

# Mortgage lending and promoting competition: Time to switch gears



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**RBS** RIGA BUSINESS SCHOOL  
*Riga Technical University*



Research Presentation and Discussion

November 8, 2024, 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM  
EU House, Aspazijas Boulevard 28, Riga

## About the Research

For the majority of people, a mortgage is the most significant financial commitment they will make in their lifetime. A well-functioning mortgage market would not only allow households to purchase homes at competitive interest rates but also provide much-needed investments in housing renovation, energy efficiency improvements, and new housing construction.

The rapid increase in interest rates, after more than a decade of historically low rates, created public and political pressure, putting the mortgage market in the spotlight of discussions. These discussions highlighted previously unresolved issues and prompted the implementation of solutions. Although it is now clear that there are problems in the mortgage market that need to be addressed, opinions still differ on the causes of these issues and the most and least appropriate solutions for promoting competition and increasing lending.

To promote evidence-based discussion and offer proposals for market development, the Baltic Financial Center (BFC) at the RTU Riga Business School has conducted an independent study analyzing Latvian and global practices in mortgage market design and competition promotion.

**The event will present the study's conclusions and discuss the following questions:**

- What kind of mortgage market do we want to develop over the next 5-10 years, and what are we currently lacking for an effective competitive process?
- Will the solutions implemented so far to improve competition be sufficient, considering the experience of other countries?
- Who is responsible for promoting competition in the financial sector, and how can the approach to promoting competition be strengthened based on global best practices?

## Event Program

*The event will be held in Latvian, with English translation available.*

8.30–9.00 AM	Arrival, coffee
9.00–9.10 AM	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <i>Zane Petre, Head of the European Commission Representation in Latvia</i> <i>Elīna Gaile-Sarkane, RTU Vice-Rector for Studies</i>
9.10–9.40 AM	<b>Presentation of Research Conclusions</b> <i>Kristīne Dambe, BFC Founding Director and Economist</i> <i>Andrejs Jakobsons, BFC Economist</i>
9.40–10.40 AM	<b>Panel Discussion: What Should the Mortgage Market Look Like in 2030 and How to Get There?</b>  <i>Arvils Ašeradens, Minister of Finance</i> <i>Mārtiņš Kazāks, President of the Bank of Latvia</i> <i>Skaidrīte Ābrama, Chair of the Saeima Economic Committee</i> <i>Uldis Cērps, Head of the Finance Latvia Association</i> <i>Ainārs Balcers, Co-Chair of the Finance Latvia Association's Lending Committee, Head of Swedbank Latvia's Private Individuals Division</i> <i>Tīna Lūse, Head of the FinTech Latvia Association</i> <i>Kristīne Dambe, BFC Founding Director</i>  <i>Moderator: Ainārs Ozols, Chairman of the BFC Development Council</i>
10.40–10.45 AM	<b>Summary</b>  <i>Mārtiņš Zemītis, Head of the European Parliament Office in Latvia</i>
10.45–11.30 AM	Coffee and Refreshments

## About the Research Funding and Authors

The study is implemented within the framework of the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Facility funded project No. 5.2.1.1.i.O/I/23/I/CFLA/OOI "Strengthening Knowledge and Research Capacity in the Areas of Anti-Money Laundering, Financial Technologies, and Sector Analysis". The authors are BFC economists and experts Kristīne Dambe, Andrejs Jakobsons, and William Schaub.

The [Baltic Financial Center](#) is a new initiative of RTU Riga Business School, aimed at supporting the ecosystem and promoting the development of an innovative, sustainable, and well-functioning financial sector in Latvia.