director of National Employment Agency – E.Salmina.



ABSL Latvia has met with several candidates for the mayor position of Riga representing different political parties in order to tell in details the suggested recommendations and how Riga City Council could be involved to improve the business environment for GBSCs. ABSL Latvia has also prepared a slightly altered list of recommendations to Riga City Council and we passionately believe that the new mayor of city will be open to implement meaningful changes developing Riga as an attractive destination for investors.



Vilnis Kirsis
"Vienotiba"

Candidate for Mayor of Riga



Martins Stakis
"Attistibai Par!"

Candidate for Mayor of Riga



Olegs Burovs
"Saskana"

Former Mayor of Riga

WEBINARS ORGANIZED BY ABSL LATVIA

Knowledge sharing possibilities is a crucial part of GBS community helping to become more efficient in everything we do and the growing ability to prove our external and internal clients that we can deliver high-end world class services. During the 2nd quarter of 2020, ABSL Latvia organized three webinars.

HR CLUB – Labor Law during COVID19

(May 7, 2020)

We invited Ivita Samlaja (an expert in labor law), who guided us through the best ways on how to stay compliant with labor law when solving cases with employees arising due to Covid19.

Afterwards we held a panel discussion welcoming participants from Business Services industry: Ieva Zirne, Senior HR Business Partner at Circle K Business Centre, Santa Rožkalna, HR Manager at Solvay Business Services Latvia, Lelde Lipska, General Manager at Cabot Latvia.



BUSINESS STRATEGY CLUB – Back to Normal

(May 11, 2020)

The webinar was organized in order to share knowledge on how different GBS companies are planning to manage the transition period (after June 9) towards getting closer to normal workday at office. We had two presenters - Alise Jegere (Facilities and Physical Security Coordinator at Cognizant Latvia) and Alesja Kircenko (Deputy Head at SEB Global Services). Afterwards we held a panel discussion, inviting both presenters and also Ieva Putrina (SHE Coordinator at allnex Global Business Services Latvia) to speak on different measures taken by companies to prevent the spread of virus.

WEBINARS ORGANIZED BY ABSL LATVIA

ABSL LIVE

KĀ PIESAISTĪT 10 TŪKSTOŠUS DARBAVIETU LATVIJAI?

20. MAIJS 13:00-14:00

VARAM
Juris Pūce

EM
Jānis Vitenbergs

LIAA
Kaspars Rožkalns

ABSL Latvia
Fredis Bikovs

ERDA
Zane Čulkstēna

EY Latvia
Zane Caune

ONLINE DISCUSSION – How to attract 10 thousand jobs to Latvia?

May 20, 2020

ABSL Latvia recently released the first Business Services report in Latvia, which was officially presented on Facebook Live event "How to attract 10 thousand jobs to Latvia?". The online discussion was freely available to all interested parties. The online debate was held in Latvian as high level government officials were invited to join.

ABSL LATVIA PARTICIPATES AS SPEAKER IN RISEBA ONLINE CAREER DAYS

On May 12, Executive Director of ABSL Latvia, Monta Geidane, participated in RISEBA Online Career day, where she was invited to speak about job and career opportunities provided by Global Business Services sector in Latvia and what kind of skills are needed to successfully apply for job positions offered by industry.



RKD
RISEBA KARIERAS DIENAS

PASĀKUMA PROGRAMMA EVENT SCHEDULE

12.05.20.	13.05.20.
14:00 RISEBA Biznesa Inkubators: Biznesa ideju attīstīšana augstskolā	14:00 RISEBA Karjeras centrs: Aktuālās tendences darba tirgū
14:15 Accenture Latvia: Bootcamp – IT apmācības un prakse	14:15 Bite Latvija: Tava karjera, tā sākas jau tagad studējot
14:35 ABSL Latvia: Starptautisko biznesa pakalpojumu nozare Latvijā	14:35 Cabot Latvia: LinkedIn profila nozīme veiksmīgai karjerai
14:55 Solvay: Attālināts darbs un prakse Solvay Rīga SBS	14:55 Transcom Worldwide Latvia: Darba un prakses iespējas
15:15 Henkel: Purposeful growth. Internship opportunities	15:15 Altero.lv: Finansējuma piesaistes salīdzināšanas priekšrocības
15:35 Coca-Cola: What's like to be part of Coca-Cola HBC team?	15:35 Scandiweb: Live in Latvia - Build for the world!
15:55 Tikšanās ar uzņēmumiem (Pirmā sesija)	15:55 Tikšanās ar uzņēmumiem (Pirmā sesija)
16:15 Tikšanās ar uzņēmumiem (Otrā sesija)	16:15 Tikšanās ar uzņēmumiem (Otrā sesija)

WEBINARS ORGANIZED BY ABSL LATVIA

ABSL Poland released a report “EMEA BUSINESS SERVICES LANDSCAPE” (a snapshot of 18 countries in the region), which was officially launched and presented on May 12. ABSL Latvia chairman of the board, Fredis Bikovs, participated in media briefing to give a short announcement on the situation in Latvia and how well is the industry coping with pandemic situation here in Latvia.

ONLINE DEBATE AND REPORT LAUNCH
EMEA'S BUSINESS SERVICES LANDSCAPE
A SNAPSHOT OF 18 COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

ABSL Deloitte JLL randstad sourceright

Learn what makes modern business services industry in the EMEA region unique and join online meeting presenting the practical conclusions of the EMEA's Business Services Landscape – the another edition of the joint report by ABSL, Deloitte, JLL and Randstad Sourceright.

Speakers

Piotr Szumiec
Chairman of the Board
ABSL

Anna Dymyńska
Managing Director
JLL

Tomasz Dębski
Managing Director
Randstad Sourceright

Marcin Drogalski
Chairman of the Board
Deloitte

Cezary Kucharski
Chairman of the Board
ABSL

Wojciech Kucharski
Chairman of the Board
ABSL

Paweł Penczyński
Chairman of the Board
ABSL

REGISTER NOW



UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

According to desire expressed by members of ABSL Latvia, we just organized a webinar about quality control standards for GBS centers. There were many questions about whether it is needed for shared service centers and what is the real value in group level.

Moreover, it is planned to organize the first webinar under Finance Club within the 3rd quarter of 2020. There has been a lot of interest about sharing the knowledge among finance experts from the industry. We have to finalize the topics and speakers, but the event could potentially take a place in July.

All members and strategic partners of the association are welcomed to suggest any topic or speaker for knowledge sharing webinars/events. Please note that ABSL Latvia will do all the rest – invite experts, coordinate speakers and organize the event or webinar itself.

INDUSTRY APPEARANCE ON PUBLIC MEDIA AND BUILDING THE RECOGNITION OF GBS SECTOR

Although the the pandemic situation in country was a negative aspect, it led us to spread a word about the industry and how well in general we are coping with circumstances caused by Covid19. During the 2nd quarter of 2020, ABSL Latvia appeared 10 times in public media news (business and news portals, radio, TV, printed media) with different announcements and opinion articles.



ABSL Latvia actively posts all news on its social media accounts - Facebook and LinkedIn. The Board of ABSL Latvia has commonly agreed to post content in Latvian language on Facebook and in English language on LinkedIn in order to reach even larger audience.

LinkedIn
facebook



INDUSTRY APPEARANCE ON PUBLIC MEDIA AND BUILDING THE RECOGNITION OF GBS SECTOR

The majority of press releases and opinion articles prepared by ABSL Latvia got published on dinasbizness.lv portal. Two articles as interviews were published in printed newspaper *Diena*, one of them filling whole main opening of the newspaper and telling about ways how GBS industry is coping with Covid19 situation. The second article published in printed newspaper *Diena* mainly talked about the recommendations prepared by ABSL Latvia.



DIENA Uznēmēja Diena | E-GRĀMATNĪCA | ABONĒT | IENĀKT

AKTUĀLI | Sports mūsdienu pasaulē | Kāpēc man tas jāzina? | Atgriezties mājās | Banku biznesa anatomija | Jaunais koronavīrusa | MELU TVERTNE: Informē par viltus ziņām | Rīga +20 °C | Otrdiena, 30. janis



The second quarter of 2020 can be considered as a historical one, since ABSL Latvia for the first time gave an interview on TV3 morning news "900 sekundes". Besides, ABSL Latvia was also interviewed by Latvijas radio 1 and Latvijas radio 4. The fact that mostly attracted the media attention was mainly the associations initiative to come up with a list of recommendations to government and that we were brave enough to invite government officials to speak about things to be change and improved in our online discussion "How to attract 10 thousand jobs to Latvia?".

THE FIRST LATVIAN BUSINESS SERVICES REPORT 2020 OFFICIALLY RELEASED

Finally, ABSL Latvia has released the first Latvian Business Services report. 26 GBS centers employing more than 10 thousand people participated in the survey, thus giving the opportunity to summarize useful data representing the tendencies of whole industry. The report itself includes also chapters prepared by Fontes, Colliers, ERDA, EY, making the reading material even more insightful. Many thanks to all of you, who participated and fulfilled the survey, without you it wouldn't be possible. Please note that the report is a great informative material that you can share with your headquarters, especially in cases if there are discussions about overtaking new additional functions or regions, countries to serve.

Currently we are organizing visits to all our member companies in order to speak about opportunities provided by the association, and also to hand over the printed business services reports. If you still didn't have the meeting, most probably it will organized in upcoming weeks.



Taking into account that Business Services report will be issued on annual basis, please note that we will start the new survey in the end of this year. You are always welcomed to recommend any additional questions to include in this survey if anything is missing for you to get the overall picture about industry growth in Latvia.

COOPERATION WITH HIGH SCHOOLS

During the Summer months, ABSL Latvia will start to gather a group of industry experts or in other words those professionals from our member companies willing to give lectures to RISEBA students. ABSL Latvia will prepare an informative material so that you could rise this question within your organization. Guest lectures in RISEBA is considered to be a great opportunity for students to understand the specifics of industry and to associate all those companies with one single sector. This will be let them understand what it means to work in HR, logistics, customer care, finance, IT in Global Business Services Centre as it significantly differs compared to jobs in local companies. If the project will turn out to be successful, we will use such approach also in other highly recognized high schools in Riga.



Direct communication with students is important to get them interested in searching for a job in Latvia rather than going abroad. It's been observed that students do recognize one or another business services centre, still, they don't have an impression about those employers as a one single industry.

OTHER INITIATIVES RUN BY ABSL LATVIA

ABSL LATVIA HAS IT'S OWN HOMEPAGE

We are really close to finalize ABSL Latvia homepage, which is currently available via www.absl-latvia.lv, soon via www.absl.lv. Homepage has several informative sections about membership, report (possibility to download the report), news, career opportunities provided by our members, contacts. The homepage has been made on Mozzello homepage creator platform. The content has been prepared in Latvian and English languages.



GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES CENTERS (GBSC)

GBS Centers are globally represented companies having business units in Latvia and providing business support services (IT, accounting & finance, client service, procurement, logistics, document management and others) to

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC GROWTH OF LATVIA

- 50 GBS Centers based in Latvia are providing jobs to more than 15 thousand people;
- The average gross salary is 1657 euro, which is 43% higher than

Please note that you all are welcomed to give recommendations on what should be changed or improved in ABSL Latvia website as it represents the whole industry.



Please be advised that the website includes a separate section about career opportunities provided by ABSL Latvia members - it guides to job vacancies published on cv.lv. We kindly ask you to double check the information about your company (both languages - Latvian and English) and let us know in case if any corrections, improvements should be made.

OTHER INITIATIVES RUN BY ABSL LATVIA

GBS PANEL DISCUSSION IN HR WEEK

One of the most popular conferences among HR professionals in Latvia is HR Week, which will be held on September 22 – September 23. ABSL Latvia has managed to get a separate panel discussion about GBS related topic (best practices of remote work) and especially speaking from the following perspectives:

- tools for remote work - how do you engage people, recent two months was a hype in that, but all hypes go down - what's then? how do you engage and motivate? leadership of remote teams;
- do employees understand routine of remote work (it is not the same as sitting at home and working as you usually do in office); how do you create "working space" rather than phone and laptop on your dining table; being your own CEO as per Peter Drucker
- what's about being sure your employees do the work (trust, respect, confidence) safety on job;
- confidentiality issues (especially dealing with client data)

Please apply if you or anyone else on behalf of your company would be interested to represent the company and share the company's experience in panel discussion about remote work in GBS Centers.

There will be around 4-5 panelists, so no worries that all attention goes to you, if this is the main concern of saying „no“ to such outstanding opportunity. Please contact Monta Geidane to apply as one of the panelists or to get more information.



HRWeekLatvia

OTHER INITIATIVES RUN BY ABSL LATVIA

NEW STRATEGIC PARTNER - DELOITTE

Many of you have noticed that the association's last webinars were organized in cooperation with Deloitte. After long discussions and presentations about possible contribution for the benefit of whole industry, the board of ABSL Latvia has chosen Deloitte as our new strategic partner. Deloitte owns strong expertise in supporting global business service centers in legal, accounting, audit and business advisory matters.

Deloitte.



ABSL LATVIA - 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

On April 18, ABSL Latvia turned 1 year – this time without loud celebrations due to Covid19, but with a huge gratitude on what has been achieved so far. We are especially thankful for every our member – together we are a strong community able to change the things for good. The next year is full of plans and new goals to achieve. Many thanks to all of you!



KIC EDUCATION CENTRE - A BRAND NEW STUDY PROGRAM

KIC Private Educational Centre has just released a new 7 days professional development program for different level managers – „Productive Service management“, which aims to increase the productivity of every enterprise. The next course starts on August 26 and runs till November 12. The course is all about increasing productivity and efficiency, improving the processes, LEAN etc. Please check KIC website if interested.

OTHER INITIATIVES RUN BY ABSL LATVIA

GREEN LIGHT FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING CO-FINANCED BY EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

CFLA has approved ABSL Latvia project for employee training needs. The support program will cover 30-70% of direct costs for GBS sector employee training needs (Scandinavian languages, IT, project management, logistics courses supported). Currently ABSL Latvia is visiting it's members to give more details about the support program and to inform what actions should be taken to receive the support.



NACIONĀLAIS
ATTĪSTĪBAS
PLĀNS 2020



EIROPAS SAVIENĪBA
Eiropas Savienības
strukturārfondi un
Kohēzijas fonds

REGULĀCIJAS TAVĀ NĀKOTNĒ

SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING



ABOUT PROJECT

Period: 06.2020 - 12.2022

ERDF support intensity:

30 - 70% from direct costs of training (excluding VAT)

Total applicable costs:

1 500 000 EUR

Planned ERDF support:

600 000 EUR

Financial support available:

Small, medium-sized and large companies registered in Latvia



TRAINING FIELDS

Training areas supported:

- Languages (Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Danish)
- Telematics and logistics
- Project management
- Production engineering and management (robotization, process optimization, Lean, Six Sigma) etc.
- Computer systems, databases;
- Programming



PROJECT INITIATION

In order to successfully start the project realization, ABSL Latvia organizes individual meetings with those representatives of companies who are responsible ones for employee training projects. Our goal is to get the overall insight on what skills are required by the industry and to tell more about support program as such. We kindly ask you to be prepared for those meetings by knowing what are your training plans for the year of 2020/2021.

Contact information: Monta Geidane, +371 29245531, monta.geidane@absl.lv
Project management contact: Raimonds Tauriņš, +371 29515697, apmacibas@absl.lv